



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 6 August 2020

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 6 August 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]

Bills

POLICE AMENDMENT (PROMOTIONS) BILL 2020

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr David Elliott, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (09:48:06):

I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Police Amendment (Promotions) Bill 2020 amends the Police Act 1990 and the Police Regulation 2015 to give effect to a merit-based and modern promotion system for non-executive police officers—namely sergeants, inspectors and superintendents. It provides for promotions based on the merit of a candidate matched to a specific advertised position rather than officers being allocated from a promotions list to the next available vacancy. In this way, promotions processes are equitable and fair, and ensure that police leaders have the technical and interpersonal skills needed to respond to emerging crime patterns and changing community needs. The introduction of the bill provides the legislative change needed to overhaul the current promotions arrangements and bring them into line with the broader public sector, as well as the expectations of our police workforce. It also reflects the key recommendation of the wideranging promotions review.

The Commissioner of Police, Michael Fuller, APM, asked former Australian Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick, AO, to look at the current promotions process and issues that might impact women's promotion opportunities and career progression in the NSW Police Force. The commissioner's promotions review sought feedback from almost 3,500 officers through an online survey, interviews and workshops. The review found there was overwhelming internal support for greater development opportunities for police officers, improved equity within the force and an overhaul of the promotions process.

The introduction of the bill provides the legislative and regulatory changes needed to update the current promotions arrangements. The Broderick promotions review was published in June 2019. In the 12 months since it was published the NSW Police Force has successfully implemented all of its non-legislative recommendations. The bill gives effect to the legislative component of the review by providing for merit-based appointments to specific positions instead of the old concept of a "promotions list" from which the person at the top of the list is appointed to the next vacancy, regardless of the specific capabilities required for the vacant role and regardless of that person's skill match.

The scheme retains the rank-based assessment component of the current promotions system and adds an additional position-based assessment component to ensure that once an officer is assessed by the commissioner as "fit for rank" she or he then also demonstrates they are "fit for job" by applying and undergoing a comparability assessment with other fit-for-rank applicants. In this way the NSW Police Force is able to identify the most suitable candidate for the position. The requirements of each position will be clearly linked back to the NSW Public Sector Capability Framework, which applies across the New South Wales public service.

Reform of the promotions system has been developed in agreement with the Police Association of NSW and is supported by the vast majority of police officers. The Broderick review report details the results from an online survey of almost 3,500 officers, including personal interviews with approximately four dozen serving police. An overwhelming 90 per cent of police officers who responded to the survey agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "the promotions system needs reform". Only 14 per cent of police officers who responded to the survey agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "the promotions system is fair and equitable for all employees". This feedback clearly demonstrates that the current promotions list system is no longer fit for purpose.

The needs of the NSW Police Force and the approach of government to capability-based recruitment have shifted significantly since 2006, when the promotions list legislation first came into force. The NSW Police Force has evolved, adapted and grown. And, as 2020 has demonstrated, police officers may be called upon in times of national crisis such as bushfires and pandemics, as well as responding to emergencies, conducting highly complex investigations, and undertaking their day-to-day crime prevention and community policing work. The NSW Police Force therefore needs its leaders to possess capabilities relevant to the actual role they are going to perform. A one-size-fits-all promotions approach will not assist the NSW Police Force to respond to the changing needs of the New South Wales community.

The NSW Police Force recognises that to ensure effective promotions the system must recognise the specialisation of roles and the range and complexity of crime types to which a modern law enforcement agency needs to respond. It must also recognise the breadth of tasks senior police now need to undertake. It needs to be responsive to all officers, including officers with young families or those from diverse backgrounds, be responsive to the multilingual, multifaceted community of New South Wales and allow for technical skills to be harnessed in vital areas such as cybercrime, national security, money laundering, and smart innovations in transport. With a greater focus on leadership capability and performance the NSW Police Force needs a system in which promoted officers meet the core capabilities required for a specific role, and not simply be the next in line. The New South Wales Government's capability framework is the benchmark for measuring leadership capability across government agencies and is equally relevant in assessing the capabilities required by leaders in the NSW Police Force. The bill will bring police promotions into line with the capability framework, whilst also recognising the special rank-related capabilities that will also be required of police leaders.

Schedule 1 to the bill sets out amendments to the Police Act 1990. Schedule 2 to the bill sets out amendments to the Police Regulation 2015 to support the operation of the amended Police Act. I turn now to the key provisions of Schedule 1. Most significantly, schedule 1 [7] and [9] update the police promotions system by removing all references to promotions lists and providing that vacant positions, including vacant specialist positions, are filled by the person "who has, in the opinion of the commissioner, the greatest merit as determined in accordance with the regulations". Thus, the concept of merit-based appointment is enshrined in legislation, but the details of how this occurs will appropriately be located in the regulation, which can be more quickly updated or changed than legislation. This is consistent with the Government Sector Employment Act 2013, which provides the legislative framework for merit-based appointments, with the details provided for via the Government Sector Employment (General) Rules 2014. The schedule 2 changes to the Police Regulation 2015 will therefore support a merit-based police promotions system provided for in the legislation.

These changes also apply to vacant specialist positions. These positions already require specialist knowledge or qualifications and may sometimes have additional requirements, such as psychological testing, to ensure officers are able to work in these roles. The current Act already allows for provisional appointments to these roles whilst officers attain their specialist qualifications, which can sometimes take a couple of years. Schedule 1, item [9], strengthens the arrangements at the end of the provisional period to require them to be permanently appointed subject to satisfactory performance and undergoing any required psychological testing. If they are not permanently appointed the bill ensures they are not disadvantaged due to time served in a provisional appointment instead of in their substantive position at their substantive rank. The bill also provides that appointments to specialist positions, whether permanent or provisional, are merit-based.

The current Act provides for acting appointments and temporary appointments. Schedule 1, item [11], merges these into a single provision allowing for acting appointments into positions that are temporarily vacant. The merging of these into a single set of arrangements will ensure consistency for the officers and will be simpler for the NSW Police Force to administer. The bill provides for acting appointments to be for a maximum of 12 months. This allows positions to be filled pending proper recruitment action but discourages long-term temporary appointments in lieu of properly filling vacant positions via a merit-based process. All police officers are subject to independent oversight by the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, as well as the NSW Police Force's internal complaints management and disciplinary arrangements as set out at part 8A of the Police Act.

The current promotions arrangements also include integrity checks. Schedule 1, items [12] and [14], update these. Item [12] provides a minor change to remove the requirement for a statutory declaration to be provided before an officer is appointed to a temporary position; but the officer must still provide a declaration. This does not diminish the integrity requirements of the Act, it just simplifies the completion of the declaration by removing the need to find a justice of the peace to witness the declaration. The consequences of an officer making a false declaration are not changed by the form of the declaration. Item [14] confirms that the commissioner must undertake integrity checking of officers at two stages in the promotions process before the officer even participates in the promotions process, and then again before the officer is appointed to a promotion position. Schedule 1, item [17], provides for regulations to be made to support the new promotion system, including the requirements and processes for promotion.

I turn now to schedule 2 to the bill, which sets out those regulation changes. Most significantly schedule 2 amends the regulations to provide for the following elements of the new promotions system: eligibility criteria for participation in the promotion process, including completion of the required time at rank, and an integrity check; successful completion of "Stage A" of the promotions process, which is a rank-based assessment. This ensures officers are rank-ready before they may begin applying for positions at the promotion rank; successful completion of "Stage B" of the promotions process, which requires an officer to apply for an advertised position and undertake a position-based assessment for that position. This process is merit-based and provides for applicants to be compared against each other and the pre-established standards for the position. The pre-established standards for the position are based on the capability framework that applies across the public service.

The regulation changes also update the existing arrangements for an officer to seek a review of a promotion decision if they are not satisfied with the process. A review panel will be established to determine these reviews, as per current arrangements. An officer may seek a review of outcomes and process relating to the rank-based assessment, which reflects the current arrangements. Reviews relating to a position-based assessment, however, will be related to the recruitment process rather than the recruitment outcome. This is consistent with the New South Wales public service in general for position-based recruitment. It ensures that proper recruitment procedures are followed and applicants are not disadvantaged by irregular processes, but also that decisions about the relative merit of one applicant compared with another are not constantly being second-guessed. Applications for review will first be assessed by the commissioner to ensure there are grounds for review. This will free up the review panel to focus its efforts on matters already determined to be within scope for review.

Item [9] of schedule 2 provides for transitional arrangements to be included in the regulation. On the date of commencement of this bill, all existing promotions lists will cease to exist. To ensure those already on a promotions list are not disadvantaged, the transitional arrangements will provide that those officers, having completed rank competency assessments under the former promotion provisions, are deemed to have completed the new rank-based assessment and they are therefore eligible to apply for an advertised position under the new arrangements. Whilst these transitional officers will not be automatically appointed to vacant positions, they will be eligible to apply as if they had qualified under the new arrangements.

The transitional arrangements will remain in force for the same length of time as that remaining on the transitional officer's existing promotion list period. For example, if a transitional officer's term on an existing promotions list expired on 31 July 2021, then the officer would be covered by the transitional arrangements until 31 July 2021—unless, of course, he or she were successfully appointed to a promotional position before that date. There will also be transitional arrangements for a small number of officers who, under the current arrangements, were provisionally appointed to specialist positions. Those officers have not previously completed rank-based assessments and will be given 12 months in which to do so, thus satisfying the requirements for appointment under the new arrangements.

The NSW Police Force has been communicating with staff about the forthcoming changes and is already taking steps to get ready to transition. The changes are welcomed by frontline police, as well as the NSW Police Force's executive. They will enable the NSW Police Force to meet the needs of the community by having police leaders with the right set of technical, leadership and interpersonal skills. They will provide a promotions system that is more equitable, transparent and flexible. For that reason, I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Budget

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2019-2020

Debate resumed from 30 July 2020.

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (10:02:29): I address the matter of flood-proofing the Newell Highway. While the land thirsts for water, we cannot forget the devastating impact and the destructive legacy of flood. In 2016 the Lachlan was inundated with the greatest water levels in 25 years. The Newell Highway south of Forbes was closed for six weeks, interrupting a major freight route and costing the nation an estimated \$112 million. Calls to avoid a repeat of that incident by flood-proofing the Newell have been loud, and I am proud to be part of a Government with the economic power and the vision to act for future generations. We are committing \$200 million to flood-proof the highway between West Wyalong and Forbes, with the project to be completed in this term of government. This significant investment will ensure that the major highway is kept open during wet weather and will improve protection against flooding.

Previous flood events along the route have left locals stranded and unable to get to work or school or to access basic services. This funding will help to safeguard against that ever happening again. The news is significant not only for local communities, but also for travellers and freight network users from Brisbane to

Melbourne. The funding will improve freight access, motorist safety and resilience against flood events for the 3,000 motorists who use the section between West Wyalong and Forbes each day. The work to improve the level of flood immunity will involve raising the existing road level to eliminate the impacts of flooding at key locations. Drainage structures are an important part of road building to ensure water can flow away from the road.

The ambitious task ahead for the Newell Highway reflects the continued strong investment in regional infrastructure and maintenance over the next five years. Freight efficiency will be improved and significant job opportunities created. Development will include a detailed study of hydrology for the Lachlan and Bland Creek catchment and preparation of a final business case. Those studies have commenced and a final business case is expected to be completed by June 2021. Construction is anticipated to commence in January 2022. We are investing in bold projects that are vital to safety on the road as well as our economic prosperity and the ability to move freight quickly and efficiently. They not only affect communities of my electorate, but also are of State significance. These projects are logical but for far too long they have been deemed too hard by short-sighted and metro-focused politics.

I turn to the matter of education. Last April I had the joy of celebrating 100 years of a tiny school called Binya Public School with its nine students. Binya Public is an inspirational little school, having overcome a number of hardships over its 100 years, including floods and termite infestation. The quality of education is second to none. The involvement and contributions of students certainly do not end with their school years. Over 300 people joined me to celebrate 100 years—a testament to the school's resounding impact on the lives of locals. In the Cootamundra electorate, our schools are extended families. There are 79 of these microcosmic communities, which are often the very centre of our small towns.

The Berejiklian-Barilaro Government is a great champion of our schools. New South Wales was the first State to sign the original Gonski agreement. We have now signed the National School Reform Agreement for 2019 to 2023, which highlights our commitment to delivering needs-based funding to government and non-government schools. In 2019-20 the New South Wales Government invested \$20.9 billion in the education of our students. Over four years we are recruiting 4,600 teachers across government schools in New South Wales, which will deliver the highest number of teachers in State schools in our history. Our school infrastructure investment will be \$6.7 billion over the next four years, as we build new schools and undertake significant upgrades to accommodate the 164,000 additional students that are expected to attend our public schools by 2031.

One of those significant upgrades is at Young High School, where we are building a game-changing shared library—a phenomenal resource for the entire Hilltops region and surrounding communities. With continued funding in the budget and council having recently endorsed the final plans, this truly innovative shared asset is taking shape. The new 2.5-storey facility will be located on Young High School grounds and will include a range of new learning spaces; reading and study areas; technology, including video conferencing facilities and multimedia spaces; a children's activity area; a youth wellbeing hub; a floor dedicated to the arts, including gallery space and specialised arts spaces; a coffee bar; and a Wiradjuri learning and cultural centre.

During school hours, some spaces within the new library facility will be reserved for exclusive school use, and some spaces will be reserved for exclusive community use. After school hours, the majority of the spaces will be available for community use. The project will also upgrade other parts of Young High School including repurposing the school library into a staff hub, a new canteen, new student toilets and landscaping works. This truly exciting project is a real signal of commitment by this Government to the bush and the representation of The Nationals and Liberal members that this collaborative multipurpose facility will be built in Young, with a population of 7,000—not at Ultimo, Parramatta or even Wollongong. [*Extension of time*]

Under our \$500 million Cooler Classrooms Program, all of my 63 public schools will automatically be eligible for an upgrade under the first round. Inside the classroom the 2019-20 budget detailed \$449 million to clear the existing school maintenance backlog in all public schools, bringing the total investment to more than \$1.3 billion over five years. Over the recent holidays 968 schools around the State received maintenance work, clearing over half of the outstanding maintenance list. In the last budget \$120 million over four years was made available to expand before and after school care, making it accessible for all parents with children at primary schools by the ambitious target of 2021.

The Government pledged \$88.4 million over four years to employ 100 additional school counsellors or psychologists and an additional 350 student support officers as well as provide dedicated services for rural and remote students to ensure public high school students across the State have access to mental health and wellbeing support. Since being elected, the New South Wales Government has brought the total full-time counselling positions to 1,081 and established school scholarship programs to help fill the demand for those positions. In my electorate the previous budget funded two full-time positions for Cootamundra, Gundagai, Junee, Murrumburrah, Narrandera, Temora, Henry Lawson High School in Grenville, West Wyalong and Young high schools and installed a student support officer at Cowra where a counsellor already works full-time. The \$88 million

commitment will also provide a team of specialist psychologists to provide students in remote and regional schools, including primary and central schools, face-to-face support online and telepsychology services.

New South Wales has the second lowest unemployment rate of any State and Territory in the nation. Whilst the challenges of COVID-19 have presented some additional difficulties, the State's unemployment rate remains low. Under the previous Labor Government this State had the lowest jobs growth of any mainland State and that particularly hit regional and rural New South Wales hard. But while our job record shines, we recognise that there are areas, particularly youth unemployment, where we can improve. As a TAFE graduate I have watched in awe the difference Connected Learning Centres [CLCs] are making across the Cootamundra electorate. Two \$4 million centres, in Narrandera and Grenfell, are changing the way we deliver courses to provide greater flexibility and ultimately accessibility to students in the bush, who are geographically challenged.

In Grenfell, over 12 months the CLC has boosted enrolments by 200 per cent. The variety of education opportunities is growing, with 21 courses now on offer. This opportunity is being extended to the furthest reaches of my electorate, with the building of a CLC in West Wyalong currently underway. This town of just 2,600 people is the most isolated and arguably the rural corner of my electorate. After the Government announced free apprenticeships for 100,000 tradies in July 2019, West Wyalong grabbed the bull by the horns, with 12 locals beginning TAFE training within a few months. Now they will have the infrastructure to match. The West Wyalong CLC promised during the election, which will be located onsite at the existing TAFE campus on Wooten Street, is delivering on the Government's commitment to provide the skills and training needed to support local economies across New South Wales. It is so important for people to be able to learn new skills without having to travel long distances.

I have seen the benefits that can be delivered by these new training facilities elsewhere in the electorate in both Narrandera and Grenfell. West Wyalong will be the first of eight new CLCs to be delivered in this term of Government and it will be open by the middle of 2021. As a florist I used to fund all of my staff through their TAFE courses. As a business owner it made sense to invest in their education and help them develop the skills to not only to help my business thrive but also to benefit the entire industry, especially when they struck out on their own. The Government knows this too and that is why it is delivering an additional 100,000 free TAFE and vocational education and training courses over four years, including 70,000 fee-free courses for young jobseekers, combining work and study through a traineeship, and 30,000 free TAFE places for mature aged workers seeking to retrain or re-enter the workforce.

In February this year I welcomed 10 new nurses to our hospitals. Across the electorate, Cowra, Gundagai, Grenfell, Young, Junee, Harden, Temora and West Wyalong all received one graduate. Two graduates are beginning nursing careers at Cootamundra Hospital and Cowra will welcome another graduate nurse in the next couple of months. The New South Wales Government's commitment to increase the number of nurses and midwives in our hospitals has been increasing since 2011. In 2019 over one-quarter of the State's nurses and midwives started their careers in rural and regional hospitals. Our nurses and midwives are on the front line of the New South Wales health system, providing care to patients. In the 2019-20 budget we delivered on a record \$2.8 billion commitment over four years to recruit health staff and more than 3,700 of those medical professionals will be recruited into regional New South Wales. This means an estimated 388 nurses, doctors, midwives and support staff for the Western New South Wales Local Health District and 273 for the Murrumbidgee Local Health District. That is more 650 frontline health workers for hospitals in my electorate alone as part of the largest workforce boost in this State's history.

Debate interrupted.

Bills

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

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 30 July 2020.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (10:18:38): As I started my speech last week, I lead for the Opposition on the Water Management Amendment (Water Rights Transparency) Bill 2020 (No 2). It has been a privilege to deal with the issue of water across New South Wales in my role as the shadow Minister for Water because it is incredibly interesting and complex. Every single person that I have met concerning the water issue has been an absolutely wonderful person. Although we have not always agreed, we have treated one another with respect and have gone about our work diligently. In essence this is the fourth water bill to be brought to the New South Wales Parliament inside the past 12 months. One bill was introduced by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party in November last year but it lapsed around May of this year.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Because of COVID.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: I say to the member for Oxley that I do not know why it lapsed. It just got timed out, as far as I know. The second bill, which was very much the same bill, was introduced by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party in the upper House. The third bill was introduced in this House by the Minister about two months ago and the fourth bill was again introduced by the member for Murray of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party about a month and a half ago. There has been a complex interchange of bills fundamentally dealing with the transparency of water ownership, particularly for members of Parliament. The three bills introduced by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party also dealt with transparency around the water register and the need for an audit through the water register so that we can have confidence and faith in the trade of water across the State, a market that is worth billions of dollars every year. That is the context of this debate.

Importantly, in the last two months three of those four bills have been in play at the same time, which led to the upper House—the other place, as we call it—in its wisdom referring the three bills for a committee inquiry. The Minister's bill in this House had already been dealt with. At that time I indicated that the Opposition would not be opposing the Minister's bill and I moved an amendment to improve it. The amendment was rejected. In any case, at the end of the second reading debate Labor did not oppose the bill. Then the committee inquiry commenced. During that process a couple of significant things happened but none more so than this: The Clerk of the Legislative Council took the rather unusual decision to make a submission to a parliamentary inquiry. I am tempted to say that is unique but I do not know if that is entirely correct. Certainly it was unusual and extraordinary.

Fundamentally the advice from the Clerk related to the Government bill. It suggested that Parliament would be unable to cope with the requirements and expectations of that bill. As members of Parliament we need to take heed of that sort of commentary from those who essentially know more about the workings of this place than we do. We have to take their wisdom on board and sometimes we have to allow the Clerks to save us from ourselves. It was a significant submission. I raise this point because when the Government bill came through this House and the Opposition did not oppose it, we were not to know that the bill was fundamentally unable to be worked through the processes of Parliament.

The second thing that happened—and I commented on this when the Minister's bill was before the House—was that in good faith the Minister indicated that the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC] was working on a report around water registries, water trading and the water market which would be available sometime during the passage of that bill. The report has now become available, from memory last Thursday morning. I congratulate the Government members who spoke on this report last week. Given that the report was 542 pages and had been tabled about an hour before the debate, I was most impressed that these Government members had been able to get through to page 393 and find a dot point on that page which seemed to justify the Government's reason for refusing—

Mrs Melinda Pavey: It was a paragraph.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: Sorry, it was a paragraph that seemed to justify the Government's reason for refusing the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party bill introduced by the member for Murray. I am not that fast a reader. It has taken me a little bit longer to get through the rest of the report. I can report to the House today that the overwhelming theme, sentiment and specifics within the ACCC report are that more transparency around water trading is required—more transparency. That is in contrast to the contributions made by the members opposite last Thursday morning. I remind members why we want to deal with this issue of transparency in relation to members of Parliament. I sum it up with this quote from former Premier Neville Wran, who fundamentally established the pecuniary interests form for members of Parliament. He stated:

The establishment of a scheme whereby members of Parliament can be seen to be above reproach not only enhances the prestige of our parliamentary system but also protects the members themselves against scurrilous attacks ...

That is why it is important that we have transparency amongst us as members of Parliament around the assets we own which could influence what we might say or do in either Chamber in our speeches, our work and our party rooms. If we put our assets on a register, if we make it public and people can see what we own, that is an important part of transparency for us as parliamentarians. It protects us and gives us a clear conscience when talking about the things that we do. For example, last week the member for Coffs Harbour came into the House and identified that he and his family own a farm and that they have access to water for growing blueberries and macadamias. I say good on him for doing that.

However, on 18 June this year *The Land*, a well-known and well-regarded newspaper, inquired among all members of Parliament into water ownership. To the credit of a number of members—I think it ended up that about half the members responded—they were quite honest and open with the newspaper. I think six members of Parliament identified that they had water assets and ownership. However, of those six, and this is key, only one

of them has declared that on the pecuniary interests register of the Parliament. That means there are five members of Parliament talking about and voting on water issues who own water assets, who have rights and access to water, who have not declared it on their pecuniary interests register.

It is hard to imagine, given how much debate and focus there has been on the issue. It is hard to imagine, given we have had four different bills over the last nine months dealing with this issue. It is hard to imagine, given that in November last year the Clerk of our House sent a letter to all members indicating the Crown Solicitor's advice that we should be declaring our water interests. *The Land* newspaper gets more information and transparency from members of Parliament than does the Parliament itself. That is how important it is to deal with the bill. That is how important it is that we progress the question of transparency. That is how important it is that we get behind the issue of water transparency in this House today.

I note that the Government, in dealing with a similar bill in the upper House last night, chose to vote against it. It is hard to understand exactly why it voted against it. There is not really a logical or coherent argument as to why it would do that. It seemed to be more about just kicking the toys out of the cot because its bill was defeated. I remind members that one of the reasons the Government's bill was defeated was because the Clerk of the Legislative Council suggested that its bill was unworkable. That is a significant reason to not go ahead with a bill. We do need transparency. I think across the Parliament all members have agreed we need greater transparency. We have all debated that we need transparency. This morning members have an opportunity to vote on transparency. I ask, where will you vote? If you vote against transparency, you are essentially voting against the spirit of the Government bill and the spirit and purpose of the bill before the House today.

I make this point about the broader issues of transparency of the asset register, with regard to comments that were made last week in this Chamber in relation to the ACCC report and comments that were made in the upper House last night to support a completely incoherent argument against the bill before us. I refer to two separate reports by the Commissioner of the Natural Resources Commission in April of this year. I will speak firstly about one report on the Water Sharing Plan for the Central Coast Unregulated Water Sources 2009. At page 64 the Natural Resources Commissioner states:

Very few trades (6 percent) have prices recorded against them. While this is not uncommon, it limits the availability of information to the market, which in turn impacts on the effectiveness and efficiency of the water market.

Six per cent of trades had a price against them, so 94 per cent of trades did not in a public water register trading scheme that is in existence today. It is the responsibility of Minister for Water, Property and Housing, who has the ability under legislation at any time to change the structure of that register—at any time—without introducing legislation. The legislative power is already vested in the Minister. We have 94 per cent of water trades in the market that do not have a water price attributed to them. The member for Murray is seeking to increase the transparency in our water trading registers and our water markets. We will be voting on this bill today. Members have the chance to vote for all 100 per cent of trade having a published price, or we can continue with 6 per cent. How will members vote? The outline of the problem is not limited to that report. Another report from the National Resources Commissioner, published in April, on the Water Sharing Plan for the Lower North Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2009 states:

Given transfer trade for a starter in the *NSW Water Register* is unreliable DPIE-Water noted that a better indication of the price of water can be obtained from share assignment ... trades. The average price was \$1,189 per ML [megalitre] for these trades; however, this is based on the small sample size of just four trades from 2010-2012 and it is therefore unknown if these prices reflect current value of water entitlements in the region.

The Natural Resources Commissioner again makes the point that at the moment the register does not allow any interrogation, auditing, accuracy or transparency. I emphasise that that is the opinion of the Natural Resources Commissioner. If we are not going to believe that entity, why do we have it? If the Treasurer, Dom Perrottet, is looking for a budget cut and we are not going to listen to what the Natural Resources Commissioner is telling us, why do we have it? On the very next page of the report, which is page 88, the Natural Resources Commissioner says something interesting:

The commission understands that WaterNSW has recently updated their trade application form to require price be included.

In April this year it is possible, although not certain, that the form might have been updated to include a price, but the water commissioner is not sure. The NSW Water Register is 100 per cent the responsibility of the Minister and the issue of published prices could have been dealt with internally. The issue of transparency has not been on this Government's radar for the past nine and a half years. For the first eight years there was no talk of transparency whatsoever and The Nationals lost the seats of Barwon and Murray fundamentally on the issue of water. As a result, two new members of Parliament from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party were elected. One of them is a very successful farmer and I congratulate her and her family. They own water. When she became a member of Parliament, she asked this question: Why do members of Parliament not declare their water entitlements? How is that possible?

Since the 2019 State election and the election of the member for Murray the issue of water trading transparency suddenly, embarrassingly and, for the Government, unfortunately been put on the agenda. The Government tried to find a way to deal with it so the Minister introduced a bill that fundamentally deals with regulation. We do not need a bill to deal with regulation but it was important for the Government to be seen to be dealing with the issue of transparency—not to be genuinely dealing with it but to be seen to be dealing with it. It is all about perception—the announcements, the words and the suggestion—of the Government doing something.

The Government does not care about taking action because, if the Minister had wanted to take action, a long time ago she could have taken action to address the NSW Water Register. The Government does not believe in genuinely taking action, which is why the Government does not hold seats from electorates that live, thrive and die based on water. That is why the Government does not hold the seats of Barwon and Murray anymore. The Government has lost those communities. I turn now to address the report of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC] and two submissions from significant water users in our community. Page 20 of the report states that NSW Farmers expressed this view:

... improvements are in the transparency of water trade are urgently required. Readily available information including price, location and volume, provide market participants with the information required to make informed decisions. Without transparency and improved functional capacity, trust in the water market and wider water reforms is being eroded, and the ability of the water market to deliver the social, economic and environmental objectives of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan is greatly diminished.

Also on page 20 the report cites SunRice's submission:

... transparency is critical—not only for the operation of an efficient market for water rights, but also for the small and medium-sized farming operations—

I emphasise "small and medium-sized farming operations"—

to manage their participation and investment in the water market. The efficient functioning of markets is based on ready access to information, enabling market participants (including growers who depend on access to annual water entitlements) to make informed purchasing, carry-over and trading decisions.

Those two organisations are pretty significant water stakeholders and they want more transparency. In essence, that means they want the member for Murray's bill to progress. Those stakeholders are people who no longer vote for The Nationals. They have had enough of the water issues created and worsened by the current Government. The ACCC report goes on to state at page 213, "Improved transparency and market oversight would increase confidence in the market". At page 228 the report states, "There is a need to address regulatory gaps to create fair and efficient water market characterised by integrity and transparency".

The list of calls for transparency and integrity goes on and on throughout the ACCC's report. Fundamentally the report says that the integrity of water markets needs improving because it currently has insufficient oversight. The report and media who have worked through the ACCC fundamentally state that in New South Wales, The Nationals have handled water so badly that it is creating a disaster for our communities, our environment, our growers and our Indigenous cultures right across the State. I do not know how many ACCC reports people have read. I have not read many of them but I have read many other reports. I do not think I have ever read a more damning report than the ACCC's report on water.

It is really important to note that the National Resources Commissioner, significant stakeholders and the ACCC all say that we need more transparency. The New South Wales Government has had the power and opportunity to do something about transparency but for 9½ years has done nothing. Today we can debate a private member's bill and vote to support it because, in line with all the professional, esteemed and established organisations to which I referred, it deals with transparency; or we can bury our heads in the sand, vote along party lines and deny justice to the State, all our water users across New South Wales, our environment, our cultural and Indigenous people and to our communities.

The farcical single argument that has been put up against a transparent water register is the idea that we will have protesters at farm gates concerned about the use of water on farms. I say farcical because it is the nicest word I can use to describe that argument. It is as simple as this: there is a thing called Google Earth, it is on your internet. You can have a look at different farms and you can find different farming communities, different dam storages and things like that. It is not always up to date, so if you wanted up-to-date information about water access on a farm you could maybe drive down the road beside it and if there are green shoots coming out of the ground they probably have water. If you wanted to launch a protest you could probably just go to the farm that has green shoots and ask, "Are you are growing something?"

Mr Dugald Saunders: Or it has rained.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: Or it has rained—fair call. You can see a lot of dams from the roadside as well, you can see a lot of the channels and canals that move irrigation water around the place. You can see the irrigators, it is not hard. If you want to protest to reclaim a bit of weed or maybe sugarcane, maybe you want to hug an apple

tree or an orange tree, they are not hard to find. That is the single argument put up by the Government as to why it would not support this bill—and I am saying this for the members that will have to come in and vote for this farcical position—where the food and fibre is being grown. It is pretty important. In dealing with the bill today I point out that the Government bill contained some things that I did like. If the Government had put up an amendment to get more detail about what is going on behind the irrigation corporations we would have supported that.

I think that is important. We have to have the transparency that is proposed. We have to know when the water is being traded, how much is being traded and who owns it. We need to know that the water is going towards food and fibre production, that it is not being speculated by people sitting in a city office buying and selling water like shares. They are important things that we need to work through. I support the bill and I recognise that we have been dealing with this issue of water transparency in a fairly complicated way in the New South Wales Parliament. I commend the member for bringing the bill to the House and the member will have our support when it comes to the vote. I hope that the sensible logical members of the Government will vote with her as well.

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (10:43:17): I speak to the Water Management Amendment (Water Rights Transparency) Bill 2020 (No 2) that my hardworking colleague the member for Murray has brought to this place. I note that several wannabe Logie award-winning thespians opposite commented about my presence, or otherwise, in this place last time the bill was discussed. It is nice to be thought of, missed and remembered, but their intent was far from pure. This is the game played by a desperate Coalition partner who cannot work out why they are not getting traction in electorates they have lost and are trying to at least keep the furniture, as they look like they are about to lose the house. Stop playing games, start focusing on meaningful assistance and policy change for regional New South Wales. Stop the partisan nonsense and govern for all of New South Wales.

I am not going to play their political games. I am going to call them out on it when they try to get grubby. The public deserves honest leadership from elected officials, nothing less. Government members spoke about privacy issues and farm invasions. They used the phrase "mum-and-dad farmers" over and over again. With all the ads seen recently for Coalition speech writers, they might want to speed up the recruitment. It is maybe another clear and present danger moment. They should at least try to improve the wording in the speeches that are prepared for them and avoid movie titles and clichés. Mum-and-dad farmers are not the homogenous group that they try to make out. It is offensive to suggest they are. Some have struggled to even meet a threshold for primary production status throughout the drought, while others have ongoing \$85 million dollar-plus operations. A bit more talk with mum-and-dad farmers and a little less talk about them would go a long way to helping Government members' understanding of sentiment in the bush.

On the risk of farm invasion, did we not recently pass a Right to Farm Bill—a bill that was meant to protect farmers from such intrusions? Are those opposite saying the Right to Farm Bill is ineffective? Is it lacking? The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party amendments to the Right to Farm Bill, made through negotiation with the approachable and cooperative member for Northern Tablelands made it better—we are actually pretty happy with it. The steadfast member for Orange, Phil Donato, made a point no-one opposite seemed to realise—it is no secret who uses water for irrigated agriculture. Go west some time; it is not exactly hidden. The infrastructure, channels and the crops themselves are a bit of a giveaway. Sustainable irrigated agriculture is an important economic anchor in many of the communities I represent. It is part of our proud agricultural history and part of our economic and agricultural future. Profiteering from water speculation and trade is a threat to that agricultural future.

When members of this place bring in a bill that is relevant to my constituents, first, I read it. If I believe there are deficits or other problems, I make contact with the member or their team and discuss my concerns. If I believe there is an opportunity to improve a bill I propose amendments, as I did with the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019 brought by the member for Oxley. As the member for Oxley is now acutely aware, the Government does not control the other place; the Government's legislative agenda will be made difficult by failing to engage, discuss and negotiate with the Opposition and the crossbench. I do not think our constituents want us to use the resources of this Parliament, our staff, or our time blowing hot faux angry air across this Chamber. I will not play your game and I am certainly not a monkey who dances on command—not for you. My constituents are the only ones who get to define my priorities. If the member for Oxley had a concern with the member for Murray's Water Transparency Bill, why did the member for Oxley not reach out to the member for Murray and discuss it?

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Have you read her comments on Facebook and how she treats people?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The Minister will come to order and cease interjecting.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Or how the member for Orange treats people?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I ask for decorum in this debate.

Mr ROY BUTLER: I note the interjection by the member for Oxley. There is something I have not felt the need to talk about in this place before, but I now place it on *Hansard*. It is relevant to this debate. In 2019, when the Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill was tabled for debate we reviewed the bill. My team contacted the member for Oxley's office and we spoke on the phone and we met face-to-face to point out a fatal flaw in the bill. We suggested that they get legal advice. They did. Our assessment was correct and an amendment was required. The error would have meant that all of the water infrastructure works proposed in the bill would not have been able to go ahead. A test in the bill failed every water project, it was a dud as tabled. We did not wait to come to the Chamber in order to embarrass the member. We agreed that the member for Oxley would move the amendment to address the fatal flaw. Is that not what our electors would expect us to do; to work together? To do anything else is game playing. It does not produce public value and it wastes public resources.

The people who put us here expect more from us, especially this far out from an election. With so much going on in the State, particularly in regional New South Wales, they rightly expect us to knuckle down and address issues in a fair and logical way. It is important to recognise that when we speak here, we speak for a whole electorate. That means people who do not have a water access licence also have a valid say on this. That is how proper representation works. I have plenty of letters and messages on water transparency from constituents and groups, but with such strong community sentiment why would I need them here? Representations from industry groups, lobbyists and other entities need to be balanced against wider community expectations.

There is an appetite in the general public for more transparency around water ownership and water trades. The perception in the bush is that The Nationals just listen to their mates, donors and lobbyists and ignore the average punter. It is groundhog day for regional New South Wales voters every time they act that way. The Minister for Water, Property and Housing also produced a letter from Namoi Water. If its concerns are to be taken seriously, she should look into replying to all of the correspondence that we sent to her on behalf of Namoi Water. Why does the Minister for Water, Property and Housing not respond to them? Namoi Water deserves better than to be a pawn in this place. It deserves timely responses to its legitimate concerns. Again, I offer to work with anyone in this Chamber or the other place on issues that are important to the electorate of Barwon. My offer still stands for anyone who wants to travel with me to the electorate for some car therapy. Alternatively, I am happy to connect them with people in the community. Many members in this Chamber and the other place have taken me up on that, including Government members. The offer is there. They know where to find me.

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (10:51:37): In reply: I thank those members who have spoken in the debate on this important bill. If it was not for my bill, the Government would not be doing anything about water transparency. Clearly, there is a lot of support from one side and a lot of excuses from the other. When it comes to water transparency, the Minister for Water, Property and Housing only seems to care about one person: me. She wants me to declare my water use every 14 days, yet she is happy for the Chinese Government to keep its secret. She is happy for Cayman Island companies founded by Liberal Party Ministers to rort the system. She is happy for big foreign corporates to price water out of the hands of mum-and-dad farmers. Why are The Nationals so obsessed with me and my farming family? Is it because there are no farmers left in the National Party? Is it because I am one surviving farmer that the National Party has not yet destroyed?

Yes, I buy water because I produce food. We have recently completed a corn harvest on our property. That corn goes into the cornflakes the Minister would eat for breakfast every day. Ever since I introduced this bill to Parliament in October, The Nationals have come up with intriguing, creative but weak-as-water excuses to oppose it. Firstly, they tried reporting me to the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics. They said that, because I am a farmer who owns water, I cannot introduce a bill about water. That was creative. They kept delaying until my bill lapsed. At one point they said that my bill was not necessary because a water register already exists. In opposing the bill, Government members supported their cause by referencing the recently released Australian Competition and Consumer Commission report [ACCC] into water markets. The member for Cessnock mentioned that this morning. That is the most extraordinary piece of spin that I have ever heard. The ACCC is scathing of the Government's secrecy and negligence when it comes to water. They are clinging to page 393 of the report.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: It was page 391.

Mrs HELEN DALTON: It was page 391 then, give or take a page. They say that it says something in their favour. Government members ignore the previous 390 pages that rip into them for their dreadful mismanagement and oversight. But even page 391 does not support their opposition to the bill. It states that, under the current system, a water register would not be that useful. It also states that water traders can simply mask their identity when their details are published. That is true under the current corrupt system. It is easier to get a water licence than it is to open a bank account. Think about that. Under the Government system, a person can buy millions of dollars worth of water without revealing their name or true identity. They do not even have to show their Australian business number. My bill addresses that gross flaw in our system. It is not good enough that a

company in the Cayman Islands can buy large quantities of water while keeping the names of its directors, board members and major shareholders a secret. If you are a corporation—foreign or domestic—and you want to own Australia's most valuable natural resource, taxpayers deserve to know something about you.

Under the bill, if a person applies for a water licence they need to provide detailed information. They need to tell us the name of the company director, the registered address of the company, its major shareholders and the names of its parent companies, subsidiaries and all related companies. That new requirement would apply not only to new applicants for a water licence but also to those who already have one. They would have 12 months to provide that information. Under the bill, people would no longer be able to hide behind corporate veils. Government departments would no longer be able to hide in the shadows. My water register will capture all the water they own.

This week the media reported shocking revelations that the Minister for Energy and Environment has been storing water for big foreign-owned water speculators. That is extraordinary. Our State environment department is helping big water speculators to save money and make a profit. Call me old fashioned, but why is the Minister for Energy and Environment trading water with big corporate irrigators? What is going on in the unholy alliance between the Government, Webster Limited and Duxton Water? How much money did the Government charge those big foreign corporates? Was it a sweetheart cut-price deal to help them maximise their profits? We do not know the answers to those questions because water ownership is so secretive in this State. That is why we urgently need a transparent water register, but the Government is determined to block it and stop the bill.

We need to know how much water foreign companies and government departments own. Our taxes are paying for dodgy deals. It is time to come clean. The Government's latest argument against a water register, invented just last month, is a pearler. They are now talking about mum-and-dad farmers. The mum-and-dad excuse is a favourite of the Coalition. Last week, the Minister for Water, Property and Housing mentioned it at least a dozen times. They bring out mum-and-dad farmers every time they want to oppose something. There is the mum-and-dad property investors, the mum-and-dad taxpayers and the mum-and-dad retirees. I am surprised that they did not defend the sports rorts saga by talking about the need to protect mum-and-dad athletes. I cannot believe that they have pulled out the mum-and-dad farmers card. It is obvious that the Government has never given a toss about or listened to mum-and-dad farmers.

Recently 11,000 people—mum-and-dad farmers—signed a petition for a searchable, transparent water register and a royal commission into the water mess. The Government has implemented policy after policy that has destroyed generations of family farmers. They have stood by and watched as our staple food producers are swallowed up by large corporate agribusinesses. Federal National Party MPs Barnaby Joyce and Bridget McKenzie have actively encouraged family farmers to get out of farming if they are not making a profit. They are more than happy to see the big foreign corporates taking over family farms. The Government has done more to destroy family farms than animal activists could dream of. And that is the ridiculous excuse we hear today: Apparently a water register will see family farmers terrorised by animal activists—or plant activists, as The Nationals say. They have orchestrated a desperate campaign with all their surrogates on this, because the NSW Farmers Association and the NSW Irrigators Council are parroting the exact same thing. But the Government cannot even keep its lying consistent. First it was saying my bill changes nothing and is not necessary; now it is saying it will cause greenie terrorism. So which is it?

The idea that a water register will cause attacks on farmers is a complete joke. I am an irrigator. If you walk or drive past my property you will know I am an irrigator because you will see the crops that are growing. It is easy to tell I am an irrigator, as it is with other irrigators. You can see the investment irrigation farmers have made to provide good quality food for you and fibre for the clothes on your back. The Government has established purpose-built irrigation areas. It is no secret. Clearly The Nationals do not understand agriculture, particularly irrigated agriculture.

My bill will expose the Sydney traders, politicians and foreign companies who own water. It is not obvious that those groups own water when you walk past their offices. Are The Nationals worried about animal activists flying into the Cayman Islands and attacking mum-and-dad shell companies with water licences? No, they do not care about the Cayman Islands companies buying our water at all—or perhaps they are, because we all know who they are protecting. We have a land register in Australia. Why does a water register terrify so many powerful people? I will tell you why: because there is so much to hide. The fact that The Nationals and their lobby groups oppose a water register is the exact reason we need it so much.

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

The House divided.

Ayes37

Noes44
Majority.....7

AYES

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

NOES

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

PAIRS

Chanthivong, A	Hazzard, B
Crakanthorp, T	Henskens, A
Saffin, J	Petinos, E
Warren, G	Sidoti, J
Watson, A	Williams, R

Motion negated.

*Motions***BUSHFIRES AND WILDLIFE**

Debate resumed from 30 July 2020.

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (11:12:12): I thank the member for Balmain for bringing the amended motion to the House. After the bushfires, the Government acted immediately to support affected wildlife across the State. I thank the many volunteers in my electorate who assisted with that. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service firefighting mission saved the prehistoric Wollemi pine, and repair missions have fixed fire-damaged enclosures for threatened corroboree frogs in Kosciuszko National Park. In January 2020 the National Parks and Wildlife Service also initiated extensive pest and weed control programs to protect native animals and plants from feral animals and weeds. The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment is continuing its assessment of bushfire impacts across fauna, flora and threatened ecological communities to prioritise species and locations and undertake specific intervention actions.

As part of the NSW Koala Strategy 68 on-ground actions are underway or have already been delivered to the community to address local threats to koalas. We formed partnerships with six Aboriginal community organisations to learn knowledge and skills that will help to protect koala habitat. We launched the NSW Koala Country website to connect communities and organisations that are working on koala conservation and also launched the I Spy Koala app, which allows members of the public to record koala sightings. We launched a statewide community wildlife survey, giving the public the opportunity to tell the Government about koalas in their area.

We installed more than nine kilometres of fencing along Picton Road near Wollondilly and collected 1,637 samples of koala genetic material from around Australia for the Australian Museum Koala Tissue biobank—1,276 of those samples were from New South Wales. We released a 10-year koala research plan and provided \$1.93 million for 10 research projects. We provided \$3 million for a koala hospital and sanctuary in Port Stephens, which is to be completed in late 2020, and approximately \$125,000 to volunteer wildlife rehabilitation providers for the replacement and improvement of koala rehabilitation equipment this year—building on the \$185,000 provided last year.

We invested more than \$3 million in koala conservation initiatives under the Saving our Species program, which has more than 30 partner organisations including councils, community groups and universities. Using trained detection dogs, we surveyed 450 sites for koalas in 15 burned national park areas of New South Wales. We partnered with Taronga Conservation Society Australia and developed a world-class professional development course to train vets in native wildlife care. In the third year of the strategy this year we are improving fire management approaches to protect koalas and koala habitats; learning from Aboriginal communities about protecting koala habitat; and developing a best practice planning guideline to ensure that developments are designed to avoid koala habitat and to limit indirect impacts on koalas. The Government is committed to supporting the recovery of biodiversity and the protection of threatened species in New South Wales following the unprecedented 2019-20 bushfire season. We will do this in a considered way that brings the community along with us. I commend the amended motion to the House.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (11:16:04): By leave: I support the motion and thank my Greens colleague the member for Balmain for raising this crucial issue. While we do not see many koalas in the electorates of Balmain and Newtown, the response we get from our communities—who are making sure that we are doing all we can to protect koalas, their habitat and all our native animals in New South Wales—is one of the most overwhelming. The horrific impacts of the summer's bushfires are still being felt in communities across our State today. As the motion originally noted, the bushfires across New South Wales burned more than five million hectares of land, destroying landscapes and killing over a billion native animals. We can no longer ignore the reality that we are living in a climate emergency, and we cannot wait for the current health pandemic to pass. We need to make sure that we are doing all we can to address the impacts of both the pandemic and the climate emergency at the same time.

The Greens support the motion and call on the Government to immediately protect all core koala hubs identified within the boundaries of the proposed Great Koala National Park. The motion notes the bushfires and also notes that the remaining unburnt habitat across New South Wales is of critical importance to enable native animal populations to recover. The motion notes the 42 recommendations from the recent parliamentary inquiry into koalas—chaired by my Greens colleague in the other place Ms Cate Faehrmann—and calls on the Government to take the recommendations seriously. It is absolutely crucial. My electorate office in Newtown has received direct contact from over 160 residents expressing their concerns about the future of koala populations in New South Wales. They worry that the next generation will not be able to see koalas in the wild.

The good people of the Newtown electorate have so much passion and care for the koala population and our precious native animals. As I said before, whenever there are stories about this we always receive an overwhelming response in support of making sure that we are protecting our precious native animals. Their concerns are clearly valid. After the devastating bushfires over the past summer, conservation scientists from the World Wildlife Fund [WWF] reported that as many as 10,000 koalas were killed, accounting for one-third of the koala population in the State. In the worst affected areas, like in northern New South Wales, up to 80 per cent of the koala population was killed. I hope that the recommendations of the inquiry are taken very seriously.

The Greens are 100 per cent committed to doing all that we can in this Parliament and in the community to protect our koala populations. I acknowledge The Greens member for Ballina when it comes to that work. I note that she was recently part of a formal donation of an infrared camera by WWF and the Koala company to assist local koala rescuers in her area. Explaining how this situation came about, Tamara wrote:

Three years ago Koala whisperer Maria Matthes realised that an infra-red camera would allow her and other wildlife rescuers to identify injured animals and monitor their health in the wild. She came to me and we approached the environment Minister who gave no assistance.

So I reached out to koala.com and fast forward 18 months, they in partnership with WWF donated \$22,000 for the camera. Maria is an incredible human being who works with our struggling Ballina koala population on a daily basis. This camera in her hands will save koala lives.

We are committed to ensuring that koala populations have the time to recover from the devastation we have seen in our communities across the State.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (11:20:19): In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Manly, Port Stephens, Tweed, Sydney and Newtown for their contributions. Most importantly, I acknowledge all of those in our community who have been working tirelessly to defend koala habitat and address chlamydia and the effect it is having on koala populations and who have been standing up for a safe climate to ensure their habitat is maintained in the future. The contributions from members have been broadly positive. The issue of chlamydia in koalas has been raised. While it is an important factor, we cannot use that as an excuse not to defend and protect koala habitat, in particular in areas where we know there are chlamydia-free populations. For example, there is evidence that the koala population in Campbelltown is chlamydia free. Their threat is not from a disease but from redevelopment and the encroachment on their habitat. The same is happening in south-west Sydney.

Habitat is critical and can be dealt with relatively easily. Chlamydia is harder to deal with. We must protect all of these areas throughout New South Wales, in particular where there are growing populations such as at Campbelltown and especially post the traumatic and devastating bushfires. The motion has been amended to make it palatable to both sides of Parliament. I agreed to do that because it is important that we come together around points that we are unified on. It is also important that we do not rest on our laurels. I do not intend to embarrass either the Labor Party or the Liberal-Nationals. We want significant action. The only step that the Government took was to say it would look very seriously at the recommendations of the inquiry.

Decade after decade there have been inquiries and discussions about koalas. The Government has agreed to look very seriously at the 42 recommendations but they must be implemented. We will ensure that the Government is held to account in that regard. I call on all members in Government and Opposition to ensure that we engage with the environment Minister and Cabinet so that those recommendations are pursued. I particularly call on the members for the electorates of Tweed, Manly and Goulburn, all of whom spoke eloquently about the issue. These matters need to be followed up, not just taken seriously but acted on.

The Greens are great supporters of the Great Koala National Park. We believe it is important to reserve these hubs so that we can defend and protect koalas. As I mentioned, the Office of Environment and Heritage has described the area around Coffs Harbour in particular as one containing a koala habitat of national significance. The Great Koala National Park would have 175,000 hectares of publicly owned State forest added to existing protected areas to form a 315 hectare reserve in the Coffs Harbour hinterland. It is very important that we take that forward. The Government does not have the same view and Labor was not supportive of the original motion. I hope today if we can come together and support the motion it will mark an important turning point where these matters are taken forward in a serious way and the recommendations of the important inquiry are carried out. We do not want to come back in the future to see that only half a dozen of the 42 recommendations have been implemented in piecemeal fashion. The House has laid down a challenge to the Government by adopting the motion. We want to take that forward in a positive, proactive way. I commend the motion to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

TAFE NSW

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (11:25:09): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes TAFE has provided a first-class education to hundreds of thousands of students, apprentices and trainees for over 130 years.
- (2) Commits to ensuring TAFE is properly resourced and remains a public education institution.
- (3) Recognises the future development of employment and advanced skills development must be addressed through TAFE.
- (4) Calls on the Government to expand subsidised courses and incentives for students, trainees and apprentices to enable greater access to TAFE, skills development and employment.

Investing in TAFE is investing in our future and our economy. It is investing in jobs and a better skilled, more prosperous nation. Investing in TAFE at this time also means we are investing in our economic recovery post-COVID. It is not an opportunity to save a few dollars in the budget, as the Government seems to think. Reducing funding to TAFE should not be seen as a way of saving money in the budget. It should be a way of expanding the budget through the skills process. We need a government with a long-term view, one that

understands that investing in TAFE today is investing in tomorrow's economy, investing in today's young people to build tomorrow's workforce. TAFE provides not only for young people but also for people who need to acquire new skills, to update their skills, to help them get into the workforce or to help them evolve. As part of that we need highly qualified teachers who are supported and guaranteed employment and are given the opportunity to produce their most professional work rather than be pushed away and leave.

While TAFE is one of our oldest educational institutions, founded in 1833, it is a modern organisation that is about building a modern workforce. Just because a training organisation is a little bit old does not mean it cannot be a modern organisation. If TAFE needs reform, let us get that reform happening. Let us have a look at the reform we need, take a bipartisan approach, work with the stakeholders: the Teachers Federation, the students, the industry groups and business. Let us all work together. I think all members would agree that if there is a place for reform then let us do it. We do not have to keep doing things exactly the same way. But we have to give up on this notion that any public organisation can always be run better by the private sector. That is not the case. We have a trusted, well-respected, highly regarded public institution with a great track record. No matter how much private industry might try to replicate it, it will never be as good as TAFE.

TAFE needs the support of the House to ensure that it will always be the number one provider of public education dealing with vocational and skills development. It needs to be part of the modern workforce that looks not only at the traditional tradies' roles but also the specialised skills in fields such as health care, environmental and sustainable infrastructure and building our green economy. TAFE can also be considered in that vein. There is a lot more to TAFE than just the trade skills. The Government understates the value and importance of TAFE, what it offers and the way it changes people's lives. It is not a second choice to university. The notion if you do not get into university you go to TAFE implies that TAFE offers a lesser valued course. It does not. TAFE is just as good as any other educational institution. People choose different pathways. We must provide the best possible pathway for people to acquire the skills they need for the vocation they pursue.

That is when we start talking about TAFE as an option that is equal to any other form of tertiary education. If we keep saying that it is the second chance, that it is the place to go for those who do not get into their first choice, then we are inadvertently saying that TAFE is not a place of first choice. We are then undervaluing the role of teachers and the TAFE system and the role of trades, skills and vocations. A modern workforce is not built around the old concept that those who want to learn a trade go to TAFE and those who want to learn a profession go to university. That is the old approach; that is the approach that this Government still seems to be wedded to. But TAFE offers just as many courses across a range of different professions as any other provider. If we look at what is happening around the world, we see that many European countries are experiencing a relative drop in university enrolments and an increase in enrolments in vocational systems that are the equivalent of TAFE. We need to learn from that approach, instead of simply seeing TAFE as an opportunity to save money in a budget this year.

We ask the Government to look at the bigger picture, because TAFE represents the opportunity to build a modern and resilient workforce. If we are looking for ways to get out post-COVID, TAFE is where it needs to happen. After a recent Federal Government announcement about building skills, I said on Twitter that I would like to see that happening in TAFE. We cannot put money into skills networks and not consider that TAFE has to be the first one. People here love TAFE. Everybody loves TAFE; everybody has a TAFE story. I do not for one moment think that anybody in this Chamber would have something negative to say about TAFE. But we need to make sure not only that we say positive things about TAFE, but also that we make every effort to ensure that TAFE remains as strong as possible.

I have stood up here many a time and spoken about the different numbers and statistics. I hope that there is a change in the Government's approach because from 2011 much fewer students have enrolled in TAFE. Over 5,000 teachers have been sacked from TAFE. A workforce survey showed that only 15 per cent of TAFE staff were happy. In other words, 85 per cent of the staff felt like their jobs were not secure. We do not want teachers to think that their jobs are not secure. We do not want students enrolling in TAFE, not knowing if it is going to continue to exist. We have an opportunity here to link the TAFE rebuild with professional development, upskilling and youth unemployment and to look to the jobs of the future. We can reform TAFE, but let us reform it in a way that does not just take money from it and look at the private sector. TAFE is the way of the future, as it has been for the past 130 years.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (11:32:27): I welcome the opportunity to contribute to debate on the motion of the member for Lakemba relating to TAFE NSW. I emphasise the view that TAFE is incredibly important and that the New South Wales Government is committed to TAFE as a world-class comprehensive public provider. This is made clear in the 2019-2020 budget, in which the Government's investment in TAFE grew to \$1.85 billion—an increase of 3.1 per cent. I have visited and had a good relationship with the TAFE campus on the northern beaches. As a member of this Government, I am proud of the valuable work that

TAFE NSW does in our communities to deliver the skills that are needed to support our economy. That is now more important than ever as we recover from the current COVID-19 crisis.

Over the past few months, TAFE NSW has led the way in responding to the challenges that we have faced. In April, the New South Wales Government launched 21 fee-free TAFE NSW short courses in areas such as medical administration, business and information technology to provide an opportunity for job seekers to upskill so that they are best placed to return to the workforce as soon as possible. Additionally, the courses support business owners to gain the skills they require in areas such as website design and social media to support and rebuild their businesses during this time. Due to the incredible uptake of those courses, 13 new courses were added in late April 2020 to replace courses that had reached enrolment capacity. In fact, on 28 May the Premier and Minister Lee announced that the courses had reached over 100,000 enrolments—an incredible result in such a short amount of time and an affirmation of the public's view of TAFE in New South Wales. I am delighted to hear that tens of thousands of the students who enrolled in the fee-free courses were studying at TAFE NSW for the very first time. The success of the initiative is a clear demonstration of the important role that TAFE NSW has had in the community.

But it is not only in responding to COVID-19 where the New South Wales Government is supporting our community through TAFE NSW. TAFE NSW is focused on helping communities recover from the devastating bushfires that began in November last year. It is providing significant support to those communities and businesses impacted by bushfire through the delivery of many fee-free courses in bushfire-affected areas across the State. TAFE NSW has worked with local communities to identify specific courses to be offered on a fee-free basis to support recovery. Between March and the end of June it has delivered 193 courses, including courses in first aid, chainsaw operations, construction induction white card and forklift licence. TAFE NSW has done everything possible to continue the delivery of those courses during the COVID-19 outbreak. Its modified face-to-face delivery includes implementation of social distancing rules and increased cleaning of equipment and tools. TAFE NSW will continue to play a strong role in the rebuilding and recovery process and will continue to adjust the training that is available in line with community needs.

The efforts that TAFE NSW has undertaken to respond to these crises are in addition to the existing commitments of the New South Wales Government to offer fee-free training throughout New South Wales. This includes the Mature Aged Worker Scholarship program, which provides 30,000 fee-free places over four years for people over the age of 35 who are currently unemployed or have been made redundant, or who are working for an employer that is closing down or undergoing significant structural adjustment. Eligible individuals can enrol in any Certificate II, III or IV qualification on the NSW Skills List offered by TAFE NSW. The scholarships provide vital support to people facing job uncertainty and unemployment as a result of COVID-19.

I am proud that the New South Wales Government, through TAFE NSW, has implemented the Women in Business program to help women upskill and build their careers. The program provides information topics on financial literacy and business startup skills, together with mentoring, networking and coaching opportunities. I am advised that as at 8 July 2020 over 6,475 female entrepreneurs have registered for the program, significantly exceeding its four-year target. The New South Wales Government continues to invest in TAFE NSW as a comprehensive public provider so that it can deliver the training that New South Wales needs now and into the future.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (11:37:26): I commend my good friend the member for Lakemba for moving this important motion. He is a proven school principal who has empowered many students and a professional educator who understands the power of the classroom to expand minds and open opportunities. Let us compare the member for Lakemba, with his passion for education, to those opposite. When the history of this Liberal Government is written, it is hard to imagine what disastrous policy decision will rank number one in terms of its long-term devastating impact. Will it be the Government's degradation of the environment? Perhaps. Will it be letting developers run rampant across Sydney? Maybe. Will it be the Government's obsession with privatisation? It could be. Or will it be its wilful, deliberate and long-term decimation of the TAFE sector? If I was a betting person, I would have to place my money on the destruction of TAFE.

Few policies have been more deliberate, more wide-sweeping and more consequential than the cutting of TAFE services across New South Wales. It is a task that this Government has undertaken with relish, gusto and enthusiasm. Its shameless pursuit of this policy from day one is enough to make anybody's stomach churn. TAFE should be the crown jewel of a smart, innovative and highly trained workforce. That was the case for generations. Tens of thousands of men and woman across New South Wales undertook their training in a TAFE system whose international reputation was second to none. Nowadays, sadly, one look at this State's TAFE system will show gutted campuses and empty halls and classrooms. Cuts to staffing numbers and courses and increased fees are the

policies that this Government has pursued and proudly advertised. The consequences of those policies are now evident and clear for all to see.

We have massive skills shortages in any number of industries. TAFE has one of the most casualised work forces in the country. Prospective students have fewer choices but are certainly paying a lot more in fees. The vacuum created by this Liberal-Nationals Government means that dodgy private providers have been left unchecked to rip off unsuspecting and vulnerable students. Access to quality vocational education should not be contingent on one's bank balance. Indeed, it has never been so important in this age of higher unemployment to have job seekers skilled up and job ready. They are skills not just for today and tomorrow but for the long-term future of our country and State. The irony is that at the time the Government should have been investing in TAFE, it was in fact doing the very opposite.

This Government is one that excels in window dressing. It has a Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education and a Minister for Jobs. Yet when it comes to substance, or something that actually helps those needing skills, this Government is found lacking. It is such a pity. But it is never too late. A good starting point to rebuild TAFE is to expand the number of courses at a cost people can afford, particularly during these troubling times. Recently, during the COVID-19 pandemic thousands of people took up the opportunity to complete a free TAFE course. That just goes to show how expensive and unattainable courses have become under this Liberal-Nationals Government.

Literally thousands of people were waiting for the opportunity to get workplace skills without breaking the budget. Labor knows and understands a robust TAFE is vital to the prosperity of our State and nation. The time for cutting, slashing and gutting is over. The time for investing and rebuilding is now. TAFE must be a vital part of our post COVID-19 economic recovery. I lay down this challenge to the Liberal-Nationals Government to save TAFE. It is not too late because only the weak do not change their minds.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (11:41:47): It is a pleasure to speak to the motion moved by the member for Lakemba, who is passionate about education. Members on this side of the House recognise that TAFE is incredibly important and a highly valued public education institution. We also recognise that TAFE plays a critical role in economic prosperity during the current skill shortage. I do not agree with paragraph (4) of the motion that calls on the Government to follow the Opposition's lead and commit to rebuilding TAFE. Quite frankly, the Labor Government left this Government with a dinosaur, that is, a TAFE from the Dickens' era when masters wore a cap and gown—a bit like the Clerks—and all they needed was a cane and a duster to throw at unruly students. It was just like something from the radio series *Yes, What?* with Dr Pym who used to throw the duster at Bottomly and Greenbottle. Members of the Opposition need to re-educate themselves with Australian radio drama.

Mr Jihad Dib: Will you send me a podcast?

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: I am not sure whether they are on podcast. Nonetheless this Government transformed TAFE from the dinosaur that Labor left us into a gazelle—nimble, flexible, twenty-first century digital, educational, vocational education training [VET]. We are very proud of that. Why does TAFE receive 80 per cent of the VET budget? Because we value TAFE and we know what it does for our communities. I am very proud that this Government is committed to supporting TAFE NSW as the gold standard of vocational education training right across the country. We in regional New South Wales recognise the value that TAFE brings to our communities. TAFE trains its students to get local jobs, not in basket weaving or pottery. I understand that those courses were important but we are training students to get real jobs in our communities, jobs that people need.

I am pleased to advise that the Government is investing hundreds of millions of dollars in capital projects for TAFE NSW. The brand new \$80 million TAFE NSW Centre of Excellence focused on construction will be built at the Kingswood campus and will train 700 students a year. An amount of \$61.7 million will be spent over the next four years for tranche three of the Connected Learning Centre program that will see eight new facilities rolled out across the State—Byron Bay, Bateman's Bay, Cobar, Hay, Jindabyne, Nambucca Heads, Tomaree and West Wyalong. A couple of years ago I saw the Connected Learning Centre [CLS] that opened at Yamba where there was never a TAFE. We are investing in communities that have not had a TAFE. That CLC is new and modern. It has virtual classrooms. Members of the Opposition have to move with the times and not stay in the Dickens era. Throw the duster at that member who is being very unruly.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): Order!

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: We do not like to be left in the Dickens era with the duster being thrown and the cane being waved at us which is what Labor left us with.

Mr Jihad Dib: You are not even leaving us with a duster.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): Order! The member for Lakemba will come to order.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: We have moved TAFE into the twenty-first century where students can learn remotely. They can learn in the workplace, which is what students and employers want and what this Government is delivering in New South Wales—a modern, robust, twenty-first century TAFE, not something that was left to us in the dinosaur era.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): I am glad the House is so excited about this topic, but I ask members, particularly those who have spoken or who plan to speak, to utilise the time they have to do so rather than to shout across the Chamber at one another. I allow some jest, but members are becoming a little unruly. I would appreciate it if we could all hear members' contributions.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (11:46:43): I support the motion moved by the member for Lakemba and acknowledge his knowledge of education. After the contribution of the member for Clarence I want to say that the true strength of TAFE was its trade-skilled teachers doing face-to-face training, particularly for apprentices. TAFE was strong because of the face-to-face contact with students to pass on the skills that the young, old or people transitioning needed. That is, and has always been, one of the great strengths of TAFE. I think Connected Learning Centres have a place but a transition to that model must not undermine the face-to-face component of the TAFE model.

The Minister, the member for Lakemba and I know that a remote learning environment is not straightforward. It is not the normal or preferred teaching approach with apprentices, for example. A teacher-led face-to-face learning was the source of quality outcomes and we do not want that system undermined. Learning assessment strategies vary for different learners and apprentices, in particular, may struggle with an online approach. As long as the Government gets the balance right and has a TAFE building with classrooms, a teacher teaching skills, and an online model in some areas, it could be successful. Joanne McCarthy, a local award winning journalist with the *Newcastle Herald* who lives on the Central Coast, wrote about class issues. She stated:

But the way these spruikers of vocational training have been doing it is insulting to anyone with half a brain who's watched, despairing, as governments of all stripes, over years, have trashed that education sector, or where the sector itself has kicked own goals.

"We have to address the cultural and financial bias that treats VET (vocational education training) like a second class citizen," said Business Council of Australia chief executive Jennifer Westacott—

Westacott was a high school classmate of Ms McCarthy. She then writes:

NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian weighed in with: "We want universities and VET to be thought of in the same sentence for workers looking to prepare themselves for the high value jobs of the future."

She writes that the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education Dr Geoff Lee, who is a former TAFE teacher and university lecturer:

... repeated the "cultural bias" refrain, saying there was a "cultural bias towards university", as if the problem with falling TAFE enrolments is an attitudinal thing alone, and we, the people, are snobs.

How about we frame it this way.

The public lost confidence in the vocational sector when governments supported the introduction of private colleges for "competition", when that led to extraordinary roting of the system and students, and when "diplomas" and "certificates" were thrown around like confetti but didn't lead to jobs or careers.

How about some honesty about NSW TAFE "reforms" resulting in wholesale closure of regional TAFE colleges, the collapse of courses on offer, the sacking of staff and a dramatic jump in course costs for students, many of whom once saw TAFE as a way to get ahead, often after difficult childhoods where their schooling took a battering?

Ms McCarthy goes on to write that the strength of TAFE was in its value in the community, not necessarily in models and all of those other things that politicians tend to talk about. I agree with her.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (11:50:55): This morning I speak to the member for Lakemba's motion on TAFE investment. I acknowledge that the Government is of course dedicated to investing in TAFE across New South Wales so that it can deliver the training that New South Wales needs right across the State. I am very proud to come from a family full of teachers. My mother, both my grandparents on my mother's side, my mother's sister and my dad's sister were all great educators.

The New South Wales Government has invested \$285 million over four years to fund 100,000 fee-free apprenticeships to address skills shortages in the areas of significant demand in New South Wales. I acknowledge the Minister is in the Chamber, himself a former TAFE teacher. These fee-free apprenticeships address critical areas of skills shortage in electro-technology, carpentry, plumbing and other construction by encouraging young people to take up a trade. As a result of the COVID-19 situation we are in it is now more important than ever to ensure that New South Wales continues to have the pipeline of skilled workers in critical areas to assist in our

recovery. The 100,000 fee-free apprenticeships will ensure that we have the plumbers, mechanics and electricians needed to deliver the New South Wales Government's record infrastructure program.

The Government has also put into place a requirement that 20 per cent of trade roles on major construction projects go to apprenticeships and apprentices themselves. TAFE NSW is leading the way when it comes to training apprentices, training approximately 80 per cent of apprentices right across the State. I understand that this is a far higher proportion than the national average for other TAFEs across the rest of Australia. I will give members some examples. TAFE NSW trains 98 per cent of electrical apprentices in New South Wales compared to the national TAFE average of 75 per cent across the rest of the country. TAFE NSW trains 95 per cent of plumbers compared to TAFE's average of 77 per cent across the rest of the country. TAFE NSW trains 92½ per cent of the apprentices in the State compared to the TAFE average of only 56 per cent across the rest of the country. With this Government's support TAFE NSW is leading the way across the nation.

Just before the COVID-19 pandemic took hold the Labor MPs on the Central Coast were claiming that the TAFE campus in Gosford was at risk of being removed or reduced in size. The New South Wales Government is 100 per cent committed to TAFE remaining in Gosford. TAFE has had a home in Gosford for over 70 years and will continue to achieve strong results for many more to come. Between 2017 and 2019 overall enrolments increased by 4 per cent at Gosford, Ourimbah and Wyong campuses. I am proud to say that over this same period there were increases in full-time equivalent staff numbers of approximately 8½ per cent. I repeat: Enrolments are up 4 per cent and staff numbers are up 8½ per cent. For the period to 1 September 2020 alone some 12 new courses have been made available to Central Coast students for the first time.

The future of TAFE in Gosford is brighter than ever. The untruthful claims by the Central Coast Labor MPs only serve to denigrate TAFE's reputation in our community and discourage Central Coast locals from using its campuses. As I said, the New South Wales Government is investing \$285 million over four years to fund 100,000 fee-free apprenticeships to address skills shortages in areas of significant demand in New South Wales. The future of TAFE is brighter than ever. I say to those members who suggest pop-up TAFEs that they should go and look at a connected learning class like I did at Gosford TAFE. These classes are actually working with students in Coffs Harbour with regards to real estate courses. The future of TAFE is absolutely brighter than ever.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (11:55:00): By leave: I support the motion moved by the member for Lakemba and I acknowledge his passion and knowledge in the education sector. I concur that TAFE has provided a first-class education to hundreds of thousands of students, apprentices and trainees over the past 130 years. The institution of TAFE used to be about working class education and has always been about opportunities for those who are marginalised or disadvantaged. TAFE should always be about education and not about lifelong grind or lasting debt. TAFE is an integral part of our economic infrastructure. Decreased funding has resulted in TAFE being put out of reach for many students and workers.

In 2019 the New South Wales Government introduced the new One TAFE NSW program, aimed to modernise and streamline the TAFE experience. In comparison to 2012 at least 175,000 fewer students are enrolled in TAFE as well as 500 fewer staff being employed. It is plain to see what the New South Wales Government intended when it said it would streamline TAFE. Unbelievably, so far over \$6 million has been spent on numerous consultancy reports, and the best that six million can come up with is to cut funding to TAFE. My electorate has been personally affected by cuts to TAFE.

In 2015 a decision to move the popular automotive paint and panel course from Mount Druitt to other campuses such as Campbelltown and Ultimo disadvantaged constituents in my area from accessing this course. In fact, many automotive industries surrounded the TAFE campus because of the courses that were present at the time. Many of those industries are now struggling to get skilled employees or trainees. The cost of travel alone to reach the new campuses made it impossible for many students to participate in these courses. I will never understand that decision. To take a popular course with over 180 students attending from the local area and move it to another campus proved to be only detrimental both to teaching staff at Mount Druitt TAFE and those students from my local area who wish to make a career in the automotive industry.

Funding cuts have resulted in TAFEs increasing fees for the training they offer, with students having to pay far too much and being put off pursuing careers. In 2019 a NSW Business Chamber workforce survey found that less than half of New South Wales businesses are unable to find and employ people with the necessary skills for the job. To me this is a no-brainer. Increasing funding to TAFE increases the availability of courses, decreases fees for students, employs more teachers and gives us a population with increased skills. Employers will be able to offer jobs to our young people and invariably we will see less unemployment and an improvement in our economy.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (11:59:26): By leave: I appreciate the House allowing me to participate in this debate. At the outset I acknowledge my colleague and shadow Minister, the member for

Lakemba, who is very passionate about TAFE. In fact, all Opposition members are passionate about it. The Government has decimated TAFE. Regardless of the Government's implementation of pop-up TAFEs and TAFE connecting with the community, this Government has absolutely decimated a generation of young people by truncating their courses by a year or two. In particular, disadvantaged young people have been adversely affected because, as the member for Mount Druitt said, the Government has cut very popular courses.

TAFE is emblematic for everyone, regardless of students having completed tertiary education or a master's degree. Many students enrol in TAFE at entry level to lay the foundation for a career change or to establish a career in the workforce. TAFE training has been absolutely pivotal in establishing careers, particularly for women. I urge the Government, particularly at this critical point in time of our economy with double-digit underemployment in regional communities and in western Sydney, south-west Sydney, inner-west Sydney—Sydney areas represented by Labor Opposition members such as the member for Lakemba, the member for Mount Druitt and the member for Macquarie Fields—to recognise that people are suffering.

Young people need opportunities. In the early 1980s and 1990s my peers suffered because of high rates of unemployment. The TAFE system helped all of those people to enter the workforce by enrolling in trade training and connecting with employers. It is absolutely critical for the Government to coordinate through a program with key government agencies engaged in all forms of transport, customer service and finance to support apprenticeships and cadetships. The parents of young people whose courses have been cut are suffering also because they have lost their jobs. They are struggling to pay the rent or mortgage and household bills. Families are having a very difficult time. The Government should implement a TAFE opportunity program during the COVID-19 crisis to provide an increased number of TAFE places for young people, especially those from the areas of western and south-western Sydney.

In the State 2019 election campaign Labor supported TAFE and we will continue to do so. Labor's policy was to rebuild TAFE. Our shadow Minister espoused Labor's excellent TAFE policies. We can improve the lives of young people by coordination and providing opportunities. In my community, which does not have a TAFE college, there are high double-digit unemployment rates and young people have to travel to St George, Ultimo and Bankstown to attend TAFE. Their employment often prevents them from attending their TAFE classes because of the added difficulty of travelling across suburbs to attend a TAFE. More opportunities are also needed for practicum associated with TAFE courses. I urge the Government at this time to announce an effective and coordinated program to enable young people to study at TAFE.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (12:03:34): By leave: I too wish to contribute to this important debate about TAFE and to recognise that for more than 100 years TAFE has made a sensational and remarkable contribution to the development of vocational education and training [VET] in trades, business and personal as well as community care. TAFE continues to be an outstanding education and training provider not just in New South Wales but right across the country. There is no better TAFE than TAFE NSW.

I send a big thank you to all our 10,000 TAFE teachers, who have made remarkable efforts especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the last two weeks of the semester and in the second semester TAFE was paused. In that period 7,000 TAFE teachers upgraded their skills in digital literacy and the delivery of courses through distance education and training or in combination with modified face-to-face instruction. Their aptitude and enthusiasm were second to none. They embraced the challenge. We have all had to change the way we work. The TAFE teachers and staff at 130-odd campuses have made a remarkable effort and their efforts continue.

The Government is committed to TAFE remaining a comprehensive public provider of skills and training. The Government is very proud not only of its capital investment but also of its investment in scholarships, such as 100,000 fee-free apprenticeships, 70,000 fee-free traineeships and a whole range of courses offered on a fee-free basis. The Government certainly values the VET industry and wishes to continue the link between TAFE students and industry in the future. The Government recognises the need to make sure that TAFE is as relevant for the next hundred years as it was 100 years ago. TAFE has accomplished remarkable achievements over the past 100 years. Currently TAFE is undergoing a modernisation program, which presents challenges over a multi-campus environment combining 10 institutions and with more than 400,000 students. The Government is working very hard to deliver not just the best TAFE in Australia but the world. I commend the teachers and staff for their remarkable efforts.

TAFE will continue to strongly interact with industry. As members who preceded me in this debate said, undertaking TAFE courses should be considered not only by students in year 12 but also by year 10 students as an equal and alternative option to attending a university. As we all know there is a bias in the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank system, which is set up for academic achievement. The Government is striving to reverse that position. Currently the Government is running a pilot program involving 24 schools throughout south-western Sydney and the North Coast to gauge how we can interact with students, parents, careers advisers, principals and

industry employers and enable students to make an informed decision on perhaps a career in vocational education and training or a career in higher education. The Government wants to make TAFE and VET training an equal alternative to university courses in offering students a rewarding career in the workforce. In conclusion, I congratulate the member for Lakemba on his support for TAFE. I am sure members on both sides of this House salute the absolutely great work that TAFE has done and will continue to do in the future.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (12:07:39): By leave: I thank the House for allowing me to participate in this debate. I am in favour of the motion and congratulate the member for Lakemba on initiating the debate. TAFE must play an important role in the future economic development of our State, especially as we recover from COVID-19 and the current recession. I join the member for Lakemba in calling for the expansion of subsidised TAFE courses. We must encourage people to develop their skills and enable them to do so.

The reality is that, thanks to this Government's mishandling of the skills sector, we are staring down the barrel of a skills crisis in many areas, including in early childhood education and care. We know that early childhood education is an important factor in later academic success. We also know that a lack of access to quality and affordable early childhood education and care is one of the key barriers in limiting the economic participation of women. We also know that we are facing a major shortage of available early childhood educators. In a submission to the Productivity Commission the Australian Childcare Alliance stated:

... the early learning sector is facing a **recruitment crisis**: there is a critical shortage of qualified, competent candidates for the positions of early childhood educators and Early Childhood Teachers, and services are struggling to fill these roles.

According to the Commonwealth Department of Employment's labour market research report released in April last year, the number of children using long day care services in New South Wales in June 2018 was 232,760, which is an increase of 15 per cent over the previous five years. The number of nought to four-year-olds in New South Wales is projected to grow by 7 per cent from 2,016 to 2,021. Clearly the demand for early childhood education and care will increase in the short-to-medium term.

The report notes that regional employers recruiting for early childhood teachers and educators have struggled to fill vacancies. The Australian Childcare Alliance identified the vocational training framework that services the sector as "failing in its role to deliver an adequate pool of highly skilled graduates". This must be addressed. The Victorian Government added two more early childhood qualifications to the free TAFE course list this year and has made the diploma of early childhood education and care tuition free for eligible students. This encourages people looking to start their career, re-skill or skill-up to consider pursuing a career in the early childhood sector. It is supported by scholarships for bachelor degrees, postgraduate qualifications and Aboriginal pathways relating to the early childhood sector. I reiterate the member for Lakemba's call for the Government to expand subsidised courses and incentives that enable greater access to TAFE, skills development and employment. The Government should follow the Victorian example by including early childhood education in any expansion. It is the right thing to do for the State, for the early childhood education sector, for the economy and for families.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (12:11:14): In reply: It is very clear that everyone has an enormous amount of respect for TAFE, the value of TAFE and its importance. While we will disagree on certain things we certainly can agree on the fact that there needs to be an acceptance that TAFE is the premier provider of skills and vocational education. It is on an equal footing with any other tertiary education provider. I thank the members for Manly, Macquarie Fields, Clarence, Wyong, Terrigal, Mount Druitt, Canterbury, Charlestown and the Minister for their contributions to this debate. I will address some of the points raised. The member for Manly spoke of the 3.1 per cent increase in the TAFE budget over the last year. I think the increase is great. What he did not mention, unfortunately, is the fact that 24 per cent had been cut from the budget in the four previous years. If my maths is correct that still leaves a deficit of about 20 per cent. If there is a 3 per cent increase the Government still owes TAFE 20 per cent to return it to the 2012 levels.

Everybody has said that the fee-free courses that we have spoken of are very good. Members of the Government have said that there has been a good response, 100,000 people have signed up. They are booked out. If we ever needed evidence of just how valuable TAFE is and how much faith people have in the TAFE system it is that very fact. When you take away the obstacles for enrolment, people come in droves. I believe that is evidence for what we have been saying; if you take away the obstacles, make it free and something that is practical people will do it. It is an important acknowledgement. Having an extra 100,000 students at TAFE is a fabulous thing, but I think we can do even better than that. But what is really important is the message that it sends that if you take away the obstacles people will enrol in TAFE.

There was discussion around the connected learning centres [CLCs]. I will say this about CLCs, it is not my original idea, but CLCs can actually do well on a TAFE site because they support the delivery of education, enhance it and augment it. There are a lot of things that can happen. If there is a connected learning centre that is not on a TAFE site then what you have is an internet café without the coffee. I am happy for the Minister to use

that phrase because I have publicly said that CLCs should be on TAFE sites because it is about the enhancement and the technology. The Minister can spin it whichever way he likes because one of the members spoke about basket weaving courses. Out of interest I looked for a basket weaving course. I ask, through the chair, that the Minister remain silent.

I kept hearing members of the Government say they made reforms because of a basket weaving course, but there is no such course. What they might need is to enrol in a spinning course, because I think there is some spin going on there. The point is clear but those opposite continue to interject because I am making my point. Let me make it clear: We have 140,000 fewer apprentices, TAFE could be the place. We have a skill shortage crisis, TAFE could be the place. We have people who believe in TAFE across the Chamber, TAFE could be the place. What we need is a Government that puts its money where its mouth is and makes sure that TAFE is well resourced. [*Time expired.*]

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

AUSTRAC ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING AND COUNTER TERRORISM FUNDING CUSTOMER ID AND VERIFICATION RULE

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (12:16:04): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges on 28 May 2020, AUSTRAC announced a change to their Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Funding Customer ID and Verification Rule to help those experiencing family and domestic violence to open separate bank accounts to enable their financial independence.
- (2) Notes under the change, banks and other regulated businesses can use alternative ways to verify a customer's identity when they cannot provide a driver's licence, birth certificate or other accepted form of identification.
- (3) Recognises the significant role of the Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce in delivering the rule change, taking inspiration from the Bank of Israel's supportive model for domestic violence victims.
- (4) Congratulates Jillian Segal, AM, Jillian Broadbent, AC, and the Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce [AICC] CEO, Michelle Blum, on championing this important reform since it was raised during the 2018 AICC Women Leaders Trade Mission to Israel.

On 2 June I moved a motion in this House that on 28 May AUSTRAC, which is the Australian Government agency responsible for protecting our financial systems from crime, had changed its anti-money laundering and counterterrorism customer ID and verification rule. It was to help those experiencing family and domestic violence to do a very practical thing—to open up a separate bank account to enable those men and women to have financial independence. Under that change banks and other regulated financial businesses can use alternative ways to verify a customer's identity when they cannot provide a driver's licence, birth certificate or other forms of usually accepted identification.

In that motion I wanted to acknowledge the significant role of the Australia Israel Chamber of Commerce in delivering the change and acknowledge that it was drawn from the Bank of Israel's model of support for family and domestic violence in Israel. I further want to congratulate Jillian Segal, AM, Jillian Broadbent, AC, and the AICC CEO Michelle Blum for championing this important reform. It came from a trade mission that I made with the AICC with other women in 2018. It was the AICC women leaders trade mission to Israel. It was fantastic to recently hear that this important practical change was enacted after months of work by the AICC. I did want to call them out for their important role in ensuring that this change happened. It is ultimately to practically support victims, whether they are male or female, of domestic and family violence here in Australia.

Israel is acclaimed as a leader in innovation enterprise. We did go to Israel, not necessarily with this outcome in mind. We wanted to experience Israel firsthand. For me it was my third visit. It was to bring back ideas and insights. Only an immersive trip can make that happen. One of the ideas leading to this change followed a meeting with the Bank of Israel. It is replicating their model for supporting victims of domestic and family violence. We all know in this Chamber that when a victim is fleeing a violent situation it is often impossible for them to collect their identification documents. In fact, in some cases those documents are deliberately withheld by the perpetrator of domestic and family violence. We must remember that financial abuse is a form of domestic and family violence. Having a new bank account, which this change enables, independent of a domestic violence perpetrator, is essential for that victim to set up a new life and become financially independent.

Proving your identity to set up a new bank account without the usual identification documents is very difficult. It is a practical and real barrier to these victims setting up a new life and future beyond that abuse. After we returned from the mission the AICC brought together a working group with the four major banks in Australia to investigate whether there could be an adoption of the Israel model by Australia. Out of that came this regulatory change, which as I said is a flexible approach to establishing customer identity in certain circumstances.

I cannot emphasise enough that it is a small change in many ways, but it is such a major, life-changing adjustment if a victim is in circumstances where there is financial abuse. There was consultation—that is why it took a little while—with the financial sector and community organisations including family violence services, community legal services and financial counselling services, many of which offer frontline services to victims of domestic and family violence. I commend all of those organisations for their great work in landing this small but so impactful change, and for making a reality this idea that the group I was a part of brought back from its Israel trade mission.

I add that the New South Wales Government has played a critical role in stepping up support for family and domestic violence victims. It came with the very inception of a Minister who holds that title. Pru Goward, who used to sit in this House, did a lot of work over the many years in which she held that portfolio to not only do the immediate things needed to support those victims but do many things beyond that. Indeed, when I served as Attorney General in this Parliament one of the most important things I was able to do was lead our nation in making sure that apprehended domestic violence orders [ADVOs] could be enforced across States and Territories.

We had a practical problem where ADVOs in one State were not recognised for enforcement in another State or Territory. You can imagine the incredible impact—the painful and practical impact—that had on victims if they had to flee the State to preserve their own and their families' lives. They would not have the protection of those ADVOs. That step to lead the nation, which then led to other States and Territories making sure there was mutual recognition, as I would call it, was such an important part of the small contribution I was able to make. But there are many other things, and these are even more important in the light of COVID, as we know.

Home is a safe place for many of us. But home is not a safe place for the victims of family and domestic violence. Out of COVID they have found themselves more and more surrounded by that lack of safety. That is why some of the things we have done in this Parliament are so important—why the supporting services have been stepped up with funding, with legislative changes and with temporary accommodation. There are many millions of dollars, which I will not enumerate individually here, that have gone into supporting those victims who need our support, particularly critically at this time. This is a small but vast change to banking regulation that will so help our victims of family and domestic violence set up financial independence, which is the beginning of a new and bright future for them and their families.

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (12:23:29): I thank the member for her motion on this very important matter. As stated in paragraph (1) of her motion, on 28 May 2020 the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre [AUSTRAC] announced a change to its Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Funding Customer ID and Verification Rule. The change enables victims of domestic and family violence to use alternative documents for identification when they are opening up a bank account. These important changes will allow banks to use alternative methods to verify a customer's identity while still maintaining due diligence. Financial abuse is a serious form of family and domestic violence experienced by over two million Australians over their lifetime, especially experienced by women. I commend AUSTRAC for working with the Australian Banking Association, the Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce NSW and community stakeholders to reach this valuable outcome.

The New South Wales Government has a tough stance on perpetrators of domestic and family violence [DFV] and has invested a record amount of money to support victims and to help keep them safe. Having financial independence is essential for DFV victims to start a new life after fleeing abusive situations. The Premier's priority to reduce by 25 per cent the number of domestic violence reoffenders in New South Wales by 2023 is critically important to reduce the scourge of DFV in our communities. I thank the Attorney General and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence for his work to change attitudes to DFV and reduce the occurrence of DFV.

The New South Wales Government has invested a record \$431 million over four years to tackle DFV through a range of initiatives including funding for 84 women's refuges to provide crisis accommodation and support to women, with or without children, who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness; and expanding the Staying Home Leaving Violence program to 33 sites across New South Wales. The program works with the NSW Police Force to remove perpetrators from family homes so that victims and their children can stay safely at home, and also provides a range of support services including improving home security, managing finances and helping with the legal process. The Government has introduced the Immediate Needs Support Package to provide financial assistance paid directly to victims, with the average time taken to provide payment being 11 days, against a service level standard of 15 working days. The Government has also introduced tenancy reforms to provide better protection for victims of DFV when leaving abusive relationships, giving victims certainty they will not be penalised in future rental applications.

Victims of financial abuse are vulnerable to homelessness. The New South Wales Government is working to improve the prevention of homelessness and its response to it. The Premier's priority to reduce street homelessness across New South Wales by 50 per cent by 2025 is an ambitious and important goal to help place

almost 1,300 people sleeping rough into secure and stable housing. I thank the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services for his work and his Housing First approach, which has seen 2,750 people housed during COVID. The New South Wales Government has committed more than \$1 billion to homelessness services over the next four years, including \$61 million of new funding to implement the NSW Homelessness Strategy, which focuses on identifying vulnerable people early, and providing better support and services. The AUSTRAC regulation change is a major step forward in supporting DFV victims so that they can better achieve financial independence and avoid the possibility of homelessness. I commend the motion.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:27:57): I thank the member for Vaucluse for her motion and I acknowledge the work she has undertaken in the intervening period between the trade mission to Israel in 2018 and her work alongside the Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce and leading Australian businesswomen to support this initiative in our community. It is clear from conversations I have had with the member that this is an issue that may seem quite minor to many people—it might seem like a small rule change—but at the end of the day it is something that will inextricably and substantially impact the capacity of women who are trying to escape domestic or family violence, and empower them to be able to do so. These rule changes are significant. I acknowledge the work of the member for Vaucluse in not just discussing this but in actually working to initiate and support it.

As the member mentioned earlier, in May Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre [AUSTRAC] announced a change to its Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Funding Customer ID and Verification Rule to enable victims of domestic and family violence to provide alternative documents for identification when opening up a bank account. These changes will give bank staff the flexibility they need to use alternative measures to verify a customer's identity in the case of those experiencing family and domestic violence while still maintaining the due diligence processes they need when they suspect a customer is not who they claim to be.

We are all aware of the scourge of domestic and family violence in our communities. It occurs in every community. Financial abuse is insidious in its nature in that it is often unseen and unable to be addressed. It is experienced by over two million Australians during their lifetime, with 63 per cent of women experiencing financial stress because of financial abuse. It can be perpetuated over long periods, often many decades. It can force people to stay in abusive relationships because they do not have the means and capacity to support themselves. Often people can be prevented from participating in the workforce, holding their own bank accounts and developing their own superannuation and supports. Women are forced to remain in abusive relationships for decades, possibly into their elderly years, because they do not have the financial capacity to break free.

One of the Premier's Priorities is reducing domestic violence reoffending. The Government has strongly supported the drive to reduce domestic violence and support victims and survivors of domestic and family violence in New South Wales. The Premier outlined reducing domestic violence reoffending as one of her priorities, with the aim to reduce domestic violence reoffenders by 25 per cent by 2023. There has already been progress and improvement in these areas, thanks to the commitment and energy of the frontline workers serving our communities. The New South Wales Government will continue to tackle the crime of domestic and family violence in our communities and the underlying attitudes that perpetuate it.

Our Watch has been spoken about in this place before. I acknowledge the Government's participation as of July 2019 in Our Watch, which is the national organisation working for the prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia. The decision to participate was made to build on our existing efforts to drive nationwide change to prevent domestic violence and to protect women and children. This has been raised with me in my community by the Lower North Shore Domestic Violence Network. Local organisations such as Mary's House and the Women's Community Shelters are trying to expand access for women fleeing domestic and family violence. I thank the member for Vaucluse for her motion and give it my full support.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (12:32:07): In reply: I again commend the work that has been undertaken to bring about a practical change to the lives of family and domestic violence victims. In May this year a change was announced to the customer identification and verification rule that will enable victims of family and domestic violence—who can be men and women—where they cannot produce a driver licence or birth certificate or where they show a different address so that banks and other regulated financial institutions can use other ways to verify their customer's identity. This power will enable those men and women who have been abused to start a new life, set up a new bank account, take on new financial obligations and keep part of the wealth to support them in their new way of living and into the future and keep it safe from the eyes and fingers of their abusers.

Financial abuse is a form of family and domestic violence. Shockingly, it will be experienced by over two million Australians during their lifetime. It should be remembered that 63 per cent of women experience financial stress as a result of financial abuse. It can take many forms. What often happens is an abuser uses violence and

intimidation to restrict access to a person's bank accounts and prevents them from working or accessing benefits or reduces their wherewithal to access the money they need for themselves or their children. This rule change will give victims the opportunity to set up a bank account whether or not they have the usual forms of identification

This measure came about as a result of a trade mission in 2018, of which I was a member, together with other women, hosted by the Australia Israel Chamber of Commerce. Women leaders from across business and professions attended. This was the particular initiative we took forward after returning to Sydney. It was not necessarily something that we sought out. Like a number of things in life when one travels and is open to new ideas and experiences, it came from a conversation. I remember the meeting. I was sitting in a room with some senior people from the Bank of Israel talking about how they implemented this initiative. A number of women in the room looked at one another and said, "That is amazing. We are going to go home and do something about this." It is a simple administrative change—although it took two years to make it happen. It did happen because some important people pushed it. Like most things in life, one has to push, push, push to make change.

I thank the Australian Banking Association, the Australia Israel Chamber of Commerce, the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre [AUSTRAC], which is the government agency that protects our financial system, and all the other stakeholders who consulted on this change to make it a reality. It gives power back to victims who feel they have no power. Through establishing new bank accounts, it gives them the opportunity to build a new life, which ultimately means they can do more than survive. They can thrive and build themselves a brighter future.

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

Motion agreed to.

GENDER PAY GAP

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (12:36:49): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Recognises women still earn 14 per cent less than their male counterparts and pay equity is a gendered issue.
- (2) Acknowledges 89 per cent of nurses are female and the Government's wage freeze will disproportionately hurt women.
- (3) Congratulates nurses and midwives who are the front line of the New South Wales COVID-19 pandemic response and acknowledges that a wage freeze is no way to thank them.
- (4) Condemns the Government for its wage freeze that disproportionately impacts women, nurses, teachers, child protection and other frontline public sector workers

Every way you look at it, every way you cut it, women lose, especially during the COVID pandemic: women in unpaid labour, women at work, women in education, women who earn less superannuation, women as carers, women with disabilities and women in disadvantaged communities. Women take up the frontline caring roles, as is very evident now, especially the nurses and midwives, and the teachers who are putting together online resources so students can continue learning at home. Those workers are on the front line caring for us and propping up the education system. They step into that space, again where predominantly women are impacted. They work in the domestic violence and child protection sectors and with vulnerable people who require our support. Many of our frontline public sector workers feel abandoned by the Government. They are very surprised that rather than receiving a wage increase in line with the consumer price index they got a wage freeze, which is effectively a wage cut.

Gender pay equity is spoken of by many. There is a lot of good work in this space, particularly by Emma Dawson from Per Capita and Professor Rae Cooper. I encourage people to look at some of their work. The gender pay gap measures the difference between the average earnings of women and men in the workforce. It is not a case of two people being paid differently for work of the same or comparable value, which is actually unlawful. That is the matter of equal pay. The gender pay gap is an internationally established measure of women's position in the economy in comparison to that of men. It is the result of the social and economic factors that combine to reduce women's earning capacity, which happens over their lifetime from the time that they are young. Many factors influence the gender pay gap, including conscious and unconscious discrimination and bias in hiring and pay decisions.

Women and men work in different industries and different jobs, and female-dominated industries and jobs usually offer lower wages. There is a lack of workplace flexibility to accommodate caring and other responsibilities, especially in very senior roles. Women have higher rates of part-time, casual and insecure work. Women spend more time out of the workforce while they undertake caring responsibilities, whether with children or ageing parents, and we know that that impacts women's career progression and opportunities. So women are disproportionately impacted by their share of unpaid caring and domestic work as well. The gender pay gap starts

when women first enter the workforce. A combination of factors impact women's lifetime economic security or insecurity. As a result, women are likely to earn less than men over their lifetime, are less likely to advance their careers as far as men and are less likely than men to accumulate superannuation and savings. They are also more likely to live in poverty in their old age.

In Homelessness Week it is absolutely imperative to acknowledge that the fastest growing percentage of people experiencing homelessness are women over the age of 50, closely followed by women and children who are seeking to escape situations of domestic violence. It is particularly important to note that in this week and to demand that the Government address that particular issue. It is also absolutely imperative, during the pandemic and the uncertainty of these times, to acknowledge that 89 per cent of nurses are women. Therefore, the Government's wage freeze—the public service wage cut—disproportionately hurts women. It is absolutely imperative at this point in time, as we thank our nurses, midwives and all of those frontline workers during the pandemic response, to make sure that we acknowledge that they are in no way remunerated for the work that they do. We can say thank you, but they are just words. It is appalling that the wage freeze—the public service wage cuts—will impact those very people who we expect to protect us and care for us in these uncertain times. I look forward to hearing some of my colleagues outlining, with some ferocity, some of the other issues that need to be addressed today.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (12:43:55): The gender pay gap is an unfortunate reality in Australia. The Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] and the Workplace Gender Equality Agency both show that in every industry and occupational category in Australia there is a gender pay gap favouring men working full-time over women working full-time. Australia's current national gender pay gap, as calculated by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency using data from the ABS, is just under 14 per cent. That is the reality of the pay gap before COVID-19 but, of course, that is no excuse. As the member for Blue Mountains pointed out while moving the motion, women have more of the casual jobs in our economy and more jobs in the tourism and hospitality sectors. Consequently, COVID-19 is having an even more dramatic impact on their work security and financial circumstances and has probably exacerbated that pay gap inequity.

As a woman with two kids, I have personally watched this issue. I know what it feels like. I am proud of what this Government is doing to lead the way when it comes to our own workforce in the public sector. One of the Premier's Priorities is for a world-class public sector. It is led by the Public Service Commission. This is an example of the New South Wales Government closing that gender pay gap. At 2.2 per cent the gender pay gap in the New South Wales public service is significantly smaller, as members would now know, than the gender pay gap evidently is—citing those ABS figures—nationally and across the State. The priority that our Premier has articulated commits to increasing the proportion of women in senior leadership roles to 50 per cent in the government sector by 2025. As of last year 40.3 per cent of senior leadership roles in the New South Wales public sector workforce were held by women, which was up from 38.7 per cent in 2018. That shows the positive and practical implementation of a policy when it is brought up to that level of leadership, examination and priority where the Premier personally owns it.

This makes the New South Wales public sector more progressive than the private sector where, unfortunately, women hold just over a quarter—30.07 per cent—of board directorships on the ASX 200 companies register at the end of last year. So we are leading the way when it comes to the public sector. I am proud of that because we can set an example. As a Government we are committed to ensuring that 100 per cent of roles across the New South Wales Government can be made flexible on an "if not, why not?" basis. That is a good way to approach these things because it often requires a consideration of personal circumstances and situations. Research has shown consistently that implementing a flexible work hours schedule increases employees' productivity. It can attract talented employees whose particular circumstances make flexible work attractive to them. It really incentivises those people who have that flexibility to make a greater effort and to enjoy their job. Therefore, whether they know it or not, they do a better job because they are put in circumstances that support their personal lives.

I know that to be the truth. I have had experience of both in my work life. I was living in New York City when I had my first son and I had to go back to full-time work after six weeks of maternity leave. I found that incredibly hard. We were living in a city where we did not have family. It was really only the support of my husband that made it possible for me to continue, but there was some strain that came from that. I have to say that when I came back to Australia and had my second child—my daughter, who is now 18—I was in a job where that flexibility was afforded to me. At that point, working three days a week enabled me to go back to work for a time. It made a difference to my family life and my mental and physical wellbeing to be able to work flexibly after her birth. There is more work to be done; there is no question about that. Women are being more affected by the pandemic at the moment, particularly economically. We had a debate in the House about TAFE this morning. Women represent approximately 65 per cent of the enrolments in TAFE NSW's 21 fee-free short courses that were offered by the Government as a really practical response to COVID-19.

It is wonderful to see that women are taking up these short, flexible courses to support their educational requirements, which they might not have sought pre-COVID. Those courses are now available to them. This Government has made a very significant, important, worthy and essential commitment of \$73 million to provide 180 additional specialist community-based mental health clinicians and peer support workers to assist those women in our workforce who may have additional pressures as a result of COVID. Young mums will have free access to Tresillian's digital SleepWellBaby program. There is extra capacity for the 60,000-odd calls that are made to our 1800 New South Wales mental health line. We have pop-up mental health safe space sites that provide assistance to our women in the workforce who as a result of COVID may be more dramatically impacted than men in our workforce. I do not want to say that men are not impacted by job insecurity since COVID but this motion is particularly talking about women. We do have more work to do. I am very proud of the work the Government is doing in the public sector which is making a real difference to women's lives and to the economic opportunities in our State.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (12:51:06): I thank the member for Blue Mountains for moving this important motion in the House. Despite the passing of the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act 1977, the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984 and the Sex Discrimination Commissioner being appointed in the same year, pay inequality in New South Wales and Australia is alive and well, with the pay gap between men and women still at 14 per cent. Gender pay gap is much more than just a number, it is an important symbol of the inequality that continues to exist between women and men. This is a critical motion. Now more than ever it is important that we address real pay inequality which impacts women.

We are in part of the greatest economic crisis this country and world has seen in decades. We are seeing the largest unemployment figures since the Great Depression. Job cuts and increasing unemployment disproportionately impact women. In addition, the public sector wage reduction by the Premier and the Treasurer is not only an attack on our hardworking public sector workers, who have been on the front line during this pandemic as well as during the bushfires and drought, but also an overwhelming attack on women—our cooks, cleaners, porters, who are some of our lowest paid public servants, and our nurses, midwives, teachers, cops, ambos, just to name a few. Women make up roughly 60 per cent of the New South Wales public service and our Government is turning its back on them.

Freezing pay for even a short period reduces the lifetime income and superannuation savings of public sector workers by tens of thousands of dollars because it permanently reduces their lifetime wage trajectory. A six-month pay freeze for a typical public sector worker will reduce career earnings by an estimated \$23,500 and superannuation accumulations by another \$4,000 or more. A longer two-year freeze will reduce career earnings by over \$100,000 and superannuation accumulations by \$17,500. It clearly has a huge, detrimental and crucial impact on individuals but it is also bad economics. Put simply, public sector workers spend money within their local communities on local goods and services provided by local businesses. If their pay is cut they have less disposable income and are forced to spend less, removing support from local economies and multiplying the pain of public sector wages cuts onto small businesses across the entire State.

As this is Homelessness Week it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge that the fastest growing group of homeless people is women over the age of 50. While addressing women's homelessness is complex and the result of many factors, pay inequality is one of the underlying driving factors. In Australia women working full-time today earn on average 14 per cent less than men. This pay inequality has a direct impact on the capacity of women to obtain superannuation to be used at the end of their working life. A combination of less savings in their superannuation and the fact that women are less likely to own their own asset at the end of their life has created a perfect storm, resulting in an alarming number of older women now becoming homeless.

The reality is that the gender pay gap does not only impact women once in their life. It has a compounding effect that results in women having a reduced earning capacity over their lifetime and accumulating less money for retirement. Women are more likely to spend their lives working and caring at home for loved ones. As a result women are significantly more likely to retire in poverty than are men, increasing their chances of homelessness. If the Premier is serious about homelessness, one of her signature issues, addressing pay inequality is just one of the ways that she can ensure greater equality for women over their entire life span and addressing older women's homelessness. I commend the motion to the House and thank the member for Blue Mountains for moving it.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (12:55:20): This Government has a great track record when dealing with women's issues. The Australian Labor Party does not care about women and jobs and during its 16 shameful years in Government did nothing. It had record numbers of homelessness and record numbers of women suffering from domestic violence. What has this Government done since it came to office? It placed a high priority on women and for the first time a Minister for Women was appointed. The member for Vaucluse talked about the changes this Government has made so that women can open a bank account to look after their

financial security. This Government has toughened the penalties for domestic violence. It has changed the evidence law so that body camera videos are now admissible in courts.

The Opposition members talked about a pay freeze, implying that public servants are not getting paid. Public servants are being paid. There is no wage cut. They will not have less money in their pay packets every week. But there is a moratorium on the 2.5 per cent wage rise for 12 months. That is very different to the lot of so many people who have no job or are working fewer hours and earning less money. The public servants will not earn less money. They will be paid the same as they are being paid now. The 2.5 per cent wage rise which has been cumulative each year is far higher than the consumer price index. Public servants had several good years but this is one year they will not get a wage rise, like every other member of our society. I sympathise with the frontline workers who will not get a wage rise but they are not losing their job or a getting a wage cut. They will earn the same amount of money for 12 months.

The disallowance of the regulation in the Legislative Council does not change the economic facts. Wage rises are less economically efficient at boosting a recovery than is direct investment. The disallowance was not based on either sound policy or sound economics. It was purely the result of cowardice on the part of crossbench members and the fact that the Australian Labor Party is entirely beholden to public service unions. The Government, on behalf of the people of New South Wales, is not in a position to pay for large-scale investments as well as for pay rises for bureaucrats. It is one or the other. You cannot have both.

This matter is going to the Industrial Relations Commission. The Government tried to achieve a compromise with an offer of a \$1,000 bonus to frontline workers and a job guarantee for 12 months. But that was rejected by the greedy trade union leaders—to whom the Labor Party is beholden—who just shout "More money, more money". At a time when hundreds of thousands of people are out of work, the creation of new jobs must be our top priority, not giving those with job security a pay rise. We are in the grip of a once-in-a-100-year crisis and it is simply not appropriate to pretend this is a year like any other. We tried to get consensus but that was rejected. We oppose this motion.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I thank the member for Myall Lakes.

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (12:59:16): I am not sure if the member for Myall Lakes should be thanked for his contribution. Sometimes it is better if some people say nothing. For the information of the member for Myall Lakes, I worked for the Labor Minister for women. It is not a new invention. It has been around for some time. I remind the member that domestic violence is not the purview of women. It is overwhelmingly the purview of men and it is a crime. Body-worn cameras are not some kind of bonus for women that the police now have in their armoury. The lot of women in New South Wales has got tougher and tougher over the years. I actually cannot remember a worse time for women. The member for Vacluse made the most astounding statements in her contribution. Over 65 per cent of the public service is women. That is because education and health make up a large proportion of the public sector, and 70 per cent of workers in those areas are women. The Government crows about 36 per cent of senior management roles being held by women in the public service. The member for Vacluse said 40 per cent, but that does not appear anywhere on the Government's website. Women comprise 36 per cent of senior management roles in the public sector, yet 65 per cent of the workforce is women.

Women perform low-wage jobs in the New South Wales public sector. They are cleaners in hospitals and cleaners in schools. How many male cleaners do members think are running around doing those jobs? Women are nurses. They are teachers. They are the people that members opposite do not want to give a pay rise to. The Government talks about economic stimulus packages. When there is a downturn in the economy and it needs to get going, people need to have good wages. The time to put money into an economy is now, in the middle of a crisis. The Government can pull the lever and give a pay rise to those who deserve it the most—public sector workers. The public sector is overwhelmingly women. The Government talks about what it does for women but it does nothing for them. Women have gone backwards under this Government.

In my electorate of Auburn, women are going backwards in every indicator. The Vacluse electorate had the biggest income increase but my electorate is dropping off the cliff. The Government does not care that Auburn had the highest homelessness figures and the highest unemployment figures. It does not care that every inner city infrastructure project it builds has a negative impact on Auburn. The people of Auburn pay an extra \$150 a fortnight to get to their jobs because the Government put a tax on a road that we had already paid for twice. The Government does not care about that. Government members should not come to this Chamber and lecture Opposition members about what they think they have done for women. The reality is they have done nothing. In my electorate people are going backwards. If they had the balls the women in this Chamber would all stand up for women.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The member for Auburn will tone down her language.

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ: I will. I note the concerns. If Government members had the guts they would get up and support women across the board. Instead, what we hear from the other side of the House is either silence or spin. At no point did the member for Vaucluse mention the 65 per cent of women in the public sector who are not getting a pay increase.

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (13:03:18): I contribute to this debate particularly in relation to the impact of COVID-19 on women and rural communities. There is no doubt that women are being disproportionately affected by the economic impact of COVID-19. That is why the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government has brought in stimulus measures that are designed to support women and families across New South Wales. This is a global pandemic with global pressures that are being felt in every home across the nation. We may not understand its full impacts for a long time but we do know that the pandemic has likely increased the risk of abuse in already violent homes, which not exclusively but disproportionately affects women. To combat this scourge in our society, an additional \$21 million in funding has been announced to boost frontline services for domestic violence, including a \$12.8 million commitment from the Government.

To help people escape violent homes, the New South Wales Government is also investing \$20 million in additional rental subsidies until June 2021 to enable people to access and sustain private rental accommodation. In my electorate, I am incredibly proud of the work that the local police are doing to act on this awful crime that is still far too common in our communities. Organisations like the Young Crisis Accommodation Centre Inc. do an amazing job for people fleeing violent living situations. At the end of last year, I was pleased to announce a local domestic and family violence committee grant for the centre and I am committed to helping it secure more funding to continue its vital work.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on the State's economy. The queues outside Centrelink are reminiscent of the Great Depression. They not only tell their own story but also represent thousands of hardworking people who have rarely or never had to seek assistance in their working lives. Almost 90 per cent of the State's 4.2 million-strong workforce are in the non-government sector. Right now half a million people in New South Wales are out of work due to COVID-19. In April alone 221,000 jobs were lost. Every one of those stories of economic stress and personal loss represents an individual. That terrifying figure does not include all of those who, although still employed, are coping with financial loss caused by forced standdowns, using their long service leave and leave without pay and working reduced hours or for reduced pay. It also does not include the hundreds of thousands of people who are tapping into their super to cover their expenses and using up the savings meant for their retirement.

Over the past few months I have met many people who are hurting. They are embarrassed by their employment situation and they simply want the opportunity to earn a living. Workers have been laid off. Businesses have shut. Livelihoods have been destroyed. Those people desperately need our help. The leaders, nurses, midwives and frontline and support health staff across the State are amazing. They continue to rise to the challenges of the global pandemic. In the Murrumbidgee Local Health District, CEO Jill Ludford has been the model of professionalism and leadership. It is a personal and professional joy to work with her. There is no denying that her kind of dedication should be rewarded. Now is the time for us to work together to keep as many people employed as possible.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (13:07:50): By leave: I recognise the real concerns about the gender pay gap that is still rife in our community. I thank the member for Blue Mountains for bringing this issue to the attention of the House. In these times we know that women are carrying an unfair level of the burden, both economically as a result of the pandemic and also on an emotional and physical level. They are doing much of the heavy lifting to keep things ticking over. The motion of the member for Blue Mountains refers to the incredible work of nurses and midwives. We know that 89 per cent of nurses are female. The Government's attempt to freeze the wages of public servants will have a huge impact on them. That is a massive blow given that they are going to work every day in the middle of a health pandemic and risking their lives to keep the community safe.

In the other place, the Hon. Damien Tudehope got a massive boost to his ministerial pay. At the same time, the Government cannot stump up to provide frontline workers, health professionals and women the same support. It seems outrageous to me that anyone thinks that Minister Tudehope's contribution to this State is somehow more valuable than that of the nurses and midwives. I have seen them both at work and I can tell you the delivery services of the midwives at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital have been a much more valuable contribution to my life than anything the Minister in the other place has ever done to help deliver change and positive support to the community of New South Wales.

I appreciate that we are here in the New South Wales Parliament, but I note that the issue of the gender pay gap is also real in the context of the Federal Government's cuts to the wage subsidy payments we will be seeing in late September. According to a recent report in *The Sydney Morning Herald* twice as many women as men will have a wage subsidy payment halved from late September as a result of changes to the way part-time workers will

be supported. Nationally some 22 per cent of women work fewer than 20 hours a week, compared to 10.6 per cent of men. We know in this context that the change to this subsidy will have a huge impact. In this article Federal Greens leader Adam Bandt expressed outrage that we not only saw the unexpected action to make this change of the likes of the Prime Minister—we know that the Prime Minister is no friend of women when it comes to issues of equality—but that NSW Labor federally backed in these changes and called this subsidy wasteful spending. That is cause for ongoing concern. As Mr Adam Bandt said, "Women will once again bear the brunt of the coronavirus pandemic." My Federal Greens colleague Senator Larissa Waters highlighted this inequality as well.

I really hope that when we are talking about this at all levels of government we recognise the unfair burden on women, whether it be in relation to the pay gap in New South Wales or Federal subsidies being cut. The impact and burden on women is huge. In the last minute of my contribution to this debate I give a massive shout-out to my own union, the Australian Services Union, which led the charge way back in 2015 when it had the successful gender pay gap test case. I give a shout-out to it for what was an ongoing struggle and a huge campaign. I thank all the members of that union and all the workers in that sector for the work that they did to be able to support our community and take up the fight on gender pay equality.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:12:09): By leave: I thank the House for its indulgence. I acknowledge the motion of the member for Blue Mountains. Members know that the gender pay gap is obviously an unfortunate reality in Australia, as we have heard in contributions this morning. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has stated that Workplace Gender Equality Agency data show a gender pay gap favours full-time working men over full-time working women in every industry and occupational category in Australia. In November 2019 a woman's average weekly ordinary full-time earnings across all industries and occupations were around the \$1,500 mark compared to a man's average weekly ordinary full-time earnings of around \$1,751. Of course, this is the reality of that pay gap before the COVID-19 pandemic, but that is no excuse for the gap. We must continue to do what we can to address that gender pay gap. As the member for Vaucluse, who is in the Chamber, so eloquently put it, "There is more to be done." We will continue that fight.

This is the New South Wales Parliament, where the New South Wales Government has the first elected female Premier of New South Wales. We have a strident advocate for gender equality here in New South Wales. I am proud to be part of a Parliament that had the first female Speaker, the first female Attorney General, and the first Minister for Women. There have been so many firsts in this Parliament by women. I am so proud to be part of a Government that has delivered those fantastic leaders. The Premier's Priority for a world-class public service led by the Public Service Commission is another fantastic example of the New South Wales Government working closely to close that gender pay gap that members have been discussing.

TAFE is another example. Women represent approximately 65 per cent of enrolments for TAFE. New South Wales has 21 fee-free short courses offered as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is wonderful to see that these short courses are benefiting women so well. We know that these fee-free courses are being adopted by so many women on the Central Coast. Those are the benefits that we are seeing. Mental health is another area where women have been reporting increased stress and anxiety levels during COVID-19. To support women's mental health the New South Wales Government has boosted statewide mental health services. The \$73 million investment includes over 180 additional specialist community-based mental health clinics.

Debate interrupted.

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

Members

MEMBER FOR BLUE MOUNTAINS

MEMBER FOR MIRANDA

MEMBER FOR LAKE MACQUARIE

The SPEAKER: Today is the last day of Parliament for a little while. During the recess the member for Blue Mountains, the member for Miranda and the member for Lake Macquarie will hopefully be having some suitable birthday celebrations. I wish them well for those.

Announcements

E-PETITIONS

The SPEAKER: I am pleased to announce that the new e-petitions platform will go live early next week. It is built to be simple, user friendly and secure—as well as particularly timely in the current environment. I congratulate the staff of the Legislative Assembly and of the Department of Parliamentary Services on

developing the new online platform to help modernise the Parliament and better serve the people of New South Wales.

Question Time

COVID-19 AND FACE MASKS

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:19:48): My question is directed to the Minister for Health and Medical Research. This morning I was shocked to hear him say that he is not making face masks mandatory because the Government does not have enough masks to meet demand. A few hours later junior Minister Stuart Ayres said, "We do have enough." In other words, he was sent out to clean up the health Minister's mess. Do we or do we not have enough face masks?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (14:20:37): I am delighted to finally be asked a question on the pandemic and to acknowledge that there are issues that should be considered in a careful way. I heard the temporary Leader of the Opposition being a complete pork chop today—quite stupid. She reminds me of those kids in primary school when there is a birthday party and they do not get invited. They have got to say that the cakes weren't quite right or something else wasn't quite right. I have got news for the Leader of the Opposition: what is actually happening is a major worldwide pandemic and most of her colleagues around the country are behaving far more responsibly than she is. To stir things up, carry on and play word games is as immature and juvenile as any leader of the opposition could get. It is quite stupid.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129, obviously. It is a pretty easy question to answer. Do we or do we not have enough face masks?

The SPEAKER: The Minister is in the first minute of his answer. I am happy for him to continue.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I would like to take another five minutes on that. In each and every government around the country all the Labor and Liberal health Ministers work incredibly well together and there is a respect and an understanding about the challenges that each and every State and Territory faces. They face them in different ways and at different times and have done so for the past eight or so months. But one tiny little issue has got the Leader of the Opposition terribly excited because she wants to interpret some words about a mask. Seriously? If that is the contribution that NSW Labor is making to managing a COVID crisis, we have a huge problem. We should all wait with bated breath for her to leave and for somebody else to come along and contribute in some sensible way to what is a one-in-100-year pandemic.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: The question is do we or do we not have enough face masks?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: You certainly need one.

Ms Jodi McKay: Do we or do we not have enough face masks? It is pretty simple, Minister.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will direct her comments through the Chair.

Ms Jodi McKay: This morning you said we don't. Do we or don't we?

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: That is a complete misinterpretation—

Mr Ryan Park: Then clear it today. Clear it up. Do we have enough?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: You would have been the other one in the primary school class—probably still—who would not have been invited to the party and definitely would not have been invited back.

The SPEAKER: The member for Keira will cease interjecting. The Minister will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I would imagine that the Leader of the Opposition has not read anything about face masks. I suggest that she have a little read of—

Ms Jodi McKay: I actually read what the Minister said this morning, which was that we do not have enough face masks.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Maybe you should read what the Federal Government and all of the State and Territory governments are saying about the use of masks. As we have evolved over the past eight months, there have been differing priorities. But I have to say that it has been very clear to the community—and it is very clear right now even if it is not clear to the Leader of the Opposition—that the primary safeguard we have at the moment is the physical distancing of 1.5 metres. People should keep 1.5 metres away from everybody by social distancing.

They should regularly wash their hands. If they are sick or have any signs of illness they should not go to work or school or university; they should stay home and get tested.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister is addressing an important issue. I will hear the point of order of the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms Jodi McKay: Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is one minute before Question Time concludes yet we still do not have an answer. Do we or do we not have enough face masks? Yes or no.

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that the Minister is being generally relevant to the question, but I remind him of the specific nature of the question.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Yes. I am very pleased to talk about that. In that context one has to consider when one uses masks. The Government, reflecting the advice of the Chief Health Officer, has been very clear on this: You wear a mask if you cannot maintain social distancing. That is absolutely crucial. That is the advice today. However, with advice from the Chief Health Officer, the Government is actively considering, as we have been for some months, whether any other changes should be made to that advice. But in the context of the question I was asked earlier today, I basically said that you do not need a mask except in those circumstances. If you want to, you can wear it.

Ms Jodi McKay: That is not what you said at all.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Seriously, the Leader of the Opposition should just be quiet. The Health advice is that we have more than sufficient masks but there is no reason at present to go wasting those masks, except in the circumstances in which the Chief Health Officer has advised you to use them.

Ms Prue Car: Wasting them? Even though you are recommending that people use them? What?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: For heaven's sake— *[Time expired.]*

COVID-19 AND FACE MASKS

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:26:19): My question is directed to the Minister for Health and Medical Research. Given that this morning the Minister said that people on public transport should "definitely wear face masks", will he issue a public health order this afternoon mandating face masks or facial coverings to be used on public transport?

Mr Andrew Constance: How much do you want to fine them? What is the fine level? Tell us the fine level. How much do you want to fine them?

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Transport and Roads and member for Bega will remain silent.

Mr Andrew Constance: How much do you want to fine them?

The SPEAKER: I call the Minister for Transport and Roads and member for Bega to order for the first time.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (14:27:27): Many years ago when I was a teacher there were a couple of kids in the class like you. Normally they went down for six pretty quickly because carrying on like that is just stupid.

Mr David Harris: Point of order: I know that this afternoon the Minister for Health and Medical Research is a bit agitated but he should be directing his comments through the Chair rather than goading Opposition members.

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: If I was sitting next to someone like you in the bus I would definitely wear a mask. For the benefit of Labor members, I will repeat the Health advice, which I am sure the community already knows. Currently the Health advice is you should consider wearing a face mask if you are, for example, in public transport or cannot practise social distancing.

Ms Jodi McKay: It is not what you said this morning. You said people should definitely wear a face mask.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: When they cannot socially distance. You can choose to wear them at other times but that is a matter for you. We are constantly having advice from Health. Between the Premier, me and other

senior members of the Cabinet who are dealing with these issues, we would have had hundreds of hours of discussions about all the ins and outs of face masks, et cetera.

Ms Jodi McKay: Which is why you vary from day to day.

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: There are studies from the European Centre for Disease Control, studies from the United States and a whole range of studies on when you should wear face masks but Health's basic advice is what I have just said. I add what Health also said, which is that the use of face masks in indoor settings is recommended where physical distancing is hard to maintain—this is Infection Control Expert Group [ICEG] advice—such as on public transport or in supermarkets and should be considered in indoor settings with higher risk for transmission where it is practical to wear them.

As for the staff of hospitality venues, the Premier and I attended a Committee for Economic Development of Australia [CEDA] function at which all the staff were wearing masks. That was great because it gave us a sense of security. But at this stage that is optional for restaurants and cafes. The Chief Health Officer, Dr Kerry Chant, who is just incredible, has recommended that congregants attending church services should consider wearing face masks. Again, it is not mandated but it is strongly advised. From time to time in the past week or two, messaging indicates that it would be very wise to consider this very strongly in areas around our Sydney hotspots, such as south-western Sydney, western Sydney and the Nepean and the Blue Mountains local health districts. Health also has noted that police officers and teachers have been advised that if they want to wear masks that is something they could consider but that should be based on local conditions.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: If you raise an issue of relevance now you are as irrelevant as you will ever be. Seriously, you are clearly irrelevant.

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Health and Medical Research will resume his seat. What is the Leader of the Opposition's point of order?

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

The SPEAKER: I will rule on it straightaway.

Ms Jodi McKay: This morning the health Minister said, "If you're going on public transport—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will stop now.

Ms Jodi McKay: —definitely wear it."

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will stop now.

Ms Jodi McKay: I seek clarification for the citizens of New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: That is enough.

Ms Jodi McKay: The Minister should stop changing his mind.

The SPEAKER: The Minister has more than clarified his position. I am satisfied that he has clarified his intent. The Minister has the call.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Let me make this very clear. I am trying to give serious advice that came from Health and they are not interested in listening. They are just playing word games. The bottom line is that no matter how many masks we have, it is always worth thinking about whether or not you need to use them. But do you know what? We have a ton of masks. We have more masks than you would have a clue about because our Government actively ensured there were chains of supply, which had been cut. You would not be the slightest bit interested in knowing that originally the surgical masks were cut off because they came from Hubei Province. We have a ton of masks.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister will resume his seat. Before I hear the point of order, I note that there have been interjections, but I remind the Minister to direct his comments through the Chair. I understand that the Minister is responding to—

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: She is annoying though, Mr Speaker—very frustrating and very annoying.

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Health and Medical can be annoying also. I will hear the point of order.

Ms Jodi McKay: He is the Minister for Health and Medical Research. I ask him to stop attacking me across the Chamber and just answer the question.

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Health and Medical Research will continue.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: If you sit there and keep quiet, I will answer the question. As I was saying, we have a ton of masks because the Government actively ensured there were supply chains. The Government has done an enormous amount of work to ensure there are huge quantities of masks but it is still a question based on Health advice whether face masks should be mandatory. The Opposition should think about one of the issues associated with mandating the use of face masks more broadly, which is that poorer people, people who are in the least advantaged position, would have to spend quite large amounts on masks and may not need them. Yet that is the dumb advice that Opposition members are giving. For heaven's sake, listen to what the health advice is and stop carrying on like kids in a classroom who missed out on going to a party.

ICARE

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:33:11): My question is directed to the Treasurer. Given that icare claims manager Employers Mutual Limited [EML] is a client of Michael Photios' lobbying firm, Premier State, and given that the Treasurer met with EML on 6 December last year, which was 12 days before the Dore review into EML's performance, I ask: Did the Treasurer discuss the upcoming report at that meeting?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:33:34): I have always followed through on my obligations in respect of these matters. As part of being a responsible Minister, if I have meetings I disclose those meetings. I cannot recall the contents of the meeting referred to by the member for Kogarah. I will take that on notice and provide the requisite advice.

ICARE

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (14:34:14): My question is directed to the Treasurer. Given that the Dore review of his failing workers compensation scheme found that EML has a lack of experience, poor file management and a poor understanding of compliance with the law and that its record of getting injured people back to work is getting worse, I ask: When will the Treasurer stop defending Michael Photios' client?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:35:30): In relation to scheme agents, part of the reforms and the advice we received from icare—and that was an agreement it entered into—the view at the time was to simplify the service process and as part of that to enter into one agreement, one scheme agent, through EML. That was the advice that icare received to improve service delivery for injured workers in New South Wales.

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (14:35:45): I direct a question to the Premier. It has been 160 days since her Coalition partner committed to a Federal royal commission into the Murray-Darling Basin Plan on 28 February 2020. Will the Premier inform the House if the required documents have been sent to the Prime Minister to request a royal commission? If so, when? If not, why not? When will the documents be sent?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:36:20): I acknowledge the question from the member for Barwon and acknowledge the great work done by a number of my colleagues, namely, the Deputy Premier, who called for the royal commission, as is appropriate. It is appropriate, as the member for Barwon knows, because a number of jurisdictions are signatories to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, including the Federal Government, the New South Wales Government, Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and the ACT. Therefore, any commission into this would require support from the Federal Government. I acknowledge the efforts of Minister Pavey, the water Minister, who in June wrote to her counterpart in this regard. The position articulated by the Deputy Premier and the relevant Minister is the Government's position.

I ask you, as a member of the shooters party, to support the Government and not the Labor Party in relation to these matters. I say this because last year when the Federal Labor Party supported South Australia against New South Wales in relation to this plan the New South Wales Labor Party supported their Federal Labor counterparts and did not support our Government's plans to support New South Wales farmers. I say to the shooters party, "Stop your hypocrisy. Are you with the Labor Party or are you with the Liberals and Nationals?" We support water and they do not. They support politics. They support South Australia over New South Wales.

Mr Roy Butler: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129. The question was very particular. It was about the required documents being sent to the Prime Minister from the State requesting a royal commission.

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that the Premier is being generally relevant. There is no point of order. The Premier has the call.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It is obvious that the member for Barwon does not like the answer, but the answer is that the relevant Minister has written to her counterpart. The Deputy Premier and the relevant Minister, through their ministerial responsibilities, continue to raise this at their respective ministerial council meetings and the position they express is the position of the New South Wales Government. At every opportunity the New South Wales Government, through the responsible Ministers, has undertaken this action. I say to the member for Barwon: Why does your party keep preferencing the Labor Party in New South Wales?

Mr Roy Butler: What does that have to do with the question?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Because the New South Wales Labor Party supported their Federal counterparts, putting South Australia's interests over the interests of New South Wales. I say to the member for Barwon—

Ms Yasmin Catley: When did you send the letter?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: —I have already said, in June.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I assure the member for Barwon that this Government, notwithstanding the many challenges we have had not just this year but last year, has dedicated millions of dollars to support regional communities throughout this State in relation to drought, water security and water infrastructure. I am personally excited about Wyangala and Dungowan dams and the work we are doing in relation to the Myall River dam. In addition to that we are building weirs and block banks. And, yes, I have learnt what a block bank is in the last two years and visited a number of them. There is the Broken Hill pipeline that those opposite did not support. Our record in relation to water infrastructure and supporting rural and regional communities that were impacted severely by drought and now the current COVID situation is outstanding. I say to you as a member of the shooters party: Stop the hypocrisy. Will you continue to support the Labor Party while it does not support water issues in the bush or will you stick with the Liberals and Nationals who do? It is up to you.

Documents

UNPROCLAIMED LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 117, I table a list detailing all legislation unproclaimed 90 calendar days after assent as at 6 August 2020.

Sessional Orders

MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sitting to permit:

- (1) The interruption of any business before the House, excluding the debate on the 10,000 signature petition, for the consideration of any messages from the Legislative Council regarding government business.
- (2) The interruption of consideration of any such messages at 4.00 p.m. for the debate on the 10,000 signature petition.
- (3) The House to continue to sit after the conclusion of community recognition statements to consider any such messages.

Motion agreed to.

The SPEAKER: In the circumstances where not every member can be in the Chamber at the end of question time I will re-call the previous item in deference to the member for Mulgoa, but I ask members to be aware that we have special procedures in place and to be mindful of that.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Reports

Mrs TANYA DAVIES: As Chair: I table the report of the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption dated August 2020 entitled *Review of the 2018-2019 Annual Reports of the ICAC and the Inspector of the ICAC*. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

Gocup Road Intersection Upgrade

Petition noting the tragic collision on the Gocup Road and Snowy Mountains Highway intersection near Tumut and calling on the Government to urgently review and upgrade this intersection with additional safety measures to prevent future tragedies, received from **Dr Joe McGirr**.

*Private Members' Statements***M5 AND M8 TOLLS**

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:44:15): There is a major issue affecting the residents of St George and, in particular, my electorate of Kogarah and that is the imposition of a new toll on the M5 and M8 motorways. Members will be aware that this Parliament's most recent election was in March 2019—not that long ago. In some ways it feels like an eternity. At that election many things were discussed by both major parties: Everything from plans for gas exploration to the protection of koala habitats to an elongated discussion about stadiums and options for light rail construction that was over time and \$1 billion over budget—as an aside.

What was not divulged or discussed by the Government were its plans to introduce, for the first time, a gigantic new toll on those commuters who use the M5 motorway in Sydney's south. No candidate or member told the electors in their electorates that they planned on sending them a \$3,300 yearly bill to get to work. The toll regime for the M5 is \$6.95 each way for a car and over \$20 each way for a truck on the motorways. Of my residents in Bexley, Bexley North, Beverly Hills and Kingsgrove, 52 per cent drive their cars to work. The statistics show that 2,640 people drive their cars from these suburbs to the CBD every single day. If they use the toll it amounts to \$8.8 million in toll revenue—effectively a tax from local residents to the private toll road company each and every year. There are thousands more road users in every other suburb in the electorate of Kogarah—and, I might add, the surrounding electorates—who are stuck using a road that previously they used for free, but is now prohibitively expensive for many.

It is estimated that the M5 will be paid off 15 times over by the time this contract has expired—that is the level and intensity of the toll. It is so great and so burdensome for average commuters. I honestly think this Government thinks people are made of money. No wonder the Liberals quietly announced the opening of the tunnel with the number two public servant in the department. I expected a walk-through from the Premier, stalls, a rotary raffle, perhaps some dancing clowns, maybe even supplied by local Liberal branches—a little bit of levity there about the local Liberal branches. Normally you cannot keep a politician away from a camera, a ribbon and some scissors, but they were nowhere to be seen.

The two most cynical aspects of this new toll on an existing road are the Government's rationale for the change. The first one is the question of choice. Choice is supposed to be a key political rationale of the conservative movement. "Don't worry," we are told, "Under the Liberals if you don't want to pay the toll, you can just use surface roads." Imagine explaining this idea to a tradie who has been using the road for free for 19 years only to be told he will now have to cough up over \$3,000 a year, \$100,000 by the end of his working life, but the good news is he can now join a 1½-hour queue on Stoney Creek Road—because it is all about choice, apparently. That is not a choice at all and Government members know that to be true.

The second cynical decision by the Government, in my view, is buried in the financial details of the contract. The toll will increase each year, every year, by 4 per cent. Inflation is running at zero per cent at the moment. During the boom times in Sydney it was just over 2 per cent. But this Government locks in a 20-year 4 per cent annual increase in tolls for average commuters. At the best growth rate projections for New South Wales, that is twice the rate of inflation. Each year every year the toll goes up. Based on what rationale does the Government get to gouge average people?

I listened to yesterday's debate on this very matter and no-one from the Government benches even bothered defending the annual 4 per cent increase. After a decade in power I think Government members have forgotten the people who elected them—and I do not say that lightly. There is no other explanation for this wilful financial penalty for average people—average people who, I might point out, were told during the week that New South Wales is heading into a recession, that economic growth has been smashed and that unemployment will be 10 per cent by Christmas. They deserve better. They deserve help, not this gigantic new toll.

OXLEY ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (14:49:01): It is a pleasure to be able to talk today about the massive investments taking place in the Oxley electorate, including the new Macksville hospital, which was completed recently. Luckily we did not completely shut down the State and construction of the hospital was able to continue. The hospital has been open for six weeks, operating under COVID rules. It is an incredible piece of infrastructure. The lights at Kempsey's Kemp Street showgrounds and the sporting fields will enable touch footy, soccer and netball teams to train at night through winter when the sun sets at five o'clock on the mid North Coast. The extension of the Pacific Highway dual carriageway continues to have benefits for my community. Already we can see economic activity in other parts of my community, whether it be Valla, Nambucca or Macksville, where people can have a home with lower population around them and drive to Coffs Harbour or even Port Macquarie. This benefits students from the Nambucca Valley who are able to go to St Paul's high school in Kempsey, the Catholic school. That type of infrastructure and activity have enabled our communities to grow.

There are companies like Express Coach Builders, one of the last standing bus manufacturing plants in New South Wales. In the next week or so the skills Minister, Stuart Ayres, will be touring the electorate and I will show him around. There is also Midcoast Trucks in Macksville itself, in the industrial estate—another company which by happenstance has created this cohort of workers in the manufacturing space. We know through COVID that we need to enable our manufacturers to grow and be successful. One of the great joys of the upcoming five-week break in parliamentary sittings is being back in our communities and working hard. One of my plans is to highlight to manufacturers in the Sydney region who are looking at paying in excess of \$1,000 per square metre for industrial land that they could have within my community at around \$100 per square metre, together with the advantage of an affordable workforce. At normal penalty rates you can have the most experienced and loyal workers, whereas in parts of Sydney you have to pay above award wages to keep staff in those manufacturing areas.

This is my plan for the next five weeks: to work to create more jobs and more opportunities. We have the tourism sector. We have the agricultural sector—whether that is fishing, the timber industry or the dairy sector—who we met with only last week. Twenty local dairy farmers came to the Kempsey Macleay RSL Club with our Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Michael Johnsen. We are listening to what they have to say about what they need to grow their opportunities and their jobs. We are also looking forward to supporting the agricultural sector with the release of the harvestable dam rights review that we have been working on within our agency for what seems to have been an inordinate period of time, but it is an important document. The review looks back on the policy that was introduced in 1999 and was meant to be reviewed five years after that. But we are getting there and ensuring that we can grow capacity and opportunities within our communities.

I acknowledge the work this week with the new signs on the Pacific Highway at Kempsey and at Nambucca Heads joining the signs at Macksville and at Urunga. These incredible signs, which are valued at \$60,000 or so, showcase our community. I was there on Friday at Kempsey as they were putting in the final sign. I am so proud of that initiative, an initiative that I started when I was roads Minister because I know that with the dual carriageway Pacific Highway we will remind people of the beauty and the magnificent communities that people are driving past.

I have also raised with the roads Minister, Paul Toole, the need for us to provide more commercial opportunities along the Pacific Highway to erect billboards so that we can showcase tourist attractions and all the wonderful things that we have to offer. Whether it is in my community, the community of the member for Port Macquarie or the community of the member for Coffs Harbour, there is an enormous capacity for tourism and opportunity within our region. I suspect one of the few positives of COVID is that there are economic opportunities for our region and our tourism operators because while people are Australia-bound they will be able to discover the joys and delights of the mid North Coast.

PORT MACQUARIE ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (14:54:19): In Local Government Week I acknowledge that throughout the past 12 months I have worked closely with the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and the MidCoast Council to deliver much-needed infrastructure that will benefit our community for the long term. It is thanks to The Nationals in Government that we have been able to deliver new and upgraded community assets to every corner of the Port Macquarie electorate—from Harrington to Telegraph Point. Every town and village is reaping the rewards of a government committed to supporting regional communities and local councils like never before. Whether funding is provided through the Stronger Country Communities Fund, the Regional Sports Infrastructure Fund or environment and tourism funds, clearly when State and local governments work together there is much to be gained. However, not surprisingly, on occasion our views will differ on particular issues. So

it is important that the community is cognisant of my stance as the local member, particularly when those issues relate to State Government policy.

At the ordinary council meeting of the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council on 18 March 2020 a motion on the fluoridation of the public water supply was moved by councillors Intemann and Pinson. A subsequent motion was moved on 15 July 2020. It was resolved that the council conduct a community poll with the following words in conjunction with the next local government election:

Would you prefer Council to stop adding fluoride (hydrofluorosilicic acid) to the public water supply?

I note the motion was carried 4-3. I also note that the financial implication of the community poll, as identified in a report to councillors, will be approximately \$66,000. This is in addition to the funds that have already been expended on legal advice in relation to the fluoridation of the water supply—and I am unaware of the extent of that cost.

Regarding the legal advice sought by council, legislative amendments made on 11 July 2019 put an end to any uncertainties about regulatory responsibility by explicitly excluding fluoridated drinking water from the scope of Australia's therapeutic goods legislation. The Therapeutic Goods Administration has clarified that State and Territory governments will continue to be responsible for regulating fluoride in reticulated drinking water and the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council has been alerted to these amendments. Further, the council is well aware of the position of NSW Health in relation to fluoridation. In correspondence received on 6 March 2020 from Dr Jane Jeffs, Acting Director, North Coast Public Health Unit, the council was advised that:

The New South Wales Government continues to support water fluoridation as a safe and effective way to help prevent tooth decay in the community. Efforts to improve oral health, including water fluoridation, are important in protecting the health of people in New South Wales.

Importantly, the letter further states:

Under section 6B of the Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Act 1957, a water utility may not cease fluoridation unless the direction is revoked by NSW Health. A water utility may request that NSW Health revoke a direction to fluoridate a water supply.

I also note the views of the National Health and Medical Research Council, which has publicly supported community water fluoridation as a population health measure since 1952, and regularly reviews the scientific evidence on this topic. The World Health Organization also acknowledges that the addition of fluoride to drinking water is beneficial as it reduces the incidence of dental caries, provided it is added below the threshold value of 1.5 milligrams per litre.

I leave the community with no doubt that I fully support the position of NSW Health, the National Health and Medical Research Council and others, but I also ask the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council to clarify for the community a number of matters in relation to the proposed poll: What was the cost of the installation of the centralised fluoridation dosing plant? In relation to the outcomes of the poll, under what parameters will council take further action? For example, if 55 per cent of the community vote "yes" to the poll, will they progress to remove fluoride from our water supply? Has the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council inquired from NSW Health under what conditions they would revoke a direction to fluoridate a water supply? Has the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council inquired of NSW Health as to the impact of a community poll on their decision to revoke a direction to fluoridate water? I trust that the council will be able to keep our community informed as we near the date for the community poll. I look forward to the responses to my questions.

BOTANY BAY WHARVES

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (14:58:53): I give my support to the re-establishment of a wharf at Brighton-Le-Sands in my electorate of Rockdale and the fantastic amenity that could be provided to Botany Bay if this project were supported by the State Government. Once again I bring to the attention of the House the urgent need for the maintenance and protection of our foreshore. Older residents in my electorate—such as myself—remember the fantastic wharf we used to have in front of the pavilion at Brighton-Le-Sands, which was enjoyed by swimmers, fishers and boat users alike. I have been asked many times by local residents why we have lost this important piece of infrastructure when it was so well loved by the community. The tourism industry has taken a massive hit due to recent events; this project would represent a highly effective investment to support local small businesses and tourism operators.

In October last year the member for Cronulla raised the introduction of new ferry wharves at Kurnell and La Perouse as part of a joint Federal-State initiative. This presents an obvious opportunity to link up the entire bay, with the possibility of adding stops along the western shoreline fronting my electorate. The reality is that without further options, a ferry between Kurnell and La Perouse simply will not be used. The Government's own report indicates that a service operating only between those points will not be able to stack up financially. The report also suggests that other stops servicing the airport and Brighton-Le-Sands should be incorporated. Massive

untapped tourist potential could be unleashed by the reintroduction of the wharf and, if money is being spent in Botany Bay, Brighton-Le-Sands would be a fantastic place to direct it.

Bayside Council is currently lobbying on behalf of our local community for additional ferry stops at Brighton-Le-Sands and Sans Souci. This has received overwhelming support from business owners along the foreshore that have suffered significant drops in trade due to COVID-19. Now, more than ever, these local small businesses need and deserve our support. I understand that the council has written to the Minister for Transport and Roads, the tourism Minister and the member for Cronulla seeking their support. This should not be a partisan issue, but an opportunity to seek the best possible outcome for the bay whilst balancing the interests of all users of the waterfront. The Government has made it clear that it wishes to invest significantly into the bay. If the Government is indeed going to do that, then it should invest in the whole bay, regardless of partisan leanings.

In addition to new works, the bay is badly in need of additional maintenance and protection resulting from existing usage. As I have raised many times before in this place, the impact of the airport and Port Botany on sand movements has caused major damage to our foreshore. This has meant the huge expansion of the beachfront in some parts of the bay, and its complete destruction in others. The danger that these sand movements create for swimmers is evident. Seven years ago a five-year-old boy drowned at Dolls Point while swimming with his older brother, and my community will never forget it. Although Bayside Council has recently completed significant remedial works, pumping 28,000 cubic metres of sand a distance of 1.4 kilometres from Dolls Point to Ramsgate with support from the State Government, but this is just another temporary measure.

The potential intensification of usage of the bay through a ferry service and the proposed cruise ship terminal means that permanent works are needed now more than ever. The State and Federal governments need to holistically fund works along the bay so that we can get the best out of our entire beachfront, while protecting it for future generations. Botany Bay is an incredible place. It is the economic heart of our State and a fantastic tourist attraction. It is a place of rest and relaxation for tens of thousands of local residents in my electorate and across the entire city. I again call on the Government to invest in Brighton-Le-Sands, return the wharf to our beachfront and fully fund the protection of our foreshore for current and future generations.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (15:03:23): I acknowledge all councils during this Local Government Week, which runs from 3 August 2020 to 9 August 2020. In particular I focus on the Northern Beaches Council, which is one of three councils that service my Davidson electorate constituents. Northern Beaches Council was formed in May 2016 as an outcome of the New South Wales Government's policy on the amalgamations of local councils. It resulted from the merger of the former Warringah, Manly and Pittwater councils. In just four years the Northern Beaches Council has successfully become established, created a strong financial base and achieved the following. It has provided over \$1.3 billion in services to our community through its operational budget. It has completed asset planning and management of all asset classes for the next 10 years, with \$4.97 billion in community assets under its care and management control as at 30 June 2020. It is on track to more than double the State Government's \$76.3 million estimated savings from amalgamation, with a projected \$161.6 million, net present value, over 10 years. Hill Rogers auditors independently reviewed council's modelling and have provided an assurance report on the savings.

In 2019-20 the annual recurrent merger savings being reinvested back into the community were estimated at \$29.5 million. There has been a reduction of about \$63 million in loans and the council's manager-to-employee ratio is better than the industry median. The reported average increase in rates and annual charges is only 1.67 per cent per annum. The Reserve Bank of Australia inflation for the four-year period to March 2020 was 7.8 per cent. The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal rate peg increases for the four years since amalgamation have totalled 8.3 per cent. In comparison, I understand the increase in rates and annual charges levied by the Northern Beaches Council over that same time period has been 6.68 per cent, or 1.67 per cent per annum on average.

There has been a well-planned and well-implemented response to the shocks and stresses that have challenged our community through bushfires, storm events and the COVID-19 pandemic. This is largely due to the size and scale of the Northern Beaches Council, resulting from the Coalition Government's policy of merging councils to create capacity to deal with those events. With a highly skilled workforce and financially sustainable status, the council is well positioned to address future environmental challenges and opportunities. Other positive initiatives and outcomes that are linked to the amalgamation include securing over \$36.1 million in Stronger Communities Fund grants; commencing the B-Line bus network and building six commuter car parking stations, which provide around 900 car spaces; working with the New South Wales Government to deliver the Frenchs Forest Hospital Precinct and Ingleside land release; allocating \$1.2 million for development of youth spaces and youth activities at the PCYC in Dee Why; creating a network of inclusive and accessible playgrounds; and constructing the \$21 million coast walk and art trail from Manly to Palm Beach.

Further outcomes include harmonising fees and charges across the northern beaches; implementing the new Local Planning Panel; developing and adopting an Affordable House Policy; adopting the first Northern Beaches Disability Inclusion Action Plan; managing Alcohol Free Zones and Alcohol Prohibited Areas with a more unified approach across the local government area; developing and adopting a compliance and enforcement policy to apply a single approach to enforcement across the northern beaches; consolidating traffic committees to provide a holistic approach to traffic concerns; adopting a Northern Beaches Transport Strategy; and harmonising waste and recycling collection services through a new waste collection service to deliver improved safety, environmental and financial benefits. I congratulate the Northern Beaches Council, led by CEO Ray Brownlee, Mayor Michael Regan and all the elected councillors, on their achievements and on showcasing how council mergers can facilitate positive local community outcomes.

LIVERPOOL HOSPITAL

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (15:08:45): I advise the House of very serious concerns about the funding of Liverpool Hospital. The concerns were raised earlier this year by the Liverpool Hospital Medical Staff Council [LHMSC], which represents the senior doctors and clinicians at Liverpool Hospital. The council says ongoing recurrent funding for Liverpool Hospital is inadequate to provide the necessary services. It also says the funding is unfair compared to the amounts of recurrent funding that go to other areas. In part, the council says:

We are extremely concerned that resources for South Western Sydney Local Health District are inadequate to meet the needs of our community. Every year it gets worse, as the gap between our lean resources and the relentless growth in health service needs widens.

LHMSC points to the significant expansion of Liverpool Hospital 15 years ago and its development into a tertiary and quaternary facility. The council's concern is that the model for calculating the funding to run those services was not correct. There is an unfair imbalance between developed and developing areas in the metropolitan zone and that imbalance gets worse every year. The council says:

We are in perpetual 'bed block', with more than 100% bed occupancy, and despite competitive length-of-stay across most specialties, our Emergency Department remains so full that patients often receive care in waiting rooms and corridors.

In 2018 the council commissioned a report from the Western Sydney Regional Information and Research Service [WESTIR], which provided concrete analysis that the South Western Sydney Local Health District is significantly under-resourced compared to other districts. When the activity-based funding model commenced, the base funding set out in the model was accepted as sufficient, even though it was not. Subsequent enhancements are based on that starting point and are only attempts to provide extra funding for growth. The original base point is not improved. In fact, what has happened is that so-called growth enhancement funding has gone to develop services that should have been included in the base funding but were not. As an example the council points to a non-invasive ventilation unit that existed in every other local health district but not in south-west Sydney. It had to be funded from growth money, which meant that there simply were not adequate enhanced funds to manage the growth. Again, LHMSC says:

This year it is worse than ever as, despite having a robust Clinical Council which debates and prioritises enhancements, no enhancements can be approved! We are in a phase of "consolidation" meaning none of the agreed critical priorities can be funded ...

The council details some of the other specific consequences flowing from these issues. Despite a recent root cause analysis into a neonatal death recommending a head of birthing unit as a top priority, it could not be funded. The hospital does not have sufficient resources for emergency surgery to be done in a timely fashion. There is a significant shortfall in junior medical staff numbers because of a lack of funds to employ senior residential doctors. Lack of funding means inadequate radiology services, despite the hospital's functions that should make such services a priority. The hospital can only fund staff to operate one CT scanner after hours—"after hours" includes the whole weekend. The radiology staff can only afford to provide ultrasound in office hours. The council says:

The impact on safe, quality patient care is significant, particularly in the Feto-Maternal Unit and Emergency Department, where management of suspected ectopic pregnancy and testicular torsions is negatively impacted by the use of alternate clinically inferior imaging. Resultant delays in treatment become routine, with significant implications on quality of care and length of stay.

Another radiology problem is that Liverpool is the only hospital of comparable size that does not have a mammography machine. Lack of resources also extends to lack of interpreters—an appalling issue at a hospital such as Liverpool. There is inadequate centre-based dialysis capacity. The Australian Standard is three dialysis sessions per week but inadequate funding means some patients can be offered only one or two sessions per week. There is also a lack of mental health beds, especially compared to other districts. Too many emergency department beds are used by patients who should be admitted to a mental health unit. Pathology services are substantially underfunded, especially compared to other districts.

In early 2019 the council approached the health Minister with the WESTIR report to consider an urgent funding enhancement but was unsuccessful. It received growth money marginally above the State average, which was not anywhere near enough to deal with the funding inadequacies the council identified. As the council says,

this cannot be solved by waiting for buildings to be built. This is not about capital expenditure. Bricks and mortar will not solve the problem. This is about operating expenses. The Government can build all the buildings it likes but if it does not fund the staff and services adequately then it is not solving the problem and, frankly, it is treating the people of south-west Sydney like mugs. The Government is not dealing with the health needs of the people I represent and it is not being fair. Liverpool should not have second-rate health services from this Government.

BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (15:13:23): COVID-19 has caused widespread uncertainty and people are rightly looking to our public institutions for consistency and confidence. Our criminal justice system is under scrutiny as we interrogate the ways it often lets down the most vulnerable, including our First Nation people. The Black Lives Matter movement calls out the unforgivable racism in our criminal justice system—racism that cannot be denied and that demands urgent action. I acknowledge the important work of local Indigenous organisations in the inner west, including the Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation [AbSec], Innari Housing Inc., Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-Operative and the Warringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre. I am, of course, proud to represent communities on the land of the Gadigal and Wangal peoples of the Eora Nation and I acknowledge their rich cultural heritage and ongoing ownership of land. I also acknowledge the critical work of the Marrickville Legal Centre, the Redfern Legal Centre and the Aboriginal Legal Service. They are there to assist the vulnerable people who are entangled in the criminal justice system but also to speak truth to power when the system proves to be broken.

The facts do not lie when it comes to racism in our criminal justice system. Indigenous people in New South Wales are incarcerated at 10 times the rate of non-Indigenous people. In the past 10 years, the number of Indigenous people charged by New South Wales police has increased by 67 per cent. This compares with only 8 per cent for non-Indigenous people. Shamefully, across Australia more than 400 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have died in custody since 1991. Gomerioi scholar Alison Whittaker conducted a study, revealing that only five of 134 Indigenous deaths in custody were referred by coroners to prosecutors. Only two were heard in court. Both cases ended in acquittal. She points the finger squarely at the racist silence of non-Indigenous people which perpetuates the system, which the Black Lives Matter movement calls on each of us to confront.

That truth telling should include concrete action, including adopting all the recommendations of the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. It should include properly funding the Aboriginal Legal Service. It should include escalating diversion programs for Indigenous offenders—particularly when it comes to drug and alcohol offences. The Walama Court, a culturally specific court within the New South Wales District Court designed to divert First Nation adult offenders away from the criminal justice system, should be immediately established. It should include committing to the principles of justice reinvestment whereby we transfer funding from corrections to health, education and community initiatives that are proven to reduce crime. It should start in schools, with better targeted support and intervention to keep Indigenous kids in the education system. In 2018 almost one-quarter of the 32,343 kids given short suspensions in New South Wales schools were Indigenous. That is despite them making up only a fraction of the total school population.

The truth telling must involve raising the age of criminal responsibility. The Raise The Age campaign calls on governments across Australia to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility to 14. Last year alone, almost 600 children aged 10 to 13 were imprisoned in Australia. Disgracefully, two-thirds of them were Indigenous. The Attorney General recently reported that 200 young people are housed in youth justice centres in New South Wales. Three of them are as young as 13. Cheryl Axleby, the co-chair of Change the Record, said:

Children who come in contact with the criminal legal system are more likely to die an early death, to reoffend and to stay in the criminal legal system—including as adults. It's a quicksand that traps these kids and their families for the rest of their lives.

Dr Mick Creati of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians explained that the current age of criminal responsibility goes against medical advice. He said:

The latest neuroscience shows the human brain doesn't fully develop until you're about 25, and the last bits to develop are the bits which control impulse control and seeing the long-term consequences for your actions. Criminalisation is not an effective solution.

Last week the Council of Attorneys-General and the New South Wales Government deferred any decision on lowering the criminal age of responsibility until 2021. Frankly, they have got it wrong. This is urgent. We need to act now to protect vulnerable children, particularly Indigenous children. The deferral means that hundreds more will end up in the criminal justice system, with lifelong consequences. That delay fails us all. COVID-19 has been complex and daunting, but it requires us to strengthen the public services that we rely on if we are to protect the most marginalised and vulnerable in our community. I support the Black Lives Matter movement. I stand with those fighting to restore fairness and justice to policing and our criminal justice system in New South Wales and across the globe.

HEATHCOTE ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (15:18:30): I update the House on some of the infrastructure and roadworks going on in the electorate of Heathcote. Some major works are being done on the Lawrence Hargrave Drive to improve safety. Unfortunately, over the past 30 years it has been slowly sliding off the side of the hill. The current stabilisation work has cut off the lower half of the electorate, with the expressway the only alternative route. That has created a lot of angst for the communities on the escarpment. I apologise for the interruption to their lives but getting the work done is a necessity. The work will stabilise Lawrence Hargrave Drive from Bald Hill to Stanwell Park. Rods are being anchored into sandstone under the road to fix the problem for hopefully 25, 30 or 40 years. There is quite a bit of engineering happening. It has cut off the communities of Stanwell Park, Coledale and Scarborough for the past eight weeks. Hopefully, the work will be completed in the next couple of weeks. I apologise on behalf of the New South Wales Government for the interruptions. It has been a major upheaval of people's lives. Once the work is done it will be right for at least 30 years.

Another piece of infrastructure work is the widening of the Princes Highway to eight lanes through Kirrawee, which was mooted as part of the Pinch Point Programs in 2015. That work will make it easier for commuters to head south to Wollongong by eradicating the pinch point through Kirrawee. That is a major piece of infrastructure. An extra lane is being added, which is not an easy feat when an area is landlocked. They are getting on with it. It was delayed for 12 months because of an industrial accident in another part of Sydney involving live electricity and the work had to cease. We are one year behind schedule but they are hammering on and getting the work done.

Part of the Gateway to the South Pinch Point Program included making the corner of Acacia Road and President Avenue easier to access for people going south. There are now two lanes heading south rather than one. Another piece of major infrastructure that is still in the planning but coming soon is the Linden Street extension. It will open the whole area up by creating three lanes going north on Linden Street at Sutherland. The time savings with the changes that are going to be made will be up to eight minutes for the morning and afternoon commute. That is a fantastic outcome for the people of my electorate. Another piece of infrastructure which is now being completed is the corner of Heathcote Road and New Illawarra Road. That has been the site of many accidents. One of my Liberal branch members lost his wife. He was seriously ill for about 3½ years and was in hospital due to somebody coming across the road at that corner. Thankfully, that corner has now been fixed. It will not bring back his wife but at least action has been taken on that corner. It was always a major issue.

I move on to the elephant in the room—the Woronora River Bridge on Heathcote Road. That work is still in the planning stages but it will commence in early 2021 and continue through until the end of that year. It is a very thin bridge. Against my better judgement, it will be widened to only two lanes. It is basically 1½ lanes now and was built in 1947. The replacement bridge will be wider and safer for commuters. That is a bit of a wrap-up of what is going on in my electorate. Earlier this week I was talking to the Premier about how when I was elected in 2011 we talked in millions, now everything seems to be in the billions. I hope that in the not too distant future we will be able to get some reality back into the costings of these projects. That will save money for the people of New South Wales and allow for more road infrastructure spending.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:23:32): We are living in a deeply troubling time. In the past year our community has persevered through bushfires, floods and now a pandemic. We continue to face disruption to our way of life the likes of which have never been experienced before and likely will never experience again. Thankfully, the easing of restrictions from the first wave of COVID-19 has allowed our loved ones and support networks to relieve the loneliness experienced in isolation. However, we must confront the mental health ramifications of the immense financial and employment insecurity, as well as personal loss, that our community has suffered. They will have a pervasive effect long after the immediate health risk of COVID-19 is over.

I highlight the outstanding service that support services such as the Black Dog Institute, Beyond Blue, Headspace, Head to Health, Lifeline, Kids Helpline and the Western Sydney Local Health District Mental Health Services Unit have provided to those residing in Prospect and beyond in greater Western Sydney. During this pandemic, mental health support services have adapted in an astonishing manner to accommodate drastic increases in individuals who are seeking assistance. I particularly commend Parks Community Network Inc. whose support for the south-west Sydney community has continued to be profound and significant. Through community outreach, and proactively reaching out and providing support to individuals and families, it has helped to address the particular challenges that people face, especially those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, in seeking mental health support.

I also commend the manner in which Beyond Blue has risen to the particular mental health challenges posed by the pandemic, as early into the pandemic, in April, Beyond Blue accommodated a 66 per cent increase

in demand for support services compared to the previous year. Beyond Blue's mental health professionals have been running a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week phone counselling service dedicated to those impacted by the pandemic, and has provided additional digital resources relating to the mental health impacts of COVID-19. These specialised pandemic support services have assisted more than half a million people since they were introduced. Beyond Blue's innovation and rapid evolution to meet the mental health demands arising from the pandemic are truly remarkable.

Our community has been struck by an overwhelming sense of uncertainty about what our future holds. The true extent of the economic and health repercussions of the pandemic remains to be realised. The manner in which this pandemic has exacerbated mental health issues in our community is a truly significant and a pressing concern, and one that tragically is shrouded in a cloak of secrecy and a sense of shame. I strongly encourage anyone who is struggling, whether due to the pandemic or otherwise, not to hesitate to reach out to seek support. I further implore everyone to regularly check in on their family members, friends and neighbours and ask how they are faring, and whether there is any support that they need. It is crucially important that we all commit to overcoming the stigma that surrounds mental health, and ensure that mental health services are well funded so that we can provide for our community the support that it needs during this pandemic and beyond.

We must also acknowledge the economic factors underlying many of the mental health issues faced, particularly for those in insecure work or who have lost their livelihood because of the pandemic, and continue to support them during this difficult time. Once again I thank all organisations that have provided vital mental health support to the residents of Prospect and New South Wales, and commend their dedication to our physical and mental wellbeing. Dedicated employees and volunteers at each of those organisations have been working tirelessly to accommodate the increasing mental health support our community has needed, and the anticipated demand in the future. While we may be physically distanced, our community is growing closer and our bonds stronger. We will overcome these challenges together as a community. May God bless and keep safe you and your family.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (15:28:22): I congratulate my friend the member for Prospect on his outstanding private member's statement. So often we would look at health as being a broken arm or an injury and too often we do not recognise that sometimes what is going on inside is often hard to see. I am glad that attitudes to mental health and how we treat each other have changed. In fact, we should constantly remind ourselves in this Chamber to do that. Recently my community has lost a number of young people. Last week in Gerringong I attended a meeting following the suicides of two beautiful young people. We are looking at engaging with schools, and doing more to connect our communities and making sure that supports are there. As the member for Prospect said, this has been a terrible time. We have had bushfires, drought, COVID-19 and flood. It is more important than ever before that we look after one another, not only our younger people but everybody. I thank the member for Prospect for using the time of this House to highlight such an important issue.

SOUTH COAST RAIL SERVICES

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (15:29:30): I became a member of this House to fight for things that make a real difference in our community. One of the things that I have enjoyed working so hard to deliver is improvement to local roads. At the moment one can drive from the northern part of my electorate down south and either see a completed duplication of the Princes Highway or work well and truly underway. However, the upgrade of local rail is something that I have always passionately believed in, and am committed to. In my time as a member of Parliament I have worked hard to argue for improvements. At the last election, the member for South Coast and Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Shelly Hancock, took a commitment to that election that we would provide \$125 million for a passing loop to duplicate the South Coast line to increase its capacity to have more services on this important public transport hub.

As a university student I remember travelling on that line day after day. I would look for every excuse not to look at my books and to look at that stunning view as I travelled to the University of Wollongong and back. For so many people it is a vital public transport link for medical appointments, work and for students like I was at the University of Wollongong. In the run-up to the election after a lot controversy the South Coast group of unions took up a petition. They took the petition in relation to South Coast rail to a Labor Party branch meeting in the Illawarra. They did not bring the petition to one of the two local members, either myself or the member for South Coast, and there was a bit of a barney amongst local Illawarra Labor members of Parliament as to who would table the petition so much so they had to give it to the then shadow Minister for Transport, now Leader of the Opposition, to table.

Politics aside, there was a hope and a feel among the candidates locally that Labor would make a commitment to our community. No. It is infrastructure. South Coast Labor would not commit to infrastructure on the South Coast, and once again spectacularly proven by the fact that they went to the election and we looked

hastily through those budget estimates briefing papers and found no commitment to the South Coast line from those opposite. Despite all the squabbles over a petition, they could not even deliver one Jatz cracker for the South Coast line. Once again, it was left to me and the member for South Coast to take up the fight to make sure that we delivered better rail services for our community, and we have started that work.

I thank the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, the Hon. Paul Toole, and the Minister for Transport and Roads, the Hon. Andrew Constance, for their commitment to the four kilometre passing loop which is now being investigated with geotechnical work underway. That work will establish that four kilometre passing loop which will, in effect, double capacity. We have capacity issues on the South Coast line because we have a number of tunnels between Gerringong, Berry and Kiama that make it very hard for a duplication to occur without going to great expense. The elegant solution was to provide for a passing loop which will essentially double the capacity for a fraction of the cost, making this a much more viable solution for the Government. I am proud that the work has started.

In addition, we are also looking at providing additional platforms at Bomaderry so two trains can leave and arrive at the same time. I can also advise the House that work has started on analysis of an extension of the train platform at Kiama so that the new inner city fleet that will be rolling onto our part of the line in the near future will be able to be used by locals. Those trains will be 10-carriage trains. I am very much looking forward to them as I am sure all members of the House who visit the South Coast by rail will because the carriages have better disability access, access to mobile charging ports, tray tables and even luggage racks. Who would have thought luggage racks would be on a train line that services the airport. What an innovation.

I am really proud of those things that are happening on the South Coast rail line. The question that has also raised its head is electrification. The argument from the South Coast group of unions was that we should electrify first. My point always was that we cannot electrify until we increase the capacity because the South Coast line is a single track. The Minister for Regional Transport and Roads and the Minister for Transport and Roads have devised an elegant and innovative solution to have hybrid trains service the South Coast lines—trains that run on both diesel and electric. In theory a journey can start at Bomaderry and go all the way to Sydney.

Under various transport Ministers we have delivered additional train carriages for the 4:24, the 3:54 and the 3:24. We have built a new train station at Shellharbour junction. We have delivered additional seats particularly on weekend services that are becoming more popular. I thank the Minister for listening to our community on those issues, as well as commuters who have signed petitions that I have tabled in this House. In fact, I took the fight right up to my own Government to make sure that we get better transport solutions for the South Coast. Roads are important and I am proud of those things we have delivered but I am very much looking forward to delivering even more improvements to rail on the South Coast.

GOULBURN ELECTORATE GREYHOUND RACING INDUSTRY

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (15:34:41): I speak today on something I am very passionate about. I express my strong support for the establishment of a centre of excellence and an optimal straight track for the greyhound racing industry in the Goulburn electorate. The Greyhound Racing NSW strategic plan includes substantial investments in safety at greyhound racing tracks in New South Wales consistent with the expectations of the ministerial operating licence for Greyhound Racing NSW and the New South Wales Government's safety and welfare capital grants program for the New South Wales greyhound racing industry.

Greyhound Racing NSW has demonstrated its commitment to the strategic plan with a capital investment over the past two years of more than \$7 million from the \$30 million safety and welfare capital grants program. The 25 per cent spend of funds to date has been used to upgrade, rebuild and remediate tracks to meet new standards for greyhound safety and welfare. Greyhound Racing NSW remains resolute in its commitment to invest the remaining \$23 million in funds to upgrade and rebuild and, where necessary, replace tracks; and, in accordance with the functions of its operating licence and strategic plan, to provide animal welfare initiatives including rehabilitation facility care and the provision of lifelong homes for greyhounds after their racing careers to ensure that all racing dogs are lovingly cared for beyond the racetrack.

However, I am disappointed that in its safety and welfare grants program Greyhound Racing NSW has failed to recognise the opportunities in southern New South Wales to provide a centre of excellence and the optimal straight track for the industry in our region. To truly reach its goal to achieve and enhance the track portfolio, southern New South Wales must be considered and not ignored. A centre of excellence must be established in southern New South Wales to ensure a holistic approach that caters for all areas of New South Wales, to support the industry in southern New South Wales, to ensure Greyhound Racing NSW achieves its goals and, importantly, to support the many trainers and participants in our region.

The city of Goulburn is ideally located on the Hume Highway less than an hour from the Southern Highlands, an hour from the Australian Capital Territory and less than two hours from Sydney. Goulburn is easily accessible for both regional and metropolitan markets. The Goulburn Greyhound Racing Club is dedicated to providing the best facilities possible and already regularly hosts many events. Goulburn as the home for a centre of excellence is a fantastic option for all parties involved. I note an article in the *Goulburn Post* dated 5 August 2020 whereby Goulburn Mulwaree Council also expressed its support for Goulburn to be considered. A centre of excellence should be considered on a greenfield site and I will be fighting hard to get this investment in Goulburn.

Greyhound racing is already an important part of Goulburn's economy. If the centre of excellence is built there the entire region will benefit. A centre of excellence would go a long way towards supporting the sport's owners and trainers as well as the health and welfare of the animals. The facility would enhance the city's tourism offering and drive economic growth in the region. The Goulburn Greyhound Club's facilities are strongly supported by the community and local club president Patrick Day advises they are currently employing 16 locals on a regular basis across operational, officiating and hospitality capacities. The expansion of Goulburn's facilities would allow for a more holistic approach to greyhound racing and care with better welfare and integrity outcomes. I call on both the Minister and Greyhound Racing NSW to recognise the need for a centre of excellence in southern New South Wales and I look forward to further discussions on the matter.

BATHURST ELECTORATE PROJECTS

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (15:38:55): It gives me great pleasure to speak in this House about some wonderful initiatives and projects that are occurring in the electorate of Bathurst. When you look at the things occurring in the Bathurst electorate and the neighbouring Cootamundra electorate of my parliamentary colleague you can see the investment and the projects that are changing the lives of our communities. The investment is something that we have not seen for a very long time. Over the last number of years that investment has certainly been making a big difference to the way in which people live and do things in our local area.

Today I will talk about a number of initiatives and projects occurring in our local area. The first of those is Mount Panorama. Members might think about Mount Panorama as the place where we see a lot of car race events held throughout the year. The one that all members will know is the Supercheap Auto Bathurst 1000. That event brings over 200,000 visitors to the city each year. However, throughout the year there are many visitors and locals who like to go up and have a look at the Mount Panorama racing circuit. A lot of people do not realise that it is actually a public road when racing is not taking place. That 6.2 kilometre track is quite an attraction for visitors and locals alike. Some 300,000 cars travel around the track each and every year. People in the area also like to walk and run around the mountain with their families and friends, and quite often we get visitors walking around that track. But when there are over 300,000 cars travelling around it can be quite dicey on occasions for both motorists and pedestrians.

The New South Wales Government has made an investment of \$1 million, along with \$1 million from the local council, to construct a boardwalk. The boardwalk commences at Griffins Bend and goes for about 1.7 kilometres, coming out at the Bathurst Light Car Club. This is important. It means that pedestrians will still be able to walk some of the most dangerous bends and places where it can be difficult for motorists to see them, but they will be able to do it in a safer manner. At the top of the mountain around 420 metres of the boardwalk are elevated, with a viewing platform so that anyone who walks the mountain can stand at the very top and look over the entire city of Bathurst. It is an incredible investment and one that I know will make a big difference to visitors and locals alike.

I also mention that police in the Bathurst area are certainly now at full strength. It is the first time we have seen that happen in a long time. The fact that the area recently received an additional three police officers gives assurance to the community right across the Chifley local area command. I know that the member for Cootamundra has done an incredible amount of work with the Cowra area, which is part of that command. Bathurst now also has two police dogs, Kevin and Chaser, that will cover the Chifley local area command. They are important dogs that will be reducing crime and aiding drug detection right across the command. We have also got a dog handler and a new general duties officer who has been put on, as well as an additional officer who is going to become part of the crime prevention team of the Chifley command.

Water is another important issue. We talk about droughts and the need for water in our local communities. Up until a couple of weeks ago Bathurst's water supplies were down to about 29 per cent capacity. However, the recent rainfall over the last couple of weeks has seen the dam climb to almost 50 per cent, which is good news for residents, businesses and industry in the area. But there has also been investment by the New South Wales Government. The Government has provided the local council, which is the water authority, with almost \$25 million to go towards water initiatives that are needed for the local community so that they do not run out of drinking water. I thank the Minister for the work that she has done in making sure our communities are able to

address the issues around water security for the local area. Finally, I give a shout-out to Lithgow and the Zig Zag Railway. Laing O'Rourke has done an amazing job in cleaning up that site, removing sheds and asbestos. Two weeks ago we saw the first locomotive back running on the Zig Zag Railway. I cannot wait to see it operational, when it will bring back 60,000 visitors each and every year.

MICHAEL TRAN

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (15:44:09): Today I stand here proudly to recognise Mr Michael Tran, who is a young leader in my community and my former staff member. Michael is also a well-known individual to many of us in this place. We have seen Michael work tirelessly for his various passions, with politics being just one of them. In July this year Michael was admitted to the Royal Australian Navy and currently is in training to become a naval officer. For the many of us who know him, we can all see that joining the Navy suits Michael perfectly. I am sure that his deep loyalty, commitment and endurance will shine through.

Backtracking five years, I first met Michael while he was still a student at the Canley Vale High School when he approached me to ask for a \$400 sponsorship for his place at the YMCA NSW Junior Parliament. At the YMCA NSW Junior Parliament, and subsequently for the years in which he was involved in the YMCA NSW Youth Parliament, Michael made it clear that he had a deep passion and determination for helping others. He had a strong voice, fighting passionately for what he believed in. I am proud to say that this passion for making a positive impact continued beyond the Youth Parliament.

Within my community Michael was heavily involved with the Fairfield City Council Youth Advisory Committee and was a strong advocate for youth issues and policies. Michael was also the co-chairman of one of our biggest community events, the Fairfield Relay For Life, where he worked with hundreds of young people and community members to raise life-changing funds for the Cancer Council NSW. In 2018 Michael and the Fairfield Relay For Life committee raised over \$100,000 and were recognised with both national and international awards for their events. This is a true testament for the passion and determination underlining the work to which Michael commits himself.

Michael's commitment to the community can also be seen in his role with White Ribbon Australia where he aimed to raise awareness about domestic violence prevention in our area. As a White Ribbon Day ambassador, Michael made several school presentations to raise awareness and gain commitment to domestic violence prevention within the youth in our community. In his time as an electorate officer, Michael assisted many of my constituents who were in need of support. Regardless of the situation, Michael always presented himself well and displayed great respect and friendliness to everyone who crossed his path. I could always count on Michael to serve my constituents at the best of his ability while also supporting me in whatever I needed.

Turning a new leaf, I am excited to see him as an officer in the Royal Australian Navy. I know many will agree with me when I say Michael will be an asset to the Royal Australian Navy, and that his leadership and determination will lead him far in his life. We all know that it is not an easy feat to become a naval officer and his pathway with the Royal Australian Navy will not be an easy one, but I know that his passion, determination and endurance will continue to push him to excel. I conclude by once again thanking Michael for his service to his community, to my office and to the State over the past few years. I wish him all the best in his new chapter of life in serving our nation.

SAN MIGUEL FAMILY CENTRE

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (15:47:57): I wish to update the House on my visit to the San Miguel Family Centre in North Richmond on a beautiful and sunny day on 16 July this year. I was very pleased to be joined by the Hon. Gareth Ward, the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services. San Miguel Family Centre supports young families and focuses on early intervention to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty, homelessness, domestic violence and welfare dependence. The San Miguel Family Centre provides temporary accommodation for parents and children, although the assistance does not stop there. It also provides counselling and guidance to assist them in overcoming the central issues that cause homelessness. The parents are then in a position to secure sustainable housing and employment, which makes them self-sufficient and drastically improves their own and their children's prospects in life.

The residents at the San Miguel Family Centre are in essence being assisted to help themselves and eventually stand on their own two feet. This is a very important job and the responsibility that the staff members have is taken seriously. I was very pleased with what I saw and heard during my visit, which really demonstrated why the centre has an outstanding reputation. I also saw firsthand the diligent and hardworking efforts of the staff. San Miguel is nestled on 19 pristine Hawkesbury hectares. It is an ideal healing and nurturing environment for expectant mothers who spend up to 20 months in the care and guidance of the San Miguel staff and volunteers.

The work done in this centre is truly life changing and the staff find great satisfaction in seeing a young family bond, develop and grow.

The tour around the facility left me in no doubt that the residents are in very good and capable hands. It was very evident that the interests of the young residents are at the heart of all the staff members' efforts. I could see that the residents were definitely benefiting from and appreciative of those efforts. I was very pleased to also see that the \$10,000 discretionary grant, generously given by the Premier, was put to good use with the construction of a food pantry in the community kitchen of Jack's Place, which is a community facility on the site that was named in honour of the mighty rugby league coach, Jack Gibson. Jack was a big supporter of this not-for-profit organisation. New mums at the centre are taught how to cook healthy, nutritious meals and the brand-new pantry is now fully stocked.

I thank the staff at the San Miguel Family Centre for the lovely morning tea, which provided an inviting opportunity to informally chat with both staff and residents. The homemade food and drinks on offer were delicious. I could see the strong appreciation the young residents have for the care that staff members offer them, and there was a high level of respect between the staff members and the residents. I congratulate and thank Tracy Adams, the CEO of yourtown, of which the San Miguel Family Centre is a part. I also thank all the great staff at the San Miguel Family Centre and across yourtown for their amazing work. The community of Hawkesbury and beyond are also thankful and definitely better off for having the centre. I look forward to visiting again.

Business interrupted.

Bills

WATER MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT (TRANSPARENCY OF WATER RIGHTS) BILL 2020

First Reading

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

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I advise the House that I have received a written authority from the Hon. Mark Banasiak, MLC, advising that the member for Murray will have carriage of the bill in the Legislative Assembly. I set down the second reading of the bill as an order of the day for tomorrow.

Private Members' Statements

COVID-19 AND NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY

Business resumed.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (15:52:23): A diverse and vibrant late-night economy is a hallmark of a great global city and it is essential that we establish a roadmap to help the city's nightlife recover after the pandemic. Before COVID-19 hit, Sydney's late-night economy was crippled by six years of 1.30 a.m. lockouts and over a decade of a freeze on any new premises. While the provisions provided an important circuit-breaker to spiralling violence and unsustainable venue growth in inner-city hotspots, they impacted on the city's social and cultural fabric, and its reputation as an interesting place to visit at night. The lifting of the lockouts on Oxford Street and in the central business district brought hope of a rebirth, but unfortunately COVID-19 has required new harsh and important restrictions on late-night premises to protect life. It is a significant blow to the industry, especially as we potentially face a second wave. The vast majority of hospitality venues are now barely keeping afloat, with many operators telling me they may not survive. The sector is based on bringing people together and providing opportunities to socialise, making it especially vulnerable to impacts of social distancing.

Before COVID-19 the hospitality industry employed almost a million people across Australia, but the pandemic has led to mass lay-offs in the sector. Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows job cuts of 27.1 per cent over April. Over 6 per cent of additional workers left the industry between May and June. There are estimates that up to half of hospitality jobs could be gone by the end of September and predictions that COVID-19 could result in 30 per cent to 50 per cent of hospitality businesses becoming insolvent. Around 40 per cent of employees in the industry are not eligible for JobKeeper because they are short term, casual or temporary visa holders. Letting bars sell takeaway food and drinks—which was introduced in response to my request—is providing much-needed income but takeaway can replace only 5 per cent to 10 per cent of business. Venues are unlikely to be able to cater to their full capacity for a long time and will miss out on the boom periods of summer events and Christmas. The recession will have broader impacts as people have less money to spend on discretionary expenses. There are reports that when restrictions were eased after the lockdown, landlords began demanding rent increases that far exceeded any gain in returns. The growing community transmission across

Sydney shows that the business situation remains unstable and any increase to rent will hit a business' future viability. We urgently need a plan to stop the industry from collapse.

If the sector has a clear guaranteed future, it will give operators confidence and encourage investment. The planned removal of the liquor freeze in the CBD and Kings Cross on 1 December is a good start in supporting new businesses in the city. Venues should be able to make an application without having to go separately to various agencies, such as Liquor & Gaming NSW, the council and police. We need to use this time to get the licence density in Kings Cross right and remove the 1.30 a.m. lockout that still exists. Sydney WorldPride 2023 will bring significant activation to the inner city at night. The guarantee of an influx of visitors to the area in 2023 is helping to boost confidence in the hospitality sector, particularly around Oxford Street, while planning is providing economic stimulus.

Investment in new cultural facilities such as social hubs could attract new patrons to late-night trading spots and revitalise their economies. The Metro Minerva Theatre in Potts Point provides significant opportunity to create new theatre space and diversify Kings Cross at night. Planning could start now to deliver a facility when the pandemic is over. Financial help is needed to give businesses access to low or no interest recovery loans and payroll tax deferrals must continue for another six months. Federal measures are also needed to expand the coverage of JobKeeper and extend the moratorium on bankruptcy. Importantly, we need a plan for the long-term survival of the sector. I understand a late-night strategy has been in development for some time but it needs to be brought forward in response to COVID-19, with the focus on protection and recovery. I call on the Government to establish a pathway that ensures the city can have a late-night economy that is safe and exciting during and after the pandemic.

LIVERPOOL AND ANSTO INNOVATION PRECINCTS

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (15:55:09): I will speak today about two innovation precincts that will have great benefits for the Holsworthy community. They are local projects that are already underway and will help to support the creation of jobs for our community. First, the Liverpool Innovation Precinct is a collaboration between key stakeholders and the Government to offer a precinct that focuses on education, health and resourcing sectors in an area that is experiencing growth. The Liverpool Innovation Precinct is based around the Government's \$790 million redevelopment of Liverpool Hospital. This project and the precinct will deliver a significant number of job opportunities for the local community. Through innovating and developing new businesses it will drive economic growth for our region.

The Liverpool Innovation Precinct is part of the plan that acknowledges the importance of the Liverpool CBD and the region as a whole. The innovation precinct will transform Liverpool into a region that is world leading in innovation. It makes sense for this innovation precinct to be situated in Liverpool as it has one of the country's largest hospitals, accompanied by major health institutions, several schools, a growing university and a TAFE and it is a major residential and transport hub. All of these institutions will complement the innovation precinct and allow for the local area to be a dynamic health, education, research and employment area in south-western Sydney.

It is noteworthy to add that the Liverpool Innovation Precinct is strategically located near the Western Sydney Aerotropolis and there are future plans to extend the Sydney Metro Southwest from the city to Bankstown, which will then strengthen the connection to the Sydney CBD. It is situated perfectly, particularly one that continues on to Liverpool. The innovation hub will see our top universities and the Ingham Institute working together alongside our hospital to provide leading innovative research and training, education and high-quality care for our prospering community. I would like to mention the Ingham Institute for Applied Medical Research, including its CEO Darryl Harkness, and thank them for the amazing work they do focusing on their research and the health needs of residents in south-west Sydney.

The Australia's Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation [ANSTO] Innovation Precinct, located at Lucas Heights, is on the other side of my electorate. The Government already has committed \$12.5 million of funding to provide the acceleration of medical and technological research. The funding will work to create a new world-class precinct that focuses on businesses, scientists and startups. The nuclear medicine and technology hub will help develop innovative and new nuclear technological and medical advances that will make a difference to our community. The funding will allow for the expansion of the innovation precinct and will result in the increased number of scientists and students at the centre, with funding going towards the graduate centre to encourage young people to get involved in advancing technological and medical research for New South Wales.

It is only fitting that the Government support a world-leading nuclear research facility. As such, I have written to the Premier and the Treasurer in support of ANSTO's proposal for further funding under the infrastructure and job acceleration fund. Further funding under the program will enhance and contribute to the development of the innovation precinct, which will be very welcome to the local community. ANSTO is also a

major employer within the Sutherland shire and southern Sydney. Already the construction of the innovation precinct has accounted for the potential creation of over 5,000 jobs for the local area in the coming years. Continuing development of the precinct will result in more job opportunities and boost the local economy as well. The innovation precinct also provides scholarships to graduates, allowing them to contribute to projects that will result in beneficial education opportunities. I acknowledge and thank ShireBiz, particularly Barry Alchin and the late Tony Blain. They have been a driving force and advocate for the ANSTO innovation project.

It is exciting to have two major innovation projects that will greatly benefit the Holsworthy electorate. Both are driving forces in the creation of jobs, advancing the local economy and becoming world leaders in scientific and medical research and technology for New South Wales, for Australia and for the world. Both precincts are working to deliver amazing opportunities for my electorate and, as I said, are leading the world in both scientific and medical innovative projects and research. They are, therefore, putting the Holsworthy electorate on the map as one of the innovation capitals of New South Wales.

Petitions

NARRABRI GAS PROJECT

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

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:02:43): Today I speak to a petition from a remarkable bunch of people, the Knitting Nannas. They are women who care earnestly and deeply about our environment, the future of this beautiful planet that we live on and the future of our children and our grandchildren. That is something I hope we will all agree is of utmost importance. The Knitting Nannas have collected 11,338 signatures to this petition. The citizens of New South Wales have brought to our attention the potential for the Narrabri gas project to produce significant pollution to air, soil and water systems, including the Great Artesian Basin. I acknowledge in particular the work of Kathy McKenzie, Robin Murray, Marie Flood, Bronwyn Vost and Gill Burrows—Knitting Nannas from the Northern Rivers, Blue Mountains and across New South Wales. I thank and acknowledge all those who signed the position, who live well beyond this Chamber, and particularly those who live within the vicinity of Narrabri.

I will start by referring to one of the signatories. The words of Coonamble farmer Anne Kennedy offer a sobering insight. She said, "During the height of the drought there were towns that relied on nothing but bore water for months. It really drives home how important it is that we protect our groundwater. If Santos' planned gas field goes ahead, its impacts on underground water resources, upon which our communities depend, will last for centuries. If we lose the groundwater, we have no other water here. This is such a scary thought because so many properties would be simply uninhabitable." My colleagues will speak to the Chief Scientist's recommendations and to energy pricing and supply issues. I am going to speak briefly to climate change.

Earlier this year we watched, heartbroken, as much of our State battled horrific bushfires. On the back of drought, we experienced more devastation. We watched as our emergency services workers risked their lives to save others, some of whom made the ultimate sacrifice, leaving grief-stricken loved ones behind. We watched millions of hectares of bushland burn and we looked on in horror as many communities fought to save their businesses and homes. We watched billions of native animals perish, helpless to escape the fury of our blackest of summers. We pulled together as a nation then. All across the country conversations were laden with the topic of climate change. How can we do better? How can we make the changes needed to protect and preserve our environment and water in the future?

One point raised around this Narrabri Gas Project involves the myth that coal seam gas [CSG] is a transition fuel between coal and renewables. Let me address that for a moment. Coal seam gas is mostly methane, which is a much more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. Methane is unavoidably lost to the atmosphere as fugitive emissions when coal seams are disturbed by gas extraction. Over 20 years, methane has a global warming potential that is 84 to 87 times greater than carbon dioxide. Let us all contemplate that. There has been limited research in this field, primarily overseen and funded by the companies that have a vested interest in the apparent findings of this research. More extensive research is needed. Our underground water sources are precious. A guarantee of the integrity of aquifers and groundwater is no trifling matter, nor is the volume of water used in the exploration process. Can we honestly spare this immensely valuable resource to such an extent?

In 2014 both the Government and Labor committed to the building of a regulatory framework specific to the mining of unconventional gas. Within an ABC New England story on 5 June 2020 and in a presentation to the Independent Planning Commission [IPC] recently, Coonamble stock and station agent David Chadwick said, "We live on the Artesian Basin; we understand the risk that this imposes, and it is totally unacceptable." I also urge everyone to listen to Mr Chadwick's presentation to the IPC. The story also noted:

The former Chief Scientist of NSW, Professor Mary O'Kane AC, made 16 recommendations to the government in 2014 on how to mitigate the risks of the coal seam gas industry.

A parliamentary inquiry earlier this year revealed just two of those had been fully implemented.

The environment Minister has spoken about the need for the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer's recommendations to be implemented in full. My colleagues here will speak more to the issue of these recommendations. They are critical to the assessment of the Narrabri Gas Project. The widely held view on this project, one shared by groups as diverse as NSW Farmers and the Country Women's Association, is that there should not be CSG exploration or extraction in the Pilliga. The risk to groundwater coupled with other environmental risks in this sensitive ecological area is real and the basis of this petition. If the past difficult months have taught us anything, surely it is that life can be unpredictable and uncertain. COVID has shown us that we are not indestructible and we are not always in control of how things unfold. Another farmer's voice, Mark Robinson from Narrabri, said:

We're farmers trying to do the best we can to feed everyone and we're getting overrun by a mining company that will render our farms utterly useless. The fact is, this is environmental destruction at a most basic level.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (16:07:42): It is almost laughable to think those opposite would purport to represent the opponents of gas, given their track record last time they were in government, when they plastered the State with petroleum exploration licences. They were also handing out mining leases like confetti to their friends and colleagues in a corrupt way. That was all hidden under the part 3A process. The whole reason we have the Independent Planning Commission [IPC] is because of the rorts and corruption in planning from Labor in government through to 2011. We all know that as fact. That is why the "I" in the IPC represents an independent body that is making these decisions.

Neither the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces nor I, or any other member of this Government, is going to tell the Independent Planning Commission what it should do, regardless of how many petitions are presented. If we did, those opposite would come into this House and say that members of the Government had interfered with an independent process. We have heard this over and over again previously when it came to scrutiny of the IPC. We always talk about the independence of the IPC and it looks like Labor has learnt nothing since its time in government when those opposite rorted the planning system to benefit their colleagues and friends of the Labor Party as well as donors. That is the truth of why we have the IPC.

How often do we hear those opposite—I just heard it now—talk about the science? They say, "Let's look to the science." That is exactly what we are doing. That is what the Independent Planning Commission will do and that is what the planning department has done. Every proposed State significant development is carefully considered in line with the strict requirements of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and other relevant policies. The Narrabri Gas Project is no exception. An independent water expert panel put together for the planning assessment "did not identify any land or water issues that were likely to result in significant impacts on people or the environment, or that could not be managed". That is the science that those opposite keep telling us we should look to, but they want to ignore the science when it does not suit their political case. The department of planning noted it "found it difficult to reconcile the community concerns about the Narrabri Gas Project with the technical advice from experts that the risk of any significant impacts occurring is generally low".

Let us go through the process. Importantly, no fracking is required and, despite a concerted campaign, the assessment report notes "the project area is not a major recharge area for the Great Artesian Basin". That is the science, again from the experts—the work of geologists, geotechnical engineers, chemical engineers and hydrogeologists. They are all scientists, but those opposite think they know better. Once again those opposite talk about the science but if the science does not suit their political argument, guess what, the science does not matter. This State and this nation are going through one of the most challenging periods in history. When the worst of the health impacts has passed, we will need State-building projects like Narrabri.

Again this is a matter for the IPC to determine. It is not the domain of Labor to come into this Chamber and somehow say it is the role of politicians to change or make a decision in relation to a significant planning decision, especially when Labor wants to jump into bed with the shooters party and The Greens in an unholy alliance to interfere with an independent process through the IPC. Opponents and supporters have had a full seven days to express their views to the commissioners. All of those submissions will be considered by the IPC. Here is the question: Did any of those opposite, any of the Labor speakers today, make a submission through the consultation period? The answer is absolutely not because they do not care about the science, the facts or the investment. They do not care about anything bar the politics. They decided to come to this place, into this House at this time to play politics on an issue that could make or break regional and rural New South Wales and make or break the economy of New South Wales, especially in the context of rebuilding this State in the wake of COVID and the destruction to our economy.

The Narrabri Gas Project will generate \$3.6 billion in capital investment, up to 1,300 jobs during construction and 200 ongoing jobs during operations, but there is more to that. This will unlock the potential for a new manufacturing revival in this State, which is exactly what the Australian public is calling for off the back of COVID. We need to produce more and manufacture more. Good gas and energy policies will give us the competitive advantage to compete with the world. This project has significant support from the Narrabri council, the local chamber of commerce and many others. Of course the member for Barwon does not want to support this gas project but does want a special activation precinct that is underpinned by gas. That shows the hypocrisy of the local member for Barwon and, more importantly, the hypocrisy of Labor today.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:12:49): As the shadow Minister for environment I thank the thousands of New South Wales residents who have signed this petition. Gaining more than 10,000 signatures on any petition is a very difficult task. The Knitting Nannas who have pushed this petition are to be congratulated. I know that, were we not living in a pandemic, the gallery would be packed today. I imagine that instead there are many watching this online and to them I say thank you, because the pages and pages of signatures reveal what this Liberal-Nationals Government chooses to ignore: the genuine and clear community concern about the Narrabri coal seam gas project. Every member of this House should have heard those concerns that exist.

We have intergenerational farmers and their workers raising their concerns. We have local small businesses from that region raising their concerns. We have the Country Women's Association, the NSW Farmers Association, doctors, community groups, environment organisations and residents by their thousands all raising significant concerns about this project. There were 23,000 submissions made to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, including 17,000 submissions from New South Wales prior to the Government giving its tick of approval. According to the proponent, Santos, 98 per cent of submissions opposed the project. Thousands more submissions were received by the Independent Planning Commission [IPC] in addition to an 8,000-signature petition which was organised by the Nature Conservation Council.

More than 400 people presented to the IPC over seven days of public hearings. Over the course of the hearings the IPC has heard from many voices both for and against the project, as it should. It heard from manufacturers and supporters of the project who consider the proposal to be safe and that it will help address the biggest problem facing our manufacturing sector—the cost of energy. It has also heard from those with serious and genuine concerns about the project, concerns that are given voice in this petition before the Parliament today. We know that people across the State have for years been sending a very clear message to the Government about their failings when it comes to coal seam gas. Not only has the Government failed to deliver the commitments it made, but it has misled the community and given the green light to a project based on complete falsehoods.

Here are the facts. In 2013 Liberal Premier Barry O'Farrell directed the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer to conduct an independent review of coal seam gas in New South Wales. The Chief Scientist took more than a year and a half to consider the very complex issues related to coal seam gas [CSG]. She provided 16 recommendations to the Government designed to give confidence to the community around CSG. In 2015 the Government announced that it would accept and implement every one of the recommendations. But it has not, and that is entirely the fault of the Government. The Chief Scientist's recommendations sought to provide clear and unambiguous scientific and regulatory information to the public. They sought to ensure that any coal seam gas projects were fully insured against any risks to the environment.

The recommendations sought to provide certainty around the protections the community could expect from an unconventional gas project if it were to proceed. The Government now makes spurious claims—and I am sure they will come today, especially from the next speaker—that it has implemented those recommendations. We all know that is not true. A parliamentary inquiry earlier this year found it is not true. What more do we need than this petition to show that the Government has not put in place the measures that are required to give the community confidence in this industry? Tens of thousands of submissions and tens of thousands of signatures say it all.

The Government's failure to implement the Chief Scientist's recommendations not only places the environment and water at risk, but also it places jobs in construction, agriculture, mining and manufacturing at risk. If the Independent Planning Commission does not approve the project, Santos will have the Government to blame. If manufacturers struggle to access affordable and reliable energy supply, the Liberal-National Government is to blame. If the Independent Planning Commission does approve the project, then the environment is harmed. The Government is to blame.

NSW Labor has always stood for a strong manufacturing sector. We will support the sector. We always advocate for policies and plans that support existing industries and jobs and look to creating more jobs, especially in the regions. But it cannot be at the expense of the environment. There is no economy without the environment. For any extractive project to proceed it must be safe and environmentally responsible. By failing to implement

the Chief Scientist's recommendations the Government has failed industry, workers, communities and the environment.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (16:17:28): I speak to the petition brought by the member for the Blue Mountains. I begin by saying that gas is a vital resource for our community—even in the Blue Mountains. In fact, gas is currently reticulated to customers in the suburbs of Lapstone, Glenbrook, Blaxland, Mount Riverview, Warrimoo, Katoomba, Medlow Bath, Leura, Wentworth Falls and many other villages in the Blue Mountains. The provision of gas reticulation services to customers is driven by market demand. That makes sense because households rely on it for cooking, heating and hot water. Gas is used industrially by 33,000 users in the State. It is also used in the manufacturing process by 500 heavy industrial users, and 300,000 workers are employed by those industrial users.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a tragedy for our economy and for jobs, particularly in our regions. It is important to highlight the significant economic contribution this project will make to the local community. This project will offer \$3.6 billion capital investment and up to 1,300 jobs during construction, and 200 ongoing jobs during operation—that does not include those jobs I have highlighted that rely so heavily on this resource. I have manufacturers in my electorate that are major users of gas. Our gas supplies and gas projects are under threat by an unholy alliance of The Greens, Labor and the shooters party, who are getting together and seeking to pre-empt the determinations before they are properly assessed through parliamentary processes.

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment engaged independent experts to provide advice on the project's potential environmental, social, economic, heritage and hazard impacts. The department has undertaken a thorough assessment of all the risks and benefits of the proposal, and it has made a recommendation to the Independent Planning Commission for a decision. I acknowledge that one of the critical concerns of the assessment of the project is water. It may come as a surprise to those opposite, but farming, forestry, mining and water management have lived symbiotically in our regions for some time. Nevertheless, the department took extra cautions in assessing this project's effects on water. The department established a four-person water expert panel, chaired by Professor Peter Cook from the University of Melbourne, to critically review the water resources assessment of the project.

The department also sought advice from the Commonwealth Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal Mining Development. The department's rigorous assessment of the proposal sought independent expert advice on a range of issues, including groundwater impacts. In its detailed investigations the panel found that the risks of the project to water resources are able to be effectively managed and are unlikely to result in any significant impacts on the region's water resources. After its careful consideration of expert advice and a comprehensive assessment of the project, the department referred the project to the Independent Planning Commission, recommending that the project was approvable subject to a suite of strict conditions.

The department concluded that the project is critical for energy security and reliability in New South Wales; would deliver significant economic benefits to New South Wales and, importantly, the Narrabri region; has been designed to minimise impacts on the region's water resources; would comply with the relevant requirements and standards in government legislation, policies and guidelines; and would not result in any significant impacts on the local community or the environment. That said, the recommended conditions include: strict water performance measures; groundwater monitoring and modelling programs; a detailed water management plan; and a requirement to establish an independent water technical advisory group to inform the regulation of the project should it be approved.

I return to my earlier point about the importance of gas to jobs. In the current economic climate of the pandemic, as a Government we must look at every opportunity to increase the number of jobs we facilitate. If we are to close off gas fields and pre-empt the decision of consent authorities through parliamentary processes, we will have a terrible ripple effect on jobs and our economy. That is something that I know those opposite seem to love. I said earlier that major manufacturers in my electorate use gas in their work. If we agree to what Labor is proposing, not only are jobs directly resultant from the natural gas industry at threat but so too are downstream jobs like those in my electorate.

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (16:22:24): The member for the Blue Mountains has brought a petition from the Knitting Nannas, signed by over 10,000 people who hold concerns about the Narrabri Gas Project. I thank the member for bringing the petition and I thank the Knitting Nannas for their unwavering commitment to polite engagement on what is a contentious issue. The petition brings to the attention of the House the potential for the Narrabri Gas Project to produce significant pollution to air, soil and water systems—including the Great Artesian Basin—and to cause human and animal health issues, while farmers face the growing challenge with insurance against the industry.

My views and concerns regarding the Narrabri Gas Project are well reported in the public domain. I again emphasise those concerns on behalf of thousands of constituents who back my position. Water—our most precious resource—should never be put at risk. Ground and surface water needs to be protected for our communities to exist. The electorate of Barwon—and much of New South Wales—is still feeling the impact of the worst drought in living memory. The towns of Narrabri, Coonamble, Bourke, Walgett, Warren, Coonabarabran and many others have relied on groundwater for their survival. Groundwater has been used exclusively for agriculture and domestic use in most Barwon communities throughout the drought. Water for stock and reduced irrigated agriculture is all groundwater. We cannot have the often talked about clean, green food without clean water.

If the source of groundwater is contaminated, it will matter not if we have all the jobs and gas in the world. Communities will simply not survive. While we have water in weir pools today, one day we will be back to relying on groundwater in this country. We know we will go back into drought. Gambling with water should not be considered when it is central to everything we do. There are alternative sources of energy, including better policy, but no alternatives to water. I note that in his written response to the petition Minister Stokes states:

... the Department has found the project is in the public interest and is approvable, subject to a comprehensive suite of strict conditions.

Why would the community have faith in these strict conditions? In 2014 the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government was handed a strict set of conditions—the 16 recommendations from the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer. They liked the recommendations so much they accepted them in full and developed the NSW Gas Plan. But in February of this year, a Legislative Council committee found that only recommendations 14 and 15 have been—arguably—fully implemented. You would think that after accepting these conditions and developing a plan, the Government and its agencies would be actively working towards a full implementation of the recommendations prior to proceeding with approvals for coal seam gas mining activities, but they are not. The New South Wales Government has set its own standard and then walked past it.

Why should we believe that a new set of standards unique to the Narrabri Gas Project would be treated any differently? The Government and Santos already have shown utter contempt around the rules they continue to ignore from the Chief Scientist. The agriculture industry in New South Wales contributes millions of dollars to the economy but it relies on our clean and green image which is underpinned by producers signing statutory declarations guaranteeing the health and safety of their products. Farmers are responsible for signing this declaration and they will be liable if their produce is contaminated, which is a very real risk for the farmers that rely on artesian bore water. If our groundwater is contaminated due to the actions of the coal seam gas industry, those contaminants can find their way into the food chain and destroy an industry. Is that a risk we want to accept?

Let us look at a myth parroted by the Government. The myth is that the Santos project will be the biggest job-creating project in the Narrabri region for a generation, and that it is expected to create 1,300 jobs during construction, 200 operational jobs and 500 direct and indirect jobs in the region. That sounds familiar because we heard it a few minutes ago. We could attribute that to any member of the Government because they keep trotting it out, but where does it come from? It comes from a report commissioned and paid for by Santos. Was it independently vetted by the department? No. Independent analysis by The Australia Institute has shown that the benefits of the project are heavily overstated while the costs are understated. They found that when regional towns in Queensland became service centres for the gas industry, existing businesses often lost their skilled staff and faced higher costs for rent and services. Overall, nine jobs were lost in the services sector for every 10 new CSG jobs, while 18 agricultural jobs were lost for every 10 people employed in the coal seam gas industry. Many parallels can be drawn between the towns in Queensland and Narrabri, and we must learn from that experience.

Lastly, the risks are present but the solution to errors and mistakes are not present when it comes to the Narrabri Gas Project. The industry will argue that the risks in the project are small; however, while the risks may be small the potential impacts will have consequences for successive generations. The mining sector has a tried and true risk assessment saying, "What is the risk of this occurring? What is the consequence if it does?" My view is the risk of aquifer damage is moderate to high and the consequences are catastrophic and irreversible. The mining sector would say not to do it.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (16:27:35): I thank the members representing the electorates of Blue Mountains, Monaro, Port Stephens, Upper Hunter and Barwon for their contributions to this debate. It is encouraging to see so many people in this House and in our community actively engaging with the New South Wales planning system, and it is encouraging to see them share their views on this significant State development application. I acknowledge the more than 11,000 people who felt so passionately about the issue that they joined their name to this petition collected by the Knitting Nannas. I have had great conversations with the Pittwater Knitting Nannas and, like other members, I have had the opportunity to talk to many individuals, including friends and family in the region, who have a range of interests in relation to this project and also to the issue of coal seam gas extraction more widely.

The petition calls on me to intervene in a planning decision-making process and impose a view, but that is not what our law provides for—and for good reason. The Government believes that decision-making about major projects should not be politicised. The role of the Parliament and the Executive arm of government is to pass laws, set policy and monitor adherence with laws. But decision-making on contentious processes, like this one, is best left to a well-resourced independent expert body that has the benefit of listening to all the views in the community and is able to recognise the huge range of views on such a complex and transformative project as this one. I am choosing my words carefully because I do not want to contaminate this process in any way. It is really important that everyone who wishes to have their say has it. I note that public hearings on this matter have been extended. It is my understanding that written submissions are still able to be submitted and that a final decision will then be reached over the coming weeks.

The job that has been handed to the commissioners of the Independent Planning Commission is an incredibly complex and difficult one—there is a huge amount of evidence to sift through. They will require the wisdom of Solomon in their role and I wish them all the best. In conclusion, the best thing I can say—and I hope it is something we can all agree upon—is that we wish them well in their deliberations. We hope that they exercise real wisdom on the basis of the evidence they have before them and that they note that the underlying objective of our planning system—the golden thread, if you will—is to bring about ecologically sustainable development of the resources of this State for the benefit of people now and into the future. We wish them all the best as they go about their role.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:30:51): In reply: I extend my deepest thanks to the member for Port Stephens and the member for Barwon. I note the contributions of the member for Monaro, the member for Upper Hunter and the Minister. The petition comes before the House only a matter of weeks after a private member's bill was debated. The substance of that bill was to make sure that all of the recommendations of the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer had been implemented in full—in line with the Government's own commitments to do so and while the proposal in question is being examined by the Independent Planning Commission [IPC]. I note that 404 people registered an interest in speaking at the public hearings, which led to the panel extending the hearing period. Over the course of the hearings, the panel heard from many proponents, both for and against the project—as it should. It heard from manufacturers and supporters of the project who consider the proposal to be safe and who say that it will help address the biggest problem facing our manufacturing sector—the cost of energy and future gas supply. Project supporters highlighted the jobs benefit both in and around Narrabri but also right through to the manufacturing areas in western Sydney, the Hunter and the Illawarra.

NSW Labor has always stood for a strong manufacturing sector in the State and will continue to advocate for policies and plans that support jobs. We will continue to look at creating more job opportunities, particularly jobs in regional areas and those that care for the environment—something that this project does not do. Opponents of the project, including the fantastic Knitting Nannas, also had their say and they have raised very legitimate concerns around the safety of groundwater, the agricultural impacts, carbon emissions and waste streams. Some of those are the subject of this petition. The independent panel will hopefully now consider all of those issues. Let us see its response to the Government's adherence to the chief scientist's recommendations. I suggest that the text from this debate be forwarded through to the IPC. Once again, I thank the Knitting Nannas for their tireless energy and advocacy. I move that the House notes the petition.

Petition noted.

Private Members' Statements

CANTERBURY HOSPITAL

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (16:33:34): The COVID-19 pandemic has created two unprecedented challenges for people around the world. On the one hand, there is the unprecedented health challenge. Governments have scrambled to mobilise enough health resources to ensure that people can receive testing and treatment. On the other hand, there is the unprecedented economic challenge. Entire industries—for example, hospitality and tourism—have effectively shut down or are operating on restrictive orders to try to stop the spread of COVID-19.

However, there is one thing that the New South Wales Government can do right now to help our health and economic systems, and that is to fund and rebuild Canterbury Hospital. It could make an announcement right now. Canterbury Hospital was last redeveloped in 1998 by a Labor Government. In the mid-nineties, after a Coalition Government slated the hospital for closure, it was Opposition Leader Bob Carr, Labor and grassroots activists in our local community who were out there championing Canterbury Hospital to ensure it remained open. Canterbury Hospital was opened in 1928-29, at the peak of the Depression. The Government of the time invested in that project to ensure that local community members had good health services, but also it provided employment for the local community.

The population of Canterbury and its surrounding districts is projected to grow by 39 per cent by 2031—more than 100,000 people over the next 1½ decades. That is a lot of people to be accommodated in our community, where currently there is congestion because our infrastructure has not caught up with the overdevelopment that has been greenlit by this Government. Our community urgently needs an expansion of services to meet its healthcare needs. Canterbury and the neighbouring electorates, including Summer Hill, Lakemba, East Hills and Oatley, are home to some of the most culturally diverse communities in New South Wales. Community members from all those electorates use the services at Canterbury Hospital. I acknowledge the over 900 hardworking staff at Canterbury Hospital. Our healthcare staff—cleaners, orderlies, pathologists, doctors, nurses and midwives—are doing a stellar job, particularly during this time of COVID. They attend to the healthcare needs of our community. During this extraordinary time, which, hopefully, we will never see again in our lifetimes or our kids' lifetimes, they are helping our community.

I thank local area health CEO Teresa Anderson, Canterbury Hospital general manager Kiel Harvey, the Health Services Union, the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association and the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation. On behalf of my electorate and all our community members, I acknowledge and thank the health workers and staff at Canterbury Hospital for the extraordinary work that they are doing at this time. We pray for them, we respect them and we wish them good strength and courage at this very difficult time. We are all willing them on. I also extend a huge thankyou to our entire health workforce in New South Wales.

Our local health district has one of the highest rates of type 2 diabetes. The rate of asthma-related hospitalisations is higher at Canterbury compared to the rest of New South Wales. Rates of bladder, liver, lung, stomach and thyroid cancers have been higher in Canterbury relative to the rest of New South Wales. The Premier says all the time that she governs for all of New South Wales. I am taking her at her word. I say to her that if she governs for all of New South Wales, that means she governs for the people of Canterbury and its districts. There are two things that she can do today. She can come to the House and promise the people of Canterbury and its districts that she will fund their hospital and it will achieve health and economic outcomes.

ALLEN JENKINS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:38:47): I pay tribute to a legendary local firefighter, Allen Jenkins, who works at Belmont Fire Station and lives in Caves Beach in the electorate of Swansea. Allen Jenkins has served New South Wales as a firefighter for over 40 years. In fact, his term of service with Fire and Rescue NSW stretches almost 42 years. When he joined at the age of 19, he started right here in the middle of the city, down at The Rocks. Twenty years ago, though, he made the great choice to move to Caves Beach and became a valued member of our local community, which he has served at Fire and Rescue stations in Belmont and Cardiff. Our community is forever grateful to all of our firefighters. Right across our State they all do such an amazing job to keep us safe.

I have my personal reasons for expressing my gratitude to Allen Jenkins. Last year, my parents' home in Swansea burned down. Amongst the three crews that arrived at my parents' home was the Belmont brigade, with Allen leading the way. When you lose everything that you have, it is so nice to have the care and attention of local firefighters. Allen Jenkins embodied that lovely and empathetic attitude, and he really made a difference. Moreover, many of my friends work at our local Fire and Rescue stations across the electorate, and they have nothing but great things to say about Allen Jenkins. He is regarded as a great bloke and they cannot speak highly enough of him. You can tell how great a bloke Allen is from some of the observations he made about his 40 years on the job when he was interviewed recently by the Newcastle Herald. He said:

You get a lot of satisfaction out of rescues.

You see people on their worst days and hopefully you can make it a bit better for them.

But even things like changing smoke alarm batteries for elderly people, the stories you hear are incredible.

I pass on to Allen the sincerest congratulations of the New South Wales Parliament on a well-earned retirement. On behalf of the Swansea community, I thank him from all of the people he has helped, reassured and taken care of over four decades. Of course, all of our professional firefighters exemplify the public service ethos of hard work, community spirit and commitment to improving and protecting our society. But I reiterate to the Parliament that among them, after almost 42 years of service, Station Officer Allen Jenkins is deserving of particular gratitude. I thank him personally and congratulate him again. Congratulations, Allen.

SEVEN HILLS ELECTORATE TERTIARY EDUCATION

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (16:42:26): I know that the Deputy Speaker and my colleague the member for Riverstone, who is at the table, fully understand that education is a powerful tool that transforms lives. Whether it is the formative years of primary school, a high school teacher who sparks a student's future career, the hands-on learning and lifelong skills that students pick up at TAFE or getting involved in the latest research

efforts at a quality university, it all goes to making quality education. Every member of this House agrees that quality education underpins a great society and a great community. I was proud of the announcement this week by the Premier and the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, Dr Geoff Lee, at Seven Hills High School indicating that that high school will benefit from a \$34 million vocational education and training facility linked with TAFE NSW, which will provide courses in community services, health, transport and trade.

However, I am here tonight to talk specifically about university education in the Seven Hills electorate. I commend the New South Wales Government for its deep involvement with university sites at Westmead, which give local students across the districts of Blacktown, Cumberland, The Hills and Parramatta more quality local choices in tertiary qualifications. The Westmead Health, Education and Innovation Precinct in the Seven Hills electorate is growing and will be an incredible site for learning, research and employment over the next few years. The University of Sydney is currently growing its presence at Westmead, and Western Sydney University will do so as well. The University of Sydney has a well-established dental and oral health campus at Westmead. The education site also teaches a Master of Nursing course for western Sydney students, who are able to train and build their skills at Westmead Hospital, The Children's Hospital at Westmead and the Westmead Private Hospital. Research is a keen interest of students from the University of Sydney and the Westmead Health facilities house students who are investigating beneficial cross-faculty research relating to health, science, business, social sciences, education, law and others.

Currently the university has 2,000 students who undertake study, research or clinical placements at Westmead and almost 1,000 staff and affiliates. Recently the Government delivered a \$1 billion-plus redevelopment of Westmead Hospital with a new 14-storey central acute services building. The redevelopment saw refurbishments to the current research and education facilities with the University of Sydney. The new building has purpose-built education and research units on each floor to ensure Western Sydney and wider New South Wales residents being cared for in its state-of-the-art infrastructure will also see life-changing, positive learnings happening derived from and informing their direct care.

The University of Sydney has invested more than \$80 million in the Westmead Health, Innovation and Education Precinct and has four critical research centres that focus on person-centred innovation and education. These include the Charles Perkins Centre, the Brain and Mind Centre, the Marie Bashir Institute and the Westmead Applied Research Centre. The centres review and investigate the unique context of western Sydney, with its diverse populations and, unfortunately, the prevalence of chronic illnesses, and seeks to address the foundations for changing these circumstances at a local, State, national and even international level. The university's current site at Westmead has students and staff from the Faculty of Medicine and Health, particularly the Sydney Dental School, Sydney Medical School, School of Medical Sciences, Sydney Nursing School and Sydney School of Public Health. Also at the site is the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sydney School of Architecture, Design and Planning and the Faculty of Engineering.

The university is looking to expand its presence at Westmead and Parramatta. By 2030 it looks to add 6,100 students, create 3,100 jobs, provide 1,000-plus affordable housing places and contribute \$2.6 billion to the local economy. By 2050 the university looks to create 20,000 knowledge-intensive jobs at Westmead with more than 25,000 students and 1,000 academic and research roles, and build a vibrant 24/7 destination for culture, arts and sport. In summary, there is absolutely no doubt that the education opportunities available not only in my electorate of Seven Hills but also in wider Sydney are being substantially assisted by the good work of a number of universities that are linking with industries and opportunities occurring in the local area, and providing outstanding quality education for western Sydney residents.

TRANSGRID

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (16:47:32): On Tuesday I was asked by the member for Wagga Wagga about the HumeLink and EnergyConnect upgrade to the electricity network by TransGrid. The member for Wagga Wagga has genuine concerns about the current community consultation process and requested that I outline my expectations of TransGrid during this extremely important process. Unfortunately, time did not allow me to conclude my answer so I take this opportunity to put these views on the record for local members the member for Wagga Wagga, the member for Albury and the member for Goulburn, and for their constituents.

My intention is to be very clear about my expectations of TransGrid as these projects undergo an extensive consultation and development process. It is imperative that we take the community with us on these projects by working in partnership with them. TransGrid, as the proponent of these projects, is central to getting that right. My expectations of TransGrid are therefore as follows. First, I expect TransGrid to undertake meaningful and extensive engagement with the local communities impacted by these projects—meaningful engagement means local engagement, which means providing those people who are impacted by the project with many opportunities to engage with TransGrid representatives and work with them to find local solutions. Second, I expect TransGrid

to work closely with local communities on route design. That means engaging in a frank and open manner with landowners about possibilities and restrictions. Third, I expect TransGrid to keep our communities and, of course, members, informed and across the detail of the projects, and to listen to and act on any concerns raised. My clear message to TransGrid today is that no concern is too small.

I also put on record the actions taken by me and my staff since Dr McGirr asked his question on Tuesday. On Tuesday afternoon my office convened a meeting with the member for Wagga Wagga, the member for Albury, the member for Goulburn, TransGrid and our department officials. I expect this to be one of many meetings as this project is developed. Yesterday I spoke directly with the Chief Executive Officer of TransGrid to again remind him of my expectations and that every issue of concern to every member of the local community is important and must be respected, and every effort is made to ensure appropriate action is taken. As I said in my earlier response this week, I acknowledge and thank the local communities that have brought their concerns forward to their local members, particularly those people living in Bannister, Yaven Creek, Lower Bago, Willigobung Creek, Adjungbilly to Batlow and Kyeamba Valley.

These projects are critically important for the future of our State and we need to ensure that we bring local communities with us. My priority is to find ways to maximise the benefits of new energy infrastructure and to do so in a way that respects the concerns of local communities and works with them. I look forward to working with the local members as we transform the electricity system and set up our State and our local communities for the future by delivering cheap, reliable, clean electricity. I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his interest in this project and his advocacy on behalf of his constituents. He raised legitimate issues that need to be addressed appropriately by the proponent and through the planning process. I make it very clear that I intend to be working with the local members and local communities to make sure that we get the best result not only for those local communities, but also everyone in New South Wales, who will be the beneficiaries of this project.

This project will deliver cheap, clean, reliable energy into our system. To make that happen we need to upgrade electricity infrastructure—the transmission lines. That will have an impact but that impact, where possible, can be minimised. I want to make sure that we achieve that outcome. I again thank the member for Wagga Wagga for raising these important issues. I know the member for Goulburn and the member for Albury have also been on the front foot on behalf of their communities. My door is always open. I will work them to make sure that TransGrid, the planning process and the energy department are doing everything they can to address these legitimate concerns so that everyone is a winner as we got through this major transition.

BERYL MATTHEWS

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (16:52:17): Earlier in the year I was very happy to award East Hills resident Beryl Matthews, the East Hills Woman of the Year due to her decades of service to the Girl Guides. I first met Beryl last December at the Revesby Guides Christmas party where Beryl was recognised for her 45 years of service. The *Guide Handbook* states that one of the key tenets of Guiding is the commitment to "The Good Turn—Each guide tries to do a kind thing for someone else without payment/and without being asked every day." Beryl Matthews joined the Girl Guides of Australia in 1958 by becoming a brownie at the Hurstville Brownie Unit. In 1961 she moved up to the 1st Beverly Hills guide unit. While a guide, Beryl was a "packie" or guide helper at the Beverly Hills guide unit for two years. In this time she had the opportunity to welcome the Queen, who was visiting Australia, to Glengarry, the guide camp a North Turramurra.

In 1966 Beryl became a land ranger. Between 1966 and 1970 she earned her full ranger star and her land ranger badge. She escorted the flag at the State Guides Own at Sydney's Town Hall, and she attended regattas and moots where she served as treasurer. Beryl's experience as a leader began in 1966 when she commenced her service as a brownie leader, and earned her guiding name, "Brown Owl". In 1970, Beryl was one of two ranger guides who shook hands with Lady Olave Baden-Powell, who was the first chief guide for Britain and wife to the founder of scouting and Girl Guides, Robert Baden-Powell, at a Diamond Jubilee camp held in England.

Beryl gained her pack holiday permit on 1971 and over the years has taken brownies to many camps and events. These events included three winter sleepovers held at Taronga Zoo and the Karingal campsite, travelling to Melbourne twice, Tasmania, Tweed Heads and many region and division campfires, Thinking Day events, swimming carnivals and fundraisers. Beryl was also at the opening of the Beverly Hills Girl Guide hall, which her parents helped to build, and the opening of the Karingal camp site at Engadine in 1972. Incidentally, Beryl's mother, Marge Wilson, was heavily involved with the Girl Guides and received a Boronia Award for her 50 years of service.

Beryl's move to Revesby in my electorate of East Hills proved to be of great benefit to our community. She joined the Revesby Brownies in 1982. Over the years Beryl has worked in many different roles. She was part of the Brownie subcommittee for five years. She attended a number of Gathering of the Owls events, several Australian Brownies leader events and up to five musters, now known as jamborees. Beryl has attended the Camp

of Four Winds in Finland. She has mentored many guides during her years of service and can take pride in the paths that those guides have taken.

One of her first Brownies went on to become a leader in Canada, while another nine went on to become junior leaders and six have become adult leaders. She has seen her daughter and two of her granddaughters follow in her footsteps and become Girl Guides as well. In the words of the Brown Owl herself, "My reward has been seeing the girls go on to guides and further". I was very happy to host Beryl at the NSW Women of the Year awards, held at the International Convention Centre at Darling Harbour in March of this year. Whilst at that event several ladies came up to her to say hello and congratulate her. These ladies were there celebrating milestones of their own but recognised Beryl as a leader through their time with Girl Guides over the years.

The East Hills Local Woman of the Year award is not the first award Beryl has received for her years of service. She has also been awarded a Banksia Award by Girl Guides Australia. Recipients of this award provide service to their guiding community through consistently achieving the outcomes of their primary role as well as providing support to other volunteers and the broader guiding community at the local, State or national level. They take on extra duties and roles in support of guiding. They are acknowledged for their efforts in developing guiding by encouraging, supporting and contributing to information sharing and the skills of the adult members of Girl Guides.

Those recognised with the Banksia Award are a role model to guides, volunteers and the local community. Beryl is clearly very deserving of this award, as was evidenced by the amount of people who recognised her at the NSW Women of the Year event in March. The Revesby Guides Christmas party that I mentioned earlier was also a farewell. Beryl has completed her time with Girl Guides and has now committed to serving in the Trefoil Guild; they would be very happy to have her. I thank Beryl for her decades of service to our local community through her highly valued contribution and dedication to the Girl Guides of our area and the Greater Sydney region.

PLANNING CONTROLS

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (16:57:09): Residents of places in Pittwater like Avalon Beach, Newport and Terrey Hills are fiercely proud and protective of the bushland and beaches that envelop their neighbourhoods. That is why they could be forgiven for being a little perplexed by a Reserve Bank of Australia report discussed on the front of today's *Sydney Morning Herald* advocating 16 storeys as the efficient height of residential towers in Pittwater and suggesting that planning restrictions are depriving developers of the opportunity to provide more and bigger towers in their community.

Needless to say, I do not agree that removing planning controls is the best way to build a more efficient, sustainable, productive and just city. Yet this is the pretty clear implication of the RBA report, which makes the fairly obvious point that if we added 20 storeys to the height of residential apartment buildings the price of individual units would fall. Specifically using 2018 data, the report suggests that if we were to double the number of high-density apartments built each year the cost of housing would decline by 2.5 per cent per annum—a modest potential benefit to an individual homebuyer but a massive potential cost to everyone else in New South Wales.

While the report focuses on the marginal costs imposed by development control, it completely fails to consider the wider community costs avoided or minimised by an efficient strategic planning system, suggesting only that the benefits of density such as higher wages, more patent applications and less energy use are found to more than offset traffic congestion, shadows, noise and other costs. Really? Infrastructure Australia recently estimated that road congestion and public transport crowding cost the Australian economy \$19 billion in 2016, and this figure is set to rise to almost \$40 billion by 2031. Then there is the impact on utilities and the huge expense of retrofitting sewer, water and power infrastructure, not to mention the land costs for the additional open space required to support a burgeoning high-density population without access to private open space.

Again, the costs of retrofitting vitally important education and health resources are entirely overlooked in the RBA research. Then there are amenity costs to urban character and heritage, overshadowing, wind corridors—all costs incurred by any simplistic notion that planning inhibits city shaping. The report also criticises policies aimed at providing a greater diversity of so-called "soft-density" housing such as terraces and townhouses, claiming, without evidence, that buyers are largely indifferent between medium- and high-density housing. This completely ignores recent Ipsos polling which found that 47 per cent of respondents were supportive of more medium-density housing where they lived while only 25 per cent were in favour of more high-density residential development nearby. It also ignores the New South Wales Government research informing the "missing middle" discussion paper in 2015, which indicated demand for missing middle-style housing stock was not matched by supply, forcing up prices for scarce stock.

The RBA report also makes somewhat nebulous claims about the wider community benefits of high-rise residential apartments over all other forms of residential development, suggesting that higher densities mean higher wages, more patent applications and less energy use. Those broad claims simply do not withstand even cursory analysis. While there is a correlation between density and wage growth, that has more to do with location, demographics and education than built form. As to the claim that people in high-rise apartments have more patents than those in low-rise apartments or houses, while it is true there is a correlation between density and innovation, it relates to jobs density, not residential density. Basic agglomeration economics explain that where more great minds meet more ideas are generated; it is about where people connect to work, not about where they go to sleep. Finally, the notion that the higher the structure the lower the energy use is misplaced. While higher residential densities can lower transport energy use, research suggests that built-form energy use can escalate with building height, with limited opportunities for decentralised energy production.

It is very important that we cast a critical eye over such claims and consider the very real, very human impacts of development in shaping the way citizens live their daily lives and the opportunities for people to make decisions about choosing how and where to live. While identifying and removing unnecessary development control should of course be encouraged—and here in New South Wales we are doing just that—it does not therefore follow that all development control is unnecessary. I make a final observation. The Reserve Bank of Australia report relies heavily on evidence provided by the Urban Taskforce, an expert and effective developer lobby group. It is to be expected that the Urban Taskforce would promote the view that more and bigger towers be provided across Sydney and other Australian capitals. However, it should also be expected that the Reserve Bank of Australia takes a broader and more objective view on matters of real complexity rather than simply using a contested methodology to produce findings that are both superficial and misleading.

SECOND WORLD WAR SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (17:01:56): In his book *English History 1914-1945*, A.J.P. Taylor wrote:

Until August 1914 a sensible, law-abiding Englishman could pass through life and hardly notice the existence of the state, beyond the post office and the policeman.

He could live where he liked and as he liked.

As Taylor wrote, "the state ... left the adult citizen alone". It was not so after 1945. During the Second World War the State reached into people's lives as never before, and it has not much retreated since. In the English-speaking world, that has overwhelmingly been a positive thing. In this year, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, we remember the sacrifice and struggle of millions of ordinary people the world over who combined to remove the threat of fascism from the face of the globe. Tonight I pay my respects to that struggle on the battlefield but also remember the often forgotten struggle for a better world that unfolded alongside the military struggle and the new world created in the years following 1945.

Firstly, on this day I acknowledge the Japanese people, who today remember the seventy-fifth anniversary of the world's first use of an atomic weapon against civilians when an atomic bomb was dropped on the city of Hiroshima, killing 145,000 people, to be followed on 9 August by the dropping of another bomb on the city of Nagasaki, killing 75,000 people. These were very cruel but necessary attacks on civilian populations that finally caused the Japanese Government to surrender unconditionally on 15 August 1945, before the signing of formal declaration of surrender documents occurred in September of that year. I acknowledge those people today and pay my respects to their families and the people of Japan.

During the years of the conflict, progressive thinkers turned their minds to the world that was possible at the end of the military conflict. In the United Kingdom the Beveridge report outlined a comprehensive welfare state aimed at providing a minimum standard of living to all people in the United Kingdom from the cradle to the grave. It became a bestseller during times of war. In this country the 1945 white paper, *Full Employment In Australia*, which was written by a group of Keynesian economists led by H. C. Coombs, became the defining economic document following 30 years of conflict. It outlined economic policy at the cessation of conflict.

In July 1945 in the midst of war, a Labour Government was elected in the UK before the defeat of the Japanese. That followed an unsuccessful attempt by the Conservatives to join with non-government parties to form a coalition and secure electoral victory. It was an attempt to use the popularity of the wartime leader to sweep the Conservatives to government. However, unexpectedly the Conservatives lost the election in a massive swing to the Labour Party. Labour was led by a quiet and dedicated Clement Attlee, who would go on to create the welfare state in the UK. In this country the Chifley Government was re-elected in July 1945, heralding the creation of the welfare state in Australia, following publication of a white paper and a referendum being held on social security legislation. Changes to the Constitution enabled the Federal Government to provide comprehensive social

security in Australia since then. The re-election of the Peter Fraser Government in New Zealand enabled an exactly similar welfare state to be created.

The year 1945 is an important year to remember. We remember the sacrifice but also celebrate the better world that was created afterwards. As a member of the Left and the Australian Labor Party, and having in mind the better world created by Labour leaders in the UK, Australia and New Zealand, I am proud to be a member of the Labor Party. It is important to remember the positive contribution of wartime Labour leaders.

ST GEORGE & SUTHERLAND SHIRE LEADER

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (17:07:00): This year marks the sixtieth anniversary of the *St George & Sutherland Shire Leader*. Since 1960 the Leader has been a constant source of local news reporting for the Sutherland shire and St George communities. From humble beginnings, the Leader grew to become Australia's largest community newspaper, with a total current monthly readership, digital and print, of 456,000 subscribers. It is the largest suburban newspaper in Australia. The Leader serves as a reliable source of information for our local community. We are in times of high global tensions, a worldwide pandemic and difficult economic outlooks. It is understandable if we sometimes forget about local news and choose to look only for national and global headlines. But throughout wars, recessions and now a pandemic, the Leader has remained focused on its mission to cover important news in our local area, never forgetting about the people of the Sutherland shire and St George communities.

The Leader has been a critical voice for the local community and for over 60 years has published articles on an incredibly wide variety of local topics—good, bad and in between. Those articles included the opening of the Captain Cook Bridge in 1965, the Queen's visit in 1970 and the Cronulla Sharks' glorious premiership win in 2016. Now the member for Kogarah and I have the great privilege of writing weekly op-eds for the Leader, which gives us a great opportunity to connect with our local communities. Media plays a central role in our democracy. The paradox in this information age is that, as more and more so-called information becomes available on the internet, it becomes less and less reliable. That is why it is so important to have quality mastheads like the Leader reporting local news. Tragically in recent times, particularly during the COVID pandemic, we see the demise of many mastheads in suburban and regional areas across Australia. The shire and St George communities are so fortunate to see the continued operation of the Leader.

As I said, the paradox is that while we have more and more information on the internet, almost anyone can put something on the internet that is not verified and not necessarily true—fake news—and that is why it is so important to have credible, ethical and reliable journalism reported in quality newspapers. I particularly pay tribute to all the journalists at the Leader, including Jim Gainsford and Murray Trembath, who is a long-time writer for the Leader and he formerly wrote for *The Sun*. It is important to have journalists like them who adhere to the journalists' code of ethics when reporting our local news. I have sometimes grumbled about Murray's articles. In the early days I had a thinner skin than I have now and wished that I had more favourable coverage—but that probably reflects more on the issues than on Murray's journalism.

Murray is thorough, sincere and totally ethical in his reporting. The Leader has colourful photographers such as Chris Lane and John Veage, who are great local area institutions. It is important for quality newspapers and journals to continue to be published. It is important for politicians like you, Mr Assistant Speaker—the member for Oatley—and me, as well as local councils and other public institutions, to be held to account. Having a great institution like the Leader in our community gives us cause to celebrate. I congratulate the Leader on its sixtieth anniversary and wish it many more years of success. I will continue to enjoy—well, mostly enjoy—reading its articles from time to time.

Community Recognition Statements

TRIBUTE TO BETTY ALLMAN

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:11:39): I recognise Betty Allman, an outstanding member of the Port Macquarie community, who unfortunately passed away last Friday. With the formation of the Hastings Cancer Trust in 2005, Betty Allman made a significant contribution to help raise many hundreds of thousands of dollars to improve the lives of people living with cancer and to assist in the purchase of much-needed equipment and services for the Mid North Coast Cancer Institute at the Port Macquarie Base Hospital.

Betty led a team of dedicated volunteers who would raise funds by selling raffle tickets and holding events, including the annual fundraising ball, which for many was the social event of the year and never failed to raise tens of thousands of dollars on each occasion. In 2014 Betty retired from the Hastings Cancer Trust fundraising committee but continued dedicating her life to helping others including Sailability, which is a sailing organisation for people with a disability, and was a proud member of the Rotary Club of Port Macquarie West. Like so many

people who came into her life, I was proud to have known Betty and to call her a friend. Betty will be missed by her family and many friends but she will never be forgotten as she is reunited with her beloved husband, John. Rest in peace, Betty Allman.

BEIRUT EXPLOSION

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:12:37): As the initial smoke rose on Tuesday afternoon, a crew of 10 firefighters raced to the port of Beirut to face the fire raging in warehouse 12 next to the port's large grain silo. Flashes lit up the smoke and it was reported the initial fire set off a stash of fireworks stored there. The brigade was at the epicentre when, at 6:05 p.m., a giant explosion blasted a crater into the port and turned every building to twisted metal.

More firefighter crews arrived. Each took a section of the port. For the next 24 hours, the crews, covered in soot and their faces darkened with dust, smoke and sorrow, pulled out bodies—but only one was a fellow firefighter. This morning Chief Oussama Ali Salam, who is the head of Beirut's Fire Department, sadly confirmed that the 10 firefighters had been killed in the line of duty. My thoughts are with the injured, bereaved and others who have been affected, as well as the Lebanese emergency services as they respond to this horrific incident. Stay safe, my brothers and sisters. God bless you and your families.

LUCAS HEIGHTS COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:13:41): Today I recognise the Lucas Heights Community School's Cooler Classrooms Program. The New South Wales Government announced the Cooler Classrooms Program as part of the commitment to improve learning environments across schools in New South Wales. I am pleased that the Lucas Heights Community School will be a recipient of this program, which will deliver air conditioning and fresh air ventilation in 51 classroom and library spaces and will remove any electric or non-flued gas heaters in 36 classroom and library spaces as well. Installation works have already begun in readiness for summer. The program will ensure that students at the Lucas Heights Community School and other public schools across the State will enjoy healthy and comfortable learning environments. Once again I congratulate the Lucas Heights Community School on receiving the Cooler Classrooms Program funds. I commend the New South Wales Government for delivering such quality, sustainable and cost-effective programs to schools across New South Wales.

EARTH MARKET MAITLAND

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:14:34): Today the Earth Market Maitland marked its third birthday and celebrated its evolution from the great pumpkin rescue to the biodiverse event it has become. None of this would be possible without volunteers Terry Kavanagh, John Brown, Bob Adams, Helen Hughes, Bob Leonard, Anne Kelly and Jenny Rooke, led by Maitland Earth Market Chair Amorelle Dempster. This small but dedicated crew puts in around 400 hours a year to bring The Levee to life. On market days their work begins at 6.00 a.m. They install the marquees, allocate and cloth the tables, set up signage, manage traffic, connect power, provide water and repair equipment. When the market opens to the public they help farmers on their stands. When it closes at 12.30 p.m. they pull it all down, only to do it all again in a fortnight. Without this committed group, there would be no Earth Market Maitland and there would be no avenue for many of our farmers to sell their local produce. Congratulations to all the team on all it has achieved.

KYLA DEVINE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (17:15:33): Kyla Devine is a 12-year-old Glenmore Park local, who had a rough start to life when she needed an emergency liver transplant at just four months old due to a life-threatening condition. Kyla's bile ducts were not working, causing bile to pool in her blood and liver, which eventually causes the liver to erode away. Thankfully Kyla received a liver transplant within nine hours of being registered at critical stage on the transplant list and is now a thriving young girl who loves being active. Kyla and her family are taking every opportunity to encourage others to consider organ donation and the many lives that can be saved.

From 26 July to 2 August was DonateLife Week. It focuses on the importance of organ donation. What is concerning is that despite the majority of Australians who support organ donation, only a third are registered organ donors. Organ donation is a rare event, with only 2 per cent of people who pass away in hospital being suitable to donate. But there are more than 1,600 people waiting for lifesaving transplants and 1,200 on dialysis. Thank you to Kyla and her family for sharing their story and reminding us all of the importance of organ donation. I wish them all the best.

SUNSHINE GIFTING

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (17:16:36): Laura from Sunshine Gifting, based at Norville, generously donated \$5 throughout the month of May from every order purchased to support Central Coast charity Iris Foundation to raise mental health and suicide awareness in the community. Sunshine Gifting is a boutique service specialising in custom gifts for all occasions. During this difficult time, it is nice to brighten up someone's day. Iris Foundation created the Box of Hope, which included items that symbolise those times we want to reach out to someone, and Sunshine Gifting distributed each box. The local business raised \$300 and the proceeds went to the Iris Foundation to support Connections 2x2 resilience workshops for students aged nine to 14 years. Connections 2x2 resilience workshops engage young people in creative projects which encourage them to explore their own identity, boost self-esteem and promote problem-solving strategies and connectedness. It is great to see local businesses Sunshine Gifting and Iris Foundation working together during this difficult time and supporting the community.

2CONNECT YOUTH AND COMMUNITY

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:17:37): Today I congratulate 2Connect Youth and Community on the worthwhile work it does in our local community. 2Connect Youth and Community is a helping hand to vulnerable community members across the St George and the Sutherland shires. 2Connect Youth and Community has a primary focus on tackling youth homelessness. It endeavours to create long-term, sustainable solutions that deal with underlying issues such as domestic violence, mental health issues and other personal factors. Its services include youth and family support and education in the areas of drugs and alcohol, mental health and wellbeing, employment and diversity. By offering these services, it is ensuring that young members of our community do not fall through the cracks of local support services. It came as no surprise to me that 2Connect Youth and Community was awarded the 2019 New South Wales Youth Service of the Year. It is a compassionate, thoughtful and effective organisation, and one of many in our local area. On behalf of the local community, I thank chairperson Bob and Valentina and the whole team at 2Connect Youth and Community.

DIGNITY FORUM AUSTRALIA

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:18:41): Many people in my community are experiencing severe hardship due to COVID-19. In response to this hardship there has been an outpouring of goodwill, as people come together to support each other through tough times. One organisation that has done great work is Dignity Forum Australia. During this crisis, Dignity Forum Australia has done invaluable work supporting members of the Nepalese community in our local area. The Nepalese community in New South Wales is one of the fastest-growing communities. Many members of the Nepalese community are international students or casual workers and many have been ineligible to receive assistance from the Commonwealth Government's JobSeeker or JobKeeper programs. Dignity Forum Australia has done exceptional work to support members of the Nepalese community during this time, including providing food and care packages to people in need and checking on people's welfare to ensure that they do not feel isolated or alone. I congratulate it on recently receiving \$5,000 in funding. I thank Dignity Forum Australia president Dr Mom Bishwakarma, his executive team and their volunteers.

ROTARY CLUB OF RICHMOND

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (17:19:51): It is always important to acknowledge a good deed when you see it. Two weeks ago, while driving around Richmond, I came across Phil and David from the Rotary Club of Richmond, who were busy removing graffiti from a prominent fence in Bourke Street, Richmond. Hawkesbury is known for its hardworking and volunteering spirit and the actions of these two men were definitely reflective of that. Richmond is a beautiful Hawkesbury town and the defacing of walls and fencing is not commonplace because locals have a real sense of pride in their town. I thank the Rotary Club of Richmond's members and volunteers for the terrific work they do in caring for our community.

SERGEANT PAUL LUCZAK

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (17:20:37): I recognise one of our very finest in blue, Sergeant Paul Luczak of the Fairfield City Police Area Command. This year marks his thirtieth in the NSW Police Force. Sergeant Luczak joined the NSW Police Force at just 21 years of age and worked in the Liverpool and Cabramatta area commands. Throughout his 30 years in the force, he has held and committed to many roles, including roles in the Liverpool Child Protection Unit. I wish Sergeant Luczak many more great years serving the people of my community and New South Wales. I extend my thanks to all NSW Police Force officers for all the hard work they do in the community and wish them all the best for the future.

JUNEE MULTIPURPOSE SERVICE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:21:22): I congratulate the Junee Multipurpose Service for raising awareness for DonateLife Week. Around 1,700 Australians are currently waitlisted for an organ transplant, and just one donor can greatly improve the lives of 10 people. The Junee Multipurpose Service marked DonateLife Week with an educational wall in the facility. The wall featured pictures of staff and residents to promote organ and tissue donation and the stories of people who had benefitted from it. It also encouraged people to speak with staff to find out more about signing up as a donor. I congratulate the service on starting this important but often difficult conversation.

INNER WEST BREWERIES AND DISTILLERIES

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (17:22:12): Inner west breweries and distilleries have quickly adapted to the restrictions of COVID-19 and at the same time are doing their bit to keep our community safe and healthy. Poor Tom's Gin, Young Henry's, Archie Rose distillery and Yulli Brews have all adapted their usual operations to create locally made hand sanitiser, which will protect the inner west community and keep people at work. Poor Tom's Gin Distillery in Marrickville stepped up its operations after being approached by Dr Andrew Dimitri, a physician whose clinic was desperately in need of hand sanitiser. Young Henry's made donations of hand sanitiser to local organisations in need. Archie Rose Distillery produced over 100,000 bottles of hand sanitiser in March alone, keeping 27 of its bar and hospitality staff employed, who would otherwise have had to be let go. I thank the inner west breweries and all the wonderful inner west businesses who have kept up the fight against COVID-19, yet again showing how generous and creative we are in Sydney's inner west.

MANLY TOWN HALL

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:23:14): Built in 1937, the Manly Town Hall is a classic and imposing building that has been at the heart of Manly as a physical presence and has housed the council's administration until the amalgamation and formation of the Northern Beaches Council. I join with many members of my community to say that now is the time to reimagine the future of the Manly Town Hall. Initial discussions have demonstrated that the town hall can become a leading viable community arts precinct. The building could consist of a major theatre seating 350 people, minor theatre, theatrette and cinema, music venue, community rooms, restaurant, café, bar, rehearsal room, green room, foyer and various AV and recording rooms. It would also create significant local jobs and would become a revenue-generating asset that will enrich the cultural fabric of the northern beaches for generations to come.

MARGARET BEARDSLEE

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (17:24:14): I extend my sincerest congratulations to my friend and constituent Margaret Beardslee. Recently Margaret was named Administrator of the Year at the 2020 Athletics NSW awards. Margaret was club administrator at the Mingara Athletics Club when it was still referred to as Tuggerah Athletics Club and since that time she has continued to hold key committee positions. That is a reflection of Margaret's dedication to the club. Her devotion to athletics has spanned many years. Margaret has reached numerous milestones in her running career, received dozens of State medals and even won the NSW XC Short Course. I congratulate Margaret on her marvellous achievements to date, which no doubt will continue.

NARELLAN FIRE AND RESCUE

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (17:25:02): I recognise two local firefighters from the Narellan fire and rescue station who have recently been acknowledged for their services to the Camden and Macarthur region. Station officer Kevin Schmitzer was awarded a second clasp to the Fire and Rescue NSW Long Service and Good Conduct Medal and a second clasp to the National Medal, recognising 30 years of diligent long service to Fire and Rescue NSW as well as 35 years of service to the community. Senior Firefighter Anthony Clarke was awarded the National Medal, which recognises 15 years of long and diligent service to the community. The efforts of firefighters on the front lines, like Kevin and Anthony, protected our communities from devastation during the horrific summer of 2019-20. They have spent the majority of their careers protecting the area. On behalf of all residents of Camden and Macarthur, I thank them for their long service.

RISE FOUNDATION

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (17:26:06): I congratulate Raise Foundation on the work it does supporting young people at risk in local high schools. It runs a program at Swansea High School that helps equip students with valuable skills that will assist them in their future careers. It also engages them in healthy and safe social activities. Many of the students that the foundation works with do not have access to family or community support and are disengaged from professional support systems. The Raise Foundation mentoring services play a

crucial role in re-engaging those students. I thank Raise Foundation, Swansea High School and all those involved with the program for the work they are doing in our community.

BAULKHAM HILLS BASEBALL CLUB

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:26:57): I recognise Baulkham Hills Baseball Club, which is based at Northmead Reserve, Northmead, in the electorate of Seven Hills. The club was founded in 1970 and competes in the NSW State Baseball League, which is the premier baseball competition in the State. It is one of the oldest clubs in Greater Sydney and currently has more than 20 teams and over 250 players across State, masters, women's and the juniors competitions. I congratulate the club on operating competitions for disadvantaged children and those with disabilities. I thank the following committee members for their dedication to the club: president and ground representative Don Beileiter, vice-president and juniors representative Ben Sweetnam, secretary Bronwyn Mercer, treasurer Matt Jory, Pacific coast and masters representative Bob Wardle and state league representative Michael Ranieri. I also thank the officers, including Jason Mercer, Kellie Parcel, Kirk Parcel and Jodie Warner, for assisting the junior teams.

GARTH AND WENDY DEAN

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (17:27:56): I congratulate Garth and Wendy Dean on celebrating 30 years since establishing Calare Civil in Bathurst in July 1990. Garth and Wendy are Bathurst born and educated, with Garth having particularly strong historical ties to the local area, and they have built a successful civil and structural engineering business. They have contributed to the local and wider community in numerous ways. Garth often coaches up to five cricket teams a season. He has coached hundreds of successful young cricketers, holding the position of academy coach for the western cricket zone for five years. He was tasked with identifying and mentoring the best junior players throughout the Central West. Wendy has been team manager of the successful OzScot Australia dancers and secretary for the 3rd Bathurst Scout Group. She is involved in school fundraising events at Scots All Saints College and is a trained parent supporter for Bathurst. Calare Civil has grown steadily over the past 30 years, employing locals as engineers, draftspeople, technicians and designers. It currently employs 18 staff, including three Charles Sturt University student engineers.

CHARLESTOWN ELECTORATE SUPERMARKET WORKERS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (17:28:59): Supermarket workers in the Charlestown electorate have been at the forefront of the COVID-19 pandemic since the beginning. I thank them for everything they have done for our community this year. As people panic-bought toilet paper and pasta in the early days, it was the supermarket workers who patiently dealt with the misplaced anxieties of worried shoppers. That manifested far too often as aggression towards workers in circumstances that were out of their control. They put themselves at risk of infection in the workplace, with no hope of maintaining social distancing in crowded supermarkets and grocery stores. With the first wave over and new clusters forming, supermarket workers will again step up and keep going to work, putting themselves at risk in order to keep our community functioning. I thank them for their patience, perseverance and hard work.

COFFS HARBOUR GOLF CLUB

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:30:01): I have been a lapsed golfer for many years but I think that is all about to change. My inspiration comes from officially opening the new driving range at Coffs Harbour Golf Club, which was funded by a \$300,000 New South Wales Government infrastructure grant. The fantastic building includes an indoor teaching facility, 14 undercover hitting bays, new lighting, a new chipping area and accessibility paths for people with disabilities. The club has provided services to our community for nearly 100 years and these improvements will help increase its capacity to serve more people. It was great to see life members Matt Martin, Col Cutmore and Ken Gibson at the official opening, as well as my predecessor Andrew Fraser. I congratulate general manager Paul McAra, club president Russ McConchie, board members Tracey Kean, Mark Dodd and Di Ratcliffe, club professional Matt Allan, teaching professional Brandon Connor, greens superintendent Justin Sheehan, club member and pro golfer Jack Pountney, as well as contractors FM Glenn Constructions and Ryan Earthmoving.

NORTH CONSTRUCTION & BUILDING

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (17:31:04): North Construction & Building in Tuggerah has been ranked seventeenth in the 2020 edition of the 50 Best Places To Work study in the 100-999 employee category by Great Place to Work Australia. It stood out as a company that has been transforming the construction industry by doing business differently. It was judged as inspiring, inventive and innovative. It is a trusted regional commercial construction company with an award-winning reputation for excellence. Managing director Matthew Cook believes the business has always strived to be an employer of choice, creating a culture of trust that not only

nurtures and develops each individual but also embraces excellence, camaraderie and fun. North Construction & Building was founded in 1987 and currently does work across a diverse range of projects within the commercial, education, aged care, health, industrial, infrastructure, retail and hospitality sectors. I congratulate staff on their efforts over the past 30 years in creating a safe working environment for their employees on the Central Coast.

DAVIDSON ELECTORATE ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (17:32:07): Recently the New South Wales Government has completed upgrading roads around the Northern Beaches Hospital, increasing capacity on the road network and improving access through the area. This major infrastructure project is located along Warringah Road and surrounding roads at Frenchs Forest in my electorate of Davidson and the electorate of Wakehurst. The project started in 2015 and involved upgrading the very busy roads around the hospital to increase capacity on the road network and improve access through and around the area. The local community and other commuters now have a much better travel experience. I thank everyone involved during the upgrade, including residents living in and around Frenchs Forest, for their ongoing patience. I thank the project team workers for their tireless effort and I thank the New South Wales Government for its financial and political backing. Many residents share my excitement at the completion of the project, and I acknowledge the positive community feedback.

BEIRUT EXPLOSION

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:33:09): I express my sincere condolences to the families of those who have perished in Beirut. We are shocked and devastated by what has happened there this week. My thoughts are with the bereaved and those who have been injured. My heartfelt sorrow goes to the Lebanese Australian community. I send my heartfelt condolences to the members and families of the many Lebanese village associations in my electorate of Canterbury. I acknowledge the leadership of Bishop Antoine Tarabay, Lebanese Muslim Association president Samier Dandan, the Bahayra association, the Zahle association in Canterbury, the Beirut charitable association and the Jieh community. I thank the many religious and faith leaders, including Sheikh Youssef from the Arrahman mosque. I am sure that there are many more whom I have missed. I want the Lebanese community to know that my office is open. I am here to help and will do whatever I can do to support them.

YASS VALLEY MEN'S SHED

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (17:34:17): Today I speak in recognition of the Yass Valley Men's Shed. Located in my electorate of Goulburn, the Yass Valley Men's Shed is a terrific organisation that undertakes a number of activities contributing to the local community, including skill sharing, networking, health programs and cultural sharing. The men's shed is entirely supported by volunteer efforts—volunteers who are always endeavouring to make improvements to the shed and the wider community. The Yass Valley Men's Shed celebrated the award of \$4,500 from the New South Wales Government's Community Building Partnership program. The funding will enable a small parcel of land to be converted into a productive bush tucker garden. The Community Building Partnership program is designed to develop and enhance facilities that bring people together. The Yass Valley Men's shed does this to a T, as well as performing a vital role in the community by keeping people connected locally. The amazing efforts and many hours spent by the volunteers should be publicly congratulated: Well done.

WAGGA WAGGA ELECTORATE SPORTING GROUPS

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (17:35:21): Wagga Wagga is known as the city of good sports. The success of so many fine sportspeople from our region comes in part because of the hard work and dedication of many club officials and volunteers who put so much into making their sport a success. In recent months as our State has had to adjust to the changing circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, sports clubs have been challenged to rethink how their beloved game could be played. There have been heartbreaking decisions, from banning spectators to cutting the number of rounds in a competition. In recent weeks restrictions placed on travel between New South Wales and Victoria have presented new challenges, with players from border areas being asked to accept the reality that there will be no competition for them in 2020. There could be little harder news for a sportsperson than the cancellation of a whole season. Yet, I have seen example after example in my city of extraordinary sportsmanship as players and officials alike acknowledge that it is being done for the good of the whole community. I acknowledge and thank all those involved.

HOMELESSNESS WEEK

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (17:36:27): This week we recognise Homelessness Week, an opportunity to consider the profound toll that homelessness can take on a person or a family. In my electorate a number of groups work tirelessly to reduce homelessness and get people into stable housing. I thank the staff at

Port Stephens Family and Neighbourhood Services, the Yacaaba Centre and the Tomaree Neighbourhood Centre for everything they do to support people struggling to remain in housing or to find new accommodation. My office in Raymond Terrace has had to call on the knowledgeable team of Port Stephens Family and Neighbourhood Services on many occasions.

I thank Colleen Whittle, Ann Fletcher, Sue Pollock and the team for their excellent advice and support. The recent COVID experience and additional temporary housing support has shown that if you get accommodation sorted first, many of the other aspects of homelessness—including mental health, financial stress, family breakdown or domestic violence—can then be addressed in a supported way. I wholeheartedly support the calls from others in this place and in the Federal Parliament that the economic recovery should include construction jobs created by building more social housing. I also wholeheartedly endorse the theme of Homelessness Week this year: Everybody Needs a Home.

BEIRUT EXPLOSION

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:37:32): I wish to offer my thoughts and prayers to the families and friends of those impacted by the Beirut explosion. I was told about it yesterday morning by my friend, Liverpool City Council councillor Tony Hadchiti, but it was only when I got home from Parliament last night to see the footage that I understood the true devastation that they must be feeling there. My thoughts and prayers go out particularly to the 135 people who have lost their lives and the 5,000 injured as of today and their friends and families, who must be so terribly concerned with what is happening there. Damage from the blast at the port extended to over half of the city. The images we have seen have been absolutely devastating. The destruction is unbelievable. I stand with the many residents of my electorate and our region who have a Lebanese background. Particularly during this time of COVID when our healthcare workers all over the world are under immense pressure, to have this added burden is even more devastating. I know all members join in in passing on our concerns.

PACIFIC LINK HOUSING

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:38:35): In Homelessness Week, I say a great thankyou to staff at Pacific Link Housing on the Central Coast. They are kicking goals. They are our community housing provider delivering the State-funded Together Home program on the coast. Just yesterday they received the occupancy certificate for the Canton Beach new generation boarding house. They are signing a builder to do the development in Woy Woy of one- and two-bedroom units. They are signing a lease to move to new offices in Gosford and working with council to deliver our affordable housing strategy. Whilst the Australian Government has provided additional income support during the COVID pandemic to people who are sleeping rough, COVID has also highlighted that we have a social housing crisis across New South Wales. Staff at Pacific Link Housing have to deal with that every day. I thank them for their amazing work and for the dignity they give to people who have been sleeping rough and couch surfing across the community who are now living a much better life.

BEIRUT EXPLOSION

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (17:39:34): I send my greatest heartfelt well-wishes to the people of Beirut and Lebanon. The video footage that I have seen of the devastation that the explosion at the Beirut port has caused is beyond terrible. There is a large Lebanese community in my electorate of East Hills. My thoughts are with them all as well as their relatives, friends and colleagues who they may know and love in Lebanon at this awful time. Bless them all.

INNER WEST FACE MASK MANUFACTURERS

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (17:40:03): Inner westies are doing their bit to keep up the local supply of face masks. Boomerang Bags, Dully Locals, Goodcloth, Gumleaf Bow Scrunchies and Sew'N by Nerida are just a few of the inner west designers and small businesses getting behind a community effort to sew reusable masks. Boomerang Bags volunteers have been making and donating hundreds of uniquely patterned masks to frontline community organisations. I was pleased to deliver some of those masks to Plumtree recently for the use of staff and vulnerable families. I also thank Ashbury resident Nerida Chedra at Sew'N by Nerida, Marrickville local Helena Bulijan at Goodcloth and Dulwich Hill local Chrissy Flanagan of Dully Locals for sewing masks. I especially acknowledge local mum Kristy and her 11-year-old daughter, Molly. Molly has type 1 diabetes and is donating a portion of the proceeds from her beautiful flora and fauna masks to Diabetes NSW & ACT. I thank all those helping keep up the supply of masks for protecting local residents and ensuring medical-grade face masks are saved for frontline health workers.

JASMINE WELZEL GRIMA

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (17:41:13): Today I congratulate an amazing young Kurrajong Heights girl by the name of Jasmine Welzel Grima for her incredible achievements in gymnastics and tumbling. Jasmine has won two National Clubs Gymnastics Carnival gold medals and is a consistent high performer in her field, having competed at regional, State and national levels 5 and 6 in rhythmic gymnastics. Jasmine has set the goal of competing in the tumbling world championships and I have no doubt that she will achieve beyond her goals. Jasmine also understands the importance of her studies. With the mental strength and discipline proven in her sporting endeavours I am certain she will go on and excel in all aspects of life. I congratulate Jasmine, her family and all who are assisting her on her wonderful achievements and wish her every success ahead.

GEORGES RIVER GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I am delighted to offer my ongoing support for Georges River Grammar School and commend the school's efforts in navigating through the current Coronavirus Pandemic and I note the school has a number of measures in place to help ensure the safety of staff and students. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Georges River Grammar School's Board of Directors, including Chair David McGregor, Treasurer John McKenzie, Ordinary Member's Vernon Falconer and Suzanne Kerwan, as well as School Principal Raquel Charet, and applaud their leadership during these difficult times. This week is education week and I would like to commend the entire Georges River Grammar School community on their many successes and for their valuable and ongoing contribution to education in our local community. I am proud to continue my support for the many dedicated and hardworking students and staff at Georges River Grammar School and wish the entire school community every success into the future.

ST BRENDAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I am delighted to offer my ongoing support for St Brendan's Catholic Church and St Brendan's Catholic Primary School in Bankstown, and commend their efforts in navigating through the current Coronavirus Pandemic. I note that St Brendan's Catholic Church and St Brendan's Catholic Primary School both have a number of measures in place to help ensure the safety of parishioners, students, staff and the wider parish community. I would like to acknowledge St Brendan's Parish Priest Father Toan Nguyen and Assistant Priest Nen Dang, School Principal Miss Maria Femia, as well as the entire St Brendan's management committee and applaud their leadership during these difficult times. This week is education week and I take this opportunity to commend the entire St Brendan's Catholic Primary School community on their many successes and for their valuable and ongoing contribution to education in our local community. I am proud to continue my support for the many students, teachers, parents, parishioners and community members of St Brendan's Catholic Church and St Brendan's Catholic Primary School, and wish them every success into the future.

SUZANNE SLATER

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I congratulate Forster local Suzanne Slater who adopted a greyhound from "Greyhounds as Pets" at Wyee on the Central Coast with its ambassador, former soccer great, Tim Cahill. "Greyhounds as Pets" is a not-for-profit initiative coordinated by Greyhound Racing NSW. They pride themselves on matching the right dog to their new owner and the owner's circumstances, as well as providing them with comprehensive support during and after the adoption process. Mrs Slater first started searching for a rescue dog after the recent passing of her much loved canine miniature poodle Micah of seven years. Mrs Slater who has renamed her new companion Honey, formally known as Ginger, has found her new addition to the family a very gentle loving pet who has made herself at home and enjoying her daily diet consisting of Turkey and Chicken. She exercises Honey every day with walks around the neighbourhood. Mrs Slater has said that Honey has never raced after suffering an injury during training. I applaud the work "Greyhounds for Pets" do in rehoming former racing greyhounds. I congratulate Mrs Slater on her choice of adoption and encourage others seeking a lovable canine to consider adopting from Greyhounds as Pets.

MELISSA BARTZ

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I congratulate Pacific Palms local Melissa Bartz. Former Australian Champion and Smiths Lake resident won the Over 35 Women's Division with a near perfect score of 9.67 and a 9.00 in the final. The NSW Surfmasters competition successfully completed on Sunday 2nd August in amazing 4 ft to 6 ft surf at Boomerang beach. This competition saw 9 new NSW State Surfing Champions crowned in divisions 35 to 65 male and female surfers for the Australian Titles. There were no major issues during the event to report on. Competitors and participants were all asked to complete a survey pre-event on their health status and travel movements in the last 14 days. All competitors followed Surfing NSW Covid-19 Plan and were very

compliant with it. Additionally our Covid Coordinator ensured spectators onsite completed a survey on their health via scanning a QR code on their phone. The police attended the event on several accounts as well as a representative from Mid Coast Council to ensure the Covid-19 Safety Plan was being adhered to. Again, I would like to congratulate Mellissa Bartz and wish her well with her future surfing endeavours.

M.T.O. SCHOOL OF ISLAMIC SUFISM

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—This year on 31 July 2020 M.T.O. Shahmaghsoudi School of Islamic Sufism celebrated one of the holiest days on the Islamic calendar, Eid al-Adha, by donating thousands of essentials to low income youth-organizations, schools and families. Of the recipients was a family of 6 in my electorate including a single mother of 5 children, all under the age of 17, who had visited my office to access some support with housing accommodation. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, many children have been left with feelings of uncertainty and anxiety, and many others have witnessed their parents lose their livelihood, businesses, or jobs. This initiative gave the children of this family in my electorate a sense of hope and happiness during this otherwise stressful period. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, M.T.O volunteers from across the world have engaged in a range of programs including making and delivering thousands of personal protective equipment products for healthcare professionals, large-scale food drives for the homeless and low-income families. Well done M.T.O for your amazing efforts and support to our community. Your contributions made a real difference and your efforts have been noticed.

VALE GIHAN KEROLLOS

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains)—On Saturday 18 May 2019 the life of a wonderful woman, a loving mother of three, was cut short when she was brutally murdered by her husband. Gihan "Gigi" Kerollos, was a nurse. Leaving work at the Prince of Wales Hospital campus in Randwick, she became the 24th Australian woman to be murdered in 2019. One year on this tragedy continues to impact her family, her friends and colleagues and her community. They are left wondering what they could have done to help keep her safe. Gigi deserved to be protected but on that particular night the system failed her. I pay tribute to Gigi's children and family, whose lives will never be the same. She will be remembered and mourned every anniversary, birthday and family celebration. Every Day. I pay tribute to her friends and colleagues, in particular Jackie Crombie, whose advocacy has given voice to Gigi's experience. Most of all, in this esteemed NSW Parliament, as we work toward implementing Coercive Control Domestic Violence legislation, I remember Gigi. I speak your name. Her name was Gigi. She was beautiful and kind. Gigi, you are loved and you will be remembered.

FRANCIS BALBI

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron)—I note with sadness the passing of Francis 'Frank' Balbi, late of Rosebery, a friend and a beloved member of the Mascot RSL Sub-branch. "Cranky Franky" as he was affectionately known passed from this life on Wednesday 22 July, aged 98 years and seven months. Frank lived a long, remarkable life. Born in Malta, he survived the Great Depression, joined the Royal Malta Artillery and served on the searchlights of Dingli Heights during the Second World War. Like every resident of Malta during the war, he was awarded the George Cross for great heroism in the face of Axis bombardment. He was believed to be the last living Maltese ex-serviceman in Australia, a point of pride. He never missed an Anzac Day march in Mascot. Frank met his wife Alice in an air raid shelter in Malta and together they immigrated to Australia in 1950, settling in Rosebery in 1959. Frank worked as motor trimmer for the Department of Supply and was a keen fisher and competitive lawn bowler, but his greatest love was for family and friends. Alice passed in 2017, and they are survived by their son Robert and grandchildren Kelly and Mark. Vale Frank.

BLAND SHIRE COUNCIL STAFF RECOGNISED

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Colleen Dore and Jeff Lemon for their services to Bland Shire Council. Colleen has given 40 years of service ranging in rolls from a Typist Clerk, Customer Service, Clerk Secretary and her current role as Administration Officer in the Engineering Services team. Jeff Lemon has also been recognised for almost 20 years of service as the Landfill Supervisor for the Shire. During this time Jeff also served the community as a Taxi Driver in the evenings and still managed time to raise his family. Thank you Colleen for your continued service to Bland Shire and I wish Jeff all the best in his well-deserved retirement.

CAMPBELLTOWN COUNCIL

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of Campbelltown Council over the past few months. The COVID-19 pandemic has placed an enormous strain on every single community throughout our great state and Campbelltown is certainly no exception. Businesses have been forced to adapt, lay off workers and in some circumstance, close. There is no doubt the virus has changed the way we live our day to day lives. But the efforts from Campbelltown Council have certainly made a significant

difference. They have continued to make sure council-run child care centre operate so children and their parents or carers are not left in the lurch. They have created a number of initiatives – particularly for businesses – to provide some respite during these uncertain times. They have continued to maintain roads, parks and sporting fields around our community. The efforts to make sure Campbelltown Sports Stadium was up to scratch for a flurry of NRL games has also been admirable. The work of councils often goes unheralded but it be remiss of me not to applaud the entire workforce of Campbelltown Council for its efforts of late. On behalf of our community, thank you.

KENTLYN PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—There are a plethora wonderful schools in the area – and they all are unique in their own special way. Recently I had the pleasure of visiting Kentlyn Public School again. The school may be one of the smallest in terms of enrolments in the LGA, but make no mistake, there was a tremendous amount of school spirit and pride on display. Tucked up the back in the quiet suburb of Kentlyn, the school is located in one of the most picturesque locations in the state of NSW. The school's website states there are around 150 students that attend their daily however it evident that there has been many helping hands involved to make the school look and function as it does today. I was incredibly humbled to have a yarn with some of the students and to talk about how they had been impacted by COVID-19. Their thoughts were insightful and really painted a picture of how the virus has affected our youngest residents. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of the teachers, staff, students and parents at Kentlyn Public School. You should all be extremely proud.

BARRY HORVATH

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—One of the things I love about the Wallsend electorate is the peace and quiet you get when you visit the Hunter Wetlands at Shortland. It's a pleasure to see the smiling faces of the visitors who enjoy the beautiful surrounds. A major reason for the beautiful surrounds is Barry Horvarth. When Barry retired about seven years ago, he wanted something to do with his time that was going to spark enjoyment and create beauty, so he started volunteering at the Hunter Wetlands. One of the largest projects Barry was involved with was the 20 Million Trees program, where he and 11 others planted 47, 000 trees through Hexham, Ash Island and Tomago. Environmental projects at the wetlands such as enhancing the environment around ponds to assist endangered birds with survival and breeding, upgrading boardwalks, and constructing animal exhibitions, are managed by Barry. I encourage anyone in the Newcastle area to make time to visit the Hunter Wetlands Centre, and take in the enriching experience that the volunteers have created. Thank you, Barry, for 20 plus years of service and participation in the environmental projects in the Hunter. You have earned your afternoon cuppa with a view.

VALERIE NOBLE

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Vision of the tragic bush fires over summer, particularly on the south coast, will never be forgotten. The tragic events drove Mary Porter of Wallsend, whose elderly neighbour, Valerie Noble, had been knitting and crocheting blankets that she wanted to donate to people directly affected by the fires, to contact my office. Knowing how much of an impact the fires had on the communities of the south coast and Andrew Constance MP, Member for Bega, whose electorate was devastated by the fires, it was an obvious decision that this was an area that was in great need of support. Andrew was grateful for Valerie's donations and quickly organised for them to be given to the relief centre at Nerrigundah. Valerie has been a very busy lady. Recently she called in to my office with even more beautifully knitted and crocheted blankets, along with some scarves, to be donated. This time Andrew's office donated the items to the Cobargo area. It is great to know that Valerie's selfless work is helping to keep people warm in this cooler weather, after they have lost so much due to the fires. Well done Valerie and thank you.

LIFELINE SOUTH COAST

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)—I congratulate Lifeline South Coast, who have opened a new call centre for their dedicated Bushfire Recovery Line. The Australia-wide 13 HELP (13 43 57) phone line was developed in response to increased demand for Lifeline's service following the devastating impacts of the Black Summer bushfires. Lifeline have been supporting this phone line from their Wollongong Centre and the opening of the Nowra centre allows for increased capacity as well as additional local jobs for the South Coast. The devastation caused by bushfires have left many people vulnerable to negative mental health outcomes. This is compounded by the impacts of COVID-19. Lifeline's message is "We want to let everyone know that they are not alone. If you are feeling overwhelmed, please seek help. The new call centre will operate out of the innovative MIND the GaP facility at University of Wollongong's Shoalhaven Campus in West Nowra. Their Crisis Supporters are highly skilled at listening and offering support to people who are struggling, and I would encourage anyone in need to contact the helpline. Lifeline is open 24 hours a day, ready to listen.

BRUNSWICK HEADS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I acknowledge the hard work of the Brunswick Heads Chamber of Commerce as they continue to steer local businesses through the challenging times of the pandemic. The Brunswick Heads Chamber of Commerce ran the 'Bruns Buy Local Campaign' throughout July to encourage the community to shop local and support our businesses during this difficult time. The campaign saw over 1400 entries and at a time when our local businesses are struggling more than ever. Initiatives like these help our local economy, keep people in jobs and bring the community together in a spirit of resilience. The four lucky winners of the competition each received a \$200 gift voucher to be spent at participating businesses in Brunswick Heads. The Brunswick Heads Chamber of Commerce continue to support local businesses and our community through solution based initiatives, and I applaud the work they do.

BETHANY STUDENT LEADERS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Earlier this year I had the pleasure of meeting the new Year 12 student leaders at Bethany College. Bethany College is a school attended by many residents from my electorate of Oatley, and the school provides quality education as well as a vast array of extracurricular activities. Leadership is an important quality to have, and a great quality to develop from a young age. It was my honour to meet the new Year 12 student leaders, and I was impressed by their level of maturity and commitment to their studies and their school. I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to College Captain, Monique Makisi, College Vice-Captain, Catherine Calavarias, as well as the members of the SRC, House Captains and Prefects. I would like to thank Mrs Rachael Colreavy, Student Leadership Facilitator, for inviting me along to meet the new Year 12 leaders. Each have such bright futures ahead of them and I look forward to hearing about their positive contributions to the school.

NSW SES BLACKTOWN UNIT

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—I would like to extend my thanks to all the members of the Blacktown Unit of the New South Wales State Emergency Service. This volunteer group provides an invaluable assistance to the residents of the Prospect Electorate and Greater Western Sydney, and is driven by an unfaltering dedication to supporting the community in times of need. Along with recognising their crucial role in responding to emergencies ranging from storm damage to supporting our fire, police and ambulance services in major operations, I particularly wish to commend the members of the Blacktown SES who recently responded to the burst water main in Toongabbie. On the third of August, a burst water main on Portico Parade gave Toongabbie an unexpected new river. The dramatic flood resulted in the Parade being closed, but thanks to the NSW SES volunteers, residents were kept safe. The volunteers helped elderly residents access their properties, and redirected the flow of the water. It is volunteers like those at the NSW SES Blacktown Unit who through their countless hours of dedicated work keep us and our communities safe. I thank you for your service.

FERNCOURT CROSSING SUPERVISOR

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Congratulations to Ferncourt Public School on recently securing a dedicated school crossing supervisor! The Premier Street pedestrian crossing is situated on a busy street on the crest of a hill. There have been a number of near misses over the years and a growing school population and increase in parents driving kids to school during COVID 19 have added to the anxiety of staff, students and parents. Teachers at Ferncourt have been forced to act as traffic cops, just to keep kids safe. The need for a school crossing guard for Ferncourt Public was one of the key issues raised in the Summer Hill School Safety Survey and is just one of the many schools around our state who urgently need a crossing supervisor. Principal Rebecca Hollands, the school P&C and local neighbours have campaigned for a lollypop person for years and I was thrilled to recently visit Ferncourt to celebrate this important win for student safety. Thank you to Rebecca, Ferncourt P&C, and everyone who raised the issue in the School Safety Survey. One more crossing in the inner west is safer for kids thanks to your passion and persistence!

THE MULLETS AND RIVER CANOE CLUB

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Congratulations to The Mulletts and the River Canoe Club on their latest monthly clean up. Over 20 inner westies pulled on their gumboots and fished rubbish out of our river, pulling over 12 bags of rubbish and debris out of the waterway, the majority of which was single-use plastic and household waste. Local groups like the Mulletts play a vital role in keeping our river and local environment clean, but have also played an important role in keeping people connected during this Covid-19 pandemic. These monthly meetups and paddling around the river have boosted volunteers' spirits with everyone leaving with a smile knowing they have helped protect our beautiful river. One Mulletts regular said that:

"The Mulletts Cooks River Clean ups have really lifted my spirits. I enjoy being around positive likeminded people who are environmentally aware and want to make the world a better place."

On behalf of everyone in the inner west community, I offer my sincerest thanks to The Mullets and River Canoe Club for your tireless efforts in cleaning up and protecting our river, and thank you for the work you do in keeping people connected during these difficult times.

WOMEN IN FOOTBALL PINK RIBBON GALA DAY

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Today I discuss a very powerful event that I attended earlier this year - the St George Football Association and Peakhurst United Football Club "Women in Football: Pink Ribbon Gala Day". The joint initiative between the two organisations was aimed at raising funds and awareness for women's health. All money raised went to the Cancer Council to fund vital support services, prevention and research into breast cancer. The event was a great example of the power of our local sport and community groups. We can achieve great things when we bring great people together for great causes. The Gala Day also reaffirmed the strength of women's sport in the St George area, which continues to grow. I would like to thank Craig Kiely from St George Football Association for the invitation, as well as his team, and the whole team at Peakhurst United Football Club for organising the event.

FIREFIGHTERS

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—Today I'd like to acknowledge the 100 plus Firefighters that responded to and fought the recent factory fire in Moorebank. Under extreme fire conditions, these heroes worked tirelessly through the night to control and eventually put out the fire, and thankfully no one was injured or harmed. I'd like to thank everyone from Fire and Rescue NSW, including local, and neighbouring stations that put their lives on the line to protect the local community. At the peak of the fire, 25 fire engines were utilised, as well as 17 pumps and cherry pickers – a huge job. NSW Fire and Rescue were also supported by local police, ambulance, EPA and hazmat teams, and their hard work does not go unnoticed. Once again, I'd like to thank the firefighters, and all who assisted, for protecting the local community in controlling the factory fire in Moorebank. Thank you.

CASULA HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE IN HARMONY TEAM

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—I'd like to recognise the League in Harmony Team at Casula High School. The students in the team are Youth Ambassadors that are working with the NRL to develop their leadership skills and also build their community connections beyond the school. The students have come together and started an initiative called "Your Voice Matters", which is aimed at inspiring their fellow students to speak up. The League in Harmony team recognises that sometimes it may be difficult for younger people to speak up, but these students are encouraging others to use their voice and express their opinions, thoughts and ideas. This is such a great initiative that involves kids motivating each other to have a voice, and as they say, their voice matters "just as much as everyone else". Once again, I'd like to commend the NRL Youth Ambassadors at Casula High School for spreading such an important message to students across NSW. Thank you.

ALSTONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL - "WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE PITCH" COMPETITION

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I would like to congratulate Alstonville High School students, Clara Tolman, Zoe Fairfull and Annie Tolman on being awarded the National 2020 "Women in Agriculture Pitch" prize. The three high school students were first prize winners for Alstonville High School and I congratulate them, their teachers and the new principal, Mrs Sandra Rosner on this achievement. The \$2000 prize money will be used by the school to extend student opportunities in agriculture through 2021. The group developed their own agri-tech solution to a problem faced by the agricultural industry. The group came up with an app idea designed to entice young people to consider a career in agriculture and to link them to experience and training opportunities in their local area. It is wonderful to see that during this difficult time for communities across the globe, that the next generation of women are creating solutions for the agriculture industry. Women are currently underrepresented in the agriculture space, and I look forward to hearing the voices of more women like Clara, Zoe and Annie talking about agriculture in the future.

PENRITH ELECTORATE ROTARY CLUBS

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney)—I would like to acknowledge the incoming Presidents of the four Rotary Clubs in my electorate, Mr Nick Marathakis – Rotary Club of Nepean, Mr Willy Piepers – Rotary Club of Penrith, Ms Jean Vranich – Rotary Club of Penrith Valley and Ms Michele Ellery – Rotary Club of Lower Blue Mountains. Additionally, Mr David Clark of Lower Blue Mountains Rotary Club was named as Rotary 9685 District Governor for 2020/21 at a small luncheon held on 19 July. David has a long and fulfilling history with Rotary having served in various roles across a number of clubs over the past 50 years and I have no doubt his experience will be put to good use over the next 12 months. At the event, the Lower Blue Mountains Rotary Club were also presented with the Golden Quill Award for Public Relations, the District Community Service Award and the very prestigious District Governor

Award for Large Clubs, a fantastic effort. I sincerely thank all the local Rotary clubs for the invaluable work they do to support our local community and I wish them all the best for the year ahead.

PENRITH COMMUNITY KITCHEN & PENRITH RSL CLUB

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney)—In the face of COVID-19 pandemic, the Penrith Community Kitchen like so many organisations were required to close their doors for a period of time. Unfortunately this also meant the donations of funds, food and clothing they rely on to provide their service also diminished. Following a call out for help it was fantastic to see the Penrith RSL Club, Nepean Rotary, Raine & Horne Commercial, Our Community Cares and Mr Gordon Henwood as well as many members of our community step up and offer what help they could. To Neel Chand and his team at the Penrith RSL, a big thank you for your generosity during this time which has impacted your club so heavily. It is pleasing to note that the Penrith Community Kitchen can now continue to support those in our community who are less fortunate and disadvantaged.

EARLY LEARNING MATTERS WEEK

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—This Early Learning Matters Week, I thank early childhood educators in the Charlestown Electorate and across NSW. The pandemic has made clear how much we rely on the staff at these services, the essential workers who allow other essential workers to do their jobs. Their work often goes unappreciated. Thank you to the wonderful staff at:

1. A Magical Time Childrens Centre Kotara;
2. A Magical Time Childrens Centre Mount Hutton;
3. Adamstown OOSH;
4. After School Klub Wiripaang;
5. Ailsa's Family Day Care;
6. Belair OOSH;
7. Belair Vacation Care;
8. Birralee Long Day Care and Preschool;
9. Camp Australia – St. Kevin's Primary School OSHC;
10. Camp Australia – Warners Bay Public School OSHC;
11. Cardiff Community Preschool;
12. Charlestown Child Care Centre;
13. Charlestown East Preschool;
14. Creative Childcare Centre Kotara;
15. Eleebana and Community Outside School Hours Care;
16. Eleebana Childrens Centre;
17. Fair Play OOSH Garden Suburb;
18. Fair Play OOSH Redhead;
19. Felton Street Community Preschool;
20. Goodstart Gateshead;
21. Goodstart Mount Hutton;
22. Hillsborough OOSH;
23. Honeybee Preschool;
24. Imagine Early Learning & Childcare – Garden Suburb
25. Inspired Family Day Care;
26. Kinda Kapers Adamstown;
27. Kinda Kapers Charlestown.

EARLY LEARNING MATTERS WEEK

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1. Kinda Kapers Mount Hutton;
2. Kindy Patch Eleebana;
3. Kindy Patch Redhead;
4. Kotara Montessori Childrens Centre;
5. Kotara South OOSH;
6. KU Bel Air Preschool;
7. KU Kahibah Road;
8. KU Windale Preschool;
9. Lake Macquarie Educational Preschool;
10. Littleheroes Family Daycare
11. Little Unicorn Charlestown;
12. Mount Hutton Childcare Centre;
13. Mount Hutton OOSH;
14. New Lambton District OOSH;
15. PCYC Out Of School Hours Lake Macquarie;
16. Possum Place Vacation Care Centre;
17. Redhead Community Preschool;
18. St Nicholas OOSH Charlestown;
19. St Nicholas OOSH Kotara;
20. St Nicholas OOSH Warners Bay;
21. Uniting Preschool Adamstown Heights;
22. Victory OOSH Charlestown East;
23. Victory OOSH Charlestown South;
24. Victory OOSH Dudley;
25. Victory OOSH Kahibah;
26. Warners Bay Early Learning and Care Centre;
27. Warners Bay Little Learners;
28. Whitebridge Preschool Kindergarten;
29. Wise Family Daycare.

EAST MAITLAND RSL SUB-BRANCH

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—I acknowledge the work of East Maitland RSL Sub Branch to support veterans and their families throughout the COVID-19 crisis, and applaud the emphasis they place on both physical and mental welfare. For example: The sub-branch encourages members and their partners to attend fitness classes at a local gym. Those who attend are only required to pay \$5 each; the sub-branch pays the rest. The group also hosts Coffee and a Chat mornings twice a month on a Saturday. This drop-in gathering, open to all, encourages social interaction and good mental health. There are also some very special individuals who I'd like to mention: John Brien, who supports and helps those lodging claims with the Department of Veterans Affairs; Welfare officer Peter Hedges and his team, who stay in touch with members to ensure they are in good physical

and mental health; Secretary Neil Cromarty for his particular efforts to make ANZAC Day a special commemoration for his street during the COVID lockdown, all his work to secure grants, and the sub-branch's comprehensive newsletter; and President Stephen Grimmer, who has informed and engaged members throughout the crisis via email and social media. Thank you all.

HILL TOP MEN'S SHED

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—I would like to congratulate the Hill Top Men's Shed on the receipt of their latest piece of equipment they have received. Recently they have obtained a Cigwled multi process inverter welder. This was warmly welcomed by the very active Men's shed in Hill Top. It will assist with the creation of a number of new projects. Now, more than ever, Sheds offer men a critical avenue for social support and engagement. They are showing great leadership in ensuring that activities at the shed have correct social distancing and hygiene control. The Shed plays an important role in the local community and has assisted with a number of local projects. It is one of over 1000 Men's Sheds across Australia. After the recent bushfires the Hill Top crew led by John Matters worked with volunteers from the Mittagong SES and helped to construct a number of Wildlife shelters for those animals who lost their habitats. The main project was to construct and number of purpose built possum boxes. Well done Hill Top Men's Shed.

MACARTHUR FC

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—I would like to congratulate Macarthur FC with the announcement of the club's first overseas signing. English striker Matt Derbyshire joins Tommy Oar, Adam Federici, Denis Genreau and marquee man Mark Milligan in the Bulls growing line-up. The former Premier League player has agreed to play for Macarthur FC after spending four years with Cypriot top tier club Omonia Nikosia. Matt Derbyshire has scored almost 150 career goals, bringing a wealth of experience to the new A-League team. The 34-year-old played 76 EPL games with the Blackburn Rovers and Birmingham City. The right-footer also represented his country 14 times in the under-21s squad. Macarthur FC ambassador - and Harrington Park resident - Brett Emerton also played with Derbyshire at Blackburn. The Bulls will join the A-League in the 2020/21 season and play out of Campbelltown Stadium. As a Patron and Co-Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Macarthur FC, it gives me great joy to see these recent signings. These players will be great role models to the boys and girls playing football in Wollondilly and the Greater Macarthur region. Go the Bulls.

SYLVANIA HEIGHTS COMMUNITY AND YOUTH CLUB

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I am delighted that our community will benefit from an accessibility upgrade at the Sylvania Heights Community and Youth Club building. Facilitated by \$190,000 from the NSW Government's Infrastructure Grants program, the upgrade will improve usability for the elderly and people with a disability. Improvements to the existing facilities will include lift access to the hall, a ramp and an accessible toilet on the lower level, ensuring that more community users are able to participate and benefit from the diverse range of activities and sports supported by Sylvania Heights Community and Youth Club. I was pleased to meet with both youth and senior members of the Club to announce the funding last month. In particular, I acknowledge the dedicated executive committee who work tirelessly to provide our community with a means to come together over a mutual love of sporting and recreational activities for all ages. I recognise President Trent Jordan, Vice President Peter Barker, Secretary Jenny Buchannan, Treasurer Tony Robins, Sponsorship and Grants committee member Chris Plakias as well as members John Appleyard and John and Kathy Allingham. I commend Sylvania Heights Community and Youth Club for their continued dedication to our community.

COMO JANNALI FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—Football is back and the Como Jannali Football Club is ready to continue kicking goals. From humble beginnings out of a scout hall at Como, the now Como Jannali Football Club was established in 1956. After several name changes along the way, the Club now proudly calls their Jannali clubhouse home and is standing strong with 62 teams in the current season, nearly a third of which are junior and senior women teams. With women's football being part of the Club's fabric since the inaugural season in 1976, it's little wonder that Como Jannali Football Club is embracing the FIFA Women's World Cup being hosted in Australia and New Zealand in 2023. Of course none of the Club's success is possible without the incredible volunteers. I recognise the dedicated executive committee, namely President Greg Pritchard, Vice President Gail Keane, Secretary and Registrar Karen Traynor, Member Protection Information Officers Sally Bridgland and Matthew Rose, MiniRoo Coordinator Garry Burton and Technical Director Jake Howard. I thank those at Como Jannali Football Club for their contribution to our sporting community and extend my best wishes for the football season.

EPPING CLUB

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer)—Recently I had the opportunity to sit down with the CEO of the Epping Club, Peter Saez. The Epping Club, like so much of the hospitality sector in NSW, has been badly hit by the effects of the COVID-19 global pandemic, with its doors being forced to close and losing a full three months of revenue. Thankfully, years of strong financial management means that the Epping Club is in a strong position to weather this storm. It is great to see business is slowly getting back to normal and has set up its own COVIDSafe operating plan. The Epping Club is a successful and valued local business in the Epping community. The Club also hosts the Epping RSL Sub-Branch who do important work with local veterans as well as youth. Over the past 22 years the Club has donated more than \$4 million to the community through various initiatives and continues to work closely with community organisations like the Epping Chamber of Commerce and Epping Rotary. I want to express my personal thanks to Peter for his leadership through this difficult time.

CAMDEN MUSEUM 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—The Camden Museum has long been an integral part of cataloguing and displaying Camden's rich history. This historical museum was established by the Rotary Club of Camden and The Camden Historical Society. It was opened on the 20th of June 1970 by Major General Sir Denzil Macarthur Onslow CBE, DSO, ED who was an Australian Army Officer, businessman and grazier and whose family the iconic Onslow Park in Camden was named after. On the 20th of June 2020, the Camden Historical Society celebrated 50 years since the museum's opening. The Society met and held a celebration for this important milestone of one of Camden's great historic centres. I'd like to note the efforts of the Camden Historical Society's committee members Ian Ramsay, Rene Rem, Frances Warner, Robert Wheeler, Dawn Williams and Julie Wrigley as well as President Doug Barrett, Vice Presidents Warren Sims and John Wrigley OAM, Treasurer Fletcher Joss and Secretary Lee Stratton for all the work they do recording, maintaining and displaying Camden's rich and important history for our future generations.

FRANK HIRKA

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I would like to congratulate Frank Hirka for having played his 800th club round of hockey. A fantastic milestone! I note that Frank, who is the Secretary and a life member of the Metropolitan South West Hockey Association, has contributed greatly to the hockey community in Macarthur over many years. This is proven by the fact that his 800th game was played on a field named after him. I wish Frank well in his contributions to Macarthur's hockey community and in the many more club games to come.

AARON BULLOCK

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter)—I would like to congratulate Singleton Jockey Aaron Bullock for being honoured at the Scone Race Club's TAB meeting on 4 August, 2020 for his incredible feats in the saddle. Aaron has had a brilliant strike rate at the Scone Race Club's track for the 2019-2020 season riding 14 winners and 15 placegetters from his 60 rides. Taking out the jockey's premiership for the second time in the past three years. To acknowledge his achievements the second race on the card was named in his honour "Congratulations Aaron Bullock, Scone's Premiership Leading Jockey Maiden Plate". I congratulate Aaron on his accomplishments and wish him every success for his future in the racing industry.

KEGWORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL P&C

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I would like to draw the attention of the house the students, teachers and P&C at Kegworth Public School for their inspiring commitment to school solar initiatives. I was delighted to award the P&C with a Community Building Partnerships grant of \$17,500 for the installation of a solar system at the school last year on top of a \$50,000 grant in 2018 to upgrade their toilets in 2018. As a school committed to teaching the next generation of caring and resourceful students, I have been delighted to see their continued leadership promoting renewable energy. In particular I would like to acknowledge P&C members who have been driving this change including P&C President Jennifer Vincent and Vice Presidents, Karen Laing and Tessa Morrison, Secretary Dustin Blagg, 2019 Treasurer Leon Berkelmans, sustainability sub-committee members Celia Morris and Sara Padgett Kjaersgaard, Principal Belinda Perih, Leah Radburn and Sonya Williams from the Inner West Council. I know I speak for everyone in the community when I thank the Kegworth school community for championing sustainability and protecting our environment for generations to come.

WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—I draw the attention of this parliament to the fact that this week is World Breastfeeding Week and the 2020 theme is encouraging everyone to 'support breastfeeding for a healthier planet'. The Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) is leading the Australian campaign to educate the wider community about the contribution breastfeeding makes to population health, environmental sustainability and

social equity. Nationally the association provides support to parents through the National Breastfeeding Hotline and delivers Breastfeeding Education classes online as well as connecting with parents through their app mum2mum and their national Facebook group. The local Australian Breastfeeding Association group covering the Newtown Electorate has supported the health of families in our community for an incredible 49 years. During the pandemic, the Inner West ABA group has been running zoom support groups on breastfeeding during Covid-19, looking after the mental health of mothers and parents during lockdown, referring to health services and empowering parents about normal baby behaviours and breastfeeding. I would like to thank Margaret Grove, Holly Goodwin, Vanessa Peterson and Thushara Dibley as well as all ABA staff and volunteers for their work educating and supporting our communities on this World Breastfeeding Week.

SCOTT BAILEY - SOLDIER ON

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Sometimes we can often neglect to recognise our fundraising champions who go above and beyond to support some outstanding organisations in our community. It is during these hard times when raising funds is challenging at best, we are grateful to have people like Scott Bailey from Port Macquarie who is actively collecting money for Soldier On to ensure this tremendous organisation continues to offer an ear and a shoulder to our veterans, defence personnel and their families. As a former veteran and ruby union player, turn referee, Scott is now taking to the field as football resumes to raise funds for Soldier On to help those who have experienced trauma as a result of active service. On Saturday, six games were played at Oxley Oval, with all referees wearing camouflage jerseys while the bucket was passed through the crowds to collect gold coin donations to support the work Soldier On undertakes in mental health recovery. Scott applauds Soldier On for establishing meaningful connections and strengthening resilience with its members while rebuilding their confidence to allow them to return to the workforce. I congratulate Scott for his generous efforts on behalf of a wonderful charity in our region.

FATHER PETER WOOD

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I congratulate Father Peter Wood of St. Agnes' Parish, Port Macquarie for recently celebrating his 10th anniversary as an ordained priest in the Catholic Church. Acknowledged by his parishioners as a spiritually guided, devout Christian man who is committed in spreading the love of God through his service, Father Peter was ordained in St. Carthage's Cathedral on the 30 July 2010 and has never looked back. After his ordination, Father Peter was appointed Assistant Priest at St. Augustine's Parish in Coffs Harbour where he served for two years before transferring to Clarence Valley Parish. Relocating to Port Macquarie in November 2014, Father Peter was assigned to St. Agnes' Parish to replace Father Amila Rajasekara to support the ministry and growth of the Catholic Church in our region. Experiencing God's transforming love, mercy and forgiveness is at the forefront of Father Peter's work as he encounters challenging situations for those facing hardship and is led through the Holy Spirit to enable them to rediscover their faith relationship in Christ. Since his ordination, Father Peter has presided over 260 Baptisms, 30 Weddings and 270 Funerals. Congratulations again Father Peter on reaching this milestone.

GLENN INNES MEN'S SHED

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise the Glen Innes Men's Shed, its President Jim Wilson and its many members for their determination to continue the great work they do during the tough times of COVID-19. The Glen Innes Men's Shed is a popular local hang-out, always offering a warm welcome and comradeship to every person who walks through their doors. Despite the difficulties and restrictions imposed by COVID-19, the Men's Shed has continued to provide an invaluable support network for its more than 90 members more than 10 years after it first opened. In recent years, the Men's shed and its committee have worked extremely hard to make improvements and additions to its facilities. Not only do members get to work on projects but also be part of a supportive and easy-going community of like-minded people. The importance of a men's shed like Glen Innes for the mental health of men in the country cannot be underestimated. I commend each and every member of the Glen Innes Men's Shed on their continued success and growth.

RAY MEPHAM

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I had the pleasure of meeting with Elsmore fish breeder Ray Mepham recently to present him with an outstanding service award on behalf of the State Government for his 50 years of dedication to fisheries in NSW and his ground-breaking efforts in establishing aquaculture. Ray, his wife Edna and their late son Kevin established the Native Fish Hatchery on their property near Elsmore on the Macintyre River in 1970. Since then, Ray has made an exceptional contribution to the conservation of Murray Cod, pioneering the stocking of fingerlings back in 1970 and being the first person to artificially breed Murray Cod during the 1960s. Ray Mepham is rightfully considered a pioneer of the NSW aquaculture industry. On Ray's property, he houses a small but

informative museum that documents the efforts of DPI and stocking groups around the Northern Tablelands to re-establish fish populations in our rivers, creeks and dams. It is a popular and informative tourist destination for visitors and schools. It was a privilege to meet and celebrate the valuable contributions Ray has made to our region.

PEARLY ROSE MUNDAY 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—It is with great pleasure I extend my congratulations to one of my constituents Mrs Pearly Rose Munday on the occasion of her 100th Birthday which will fall next week on the 16th August. I wish you happiness and continued good health into the future and hope you have a special day celebrating with friends and family.

CHISHOLM CENTRE UPGRADE

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—The City of Parramatta Council's Better Neighbourhood Program has seen many projects completed across the Seven Hills Electorate, particularly in Winston Hills. Lord Mayor Councillor Bob Dwyer and North Rocks Ward Councillor Andrew Jefferies yesterday inspected the almost complete Council upgrade of the iconic Chisholm Centre on Caroline Chisholm Drive in Winston Hills. The upgrade includes increased accessibility for the elderly, those with a disability and parents and carers with prams, solar powered street lights, new seats, trees, bikes racks and an increased streetscape. I regularly drive up to Winston Hills's Chisholm Centre to get breakfast or lunch at Bagel Bakery Café or lunch or dinner at the area's best roast chicken shop, Chookalicious. Dozens of Winston Hills locals have commented positively on the project and I know the small businesses there including restaurants, a pharmacy and real estate agency are happy with the upgrade. Well done to Council's North Rocks Ward place services team and North Rocks Ward councillors for their efforts in getting this project done.

GOOD360 AUSTRALIA AT WESTMEAD HOSPITAL

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank GOOD360 Australia for recently providing care packages for the dedicated and terrific nurses, doctors and other health care staff at Westmead Hospital in my electorate of Seven Hills. GOOD360 Australia is a charity which has operated since 2012 and has donated well over \$110 million of goods and have distributed over 10 million items to Australians. GOOD360 Australia has a goal to deliver \$1 billion of brand new goods to Australians in need and those who care for our community in times of crisis such as our health care staff, emergency services workers, police and other critical personnel. The Westmead Hospital health care staff are happy to receive the very kind gifts from GOOD360 Australia and their donors and corporate partners. I thank GOOD360 for looking after our critical health care personnel who have been saving lives day after day in throughout the COVID-19 pandemic period over the last 6 months.

LEADING SENIOR CONSTABLE ANDREW MARSH

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—There comes a time in the human experience where nothing but the extraordinary efforts of a brave individual will do. On February 10th 2020, this individual was Leading Senior Constable Andrew Marsh from the Fairfield City Police Area Command. Risking his own life in the process, Andrew Marsh rescued Mrs Gabriella Isepy, a 97 year old resident from rising floodwaters which threatened her Canley Vale home and carrying her to safety. I commend the efforts of this brave and extraordinary man who acted on instinct and rushed in to rescue a member of our community in what could potentially have been a fatal situation. Leading Senior Constable Andrew Marsh's efforts on this day is indicative of the lengths the members of the Fairfield City Police Area Command will go to in order to ensure the safety of our community. I thank him for his efforts on this day and for the diligence to duty shown on any given day by Leading Senior Constable Andrew Marsh and all the members of the Fairfield City Police Area Command to keep our community safe.

FAIRFIELD RELAY FOR LIFE 2020 VIRTUAL LAUNCH

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—On Saturday 25th July 2020 a significant event was intended to take place – the virtual launch of the Fairfield Relay for Life, an event that unfortunately has had to be postponed due to the recent spike in positive COVID-19 cases in our local area. Ms Denise Daynes, Community Relations Coordinator for Cancer Council NSW and Ms Sinilia Radijevic have been keen advocates for this event for some years and have embraced the hard work and long hours involved in the preparation leading up to the event as well as on the day itself. This year they have had the mammoth task of changing the model of Fairfield Relay for Life to a virtual event and I look forward to seeing the fruits of their labour in digital form. In this current ever-changing environment we are faced with since the outbreak of COVID-19, community engagement events such as the Fairfield Relay for Life have been challenged immensely. I commend Denise and Sinilia for rising to this challenge and coming up with new ways to engage our community for a wonderful cause – to raise awareness and to work towards a future with no cancer.

TERRIGAL PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I want to congratulate Terrigal Public School for their partnership with a bushfire-affected school, Milton Public School, which I note is situated in the electorate of my colleague the Member for South Coast. At the end of term two, students at Terrigal Public School were invited to participate in a “crazy hair day” in exchange for making a gold coin donation. A total of \$2,735.40 was raised by the students on this day and every single dollar was transferred to support the school's recovery from the black summer of bushfires – which as we know, has affected so many local communities in New South Wales. The staff also raised an additional \$750. This brings the total amount raised to \$3,485.40. I want to again congratulate the staff at Terrigal Public School and their Principal, Michael Burgess, for having a bushfire buddy school and helping the community of Milton through this difficult time.

EMPIRE BAY PLAYGROUND

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I'm pleased to inform the House that after twelve months of design and construction work, the new Empire Bay district playspace has been officially opened. I was delighted to join a number of local residents, including Carolen Barripp, the President of the Empire Bay Progress Association, and Karen Tucker from Central Coast Council, at the new playspace last Friday. It features new play equipment, a pump track, outdoor gym equipment, a water fountain and BBQ area. What I think is most important about this project, is that the space was designed in collaboration with local students and local residents. Designed by locals, to be used by locals. I also want to acknowledge \$210,000 from Central Coast Council, which was provided in addition to \$150,000 from the New South Wales Government's Stronger Communities Fund that made this project possible. I know so many in our community are so looking forward to using the new facilities – they look fantastic.

MOSMAN ROWERS RECOGNISES MARGIE GEORGE

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I acknowledge the incredible achievements of Margie George of Mosman Rowers Club. Recently Mosman Rowers held a gala dinner in which Mosman local and long-time supporter of the club Margie was recognised with a prestigious Honorary Life Membership for her outstanding commitment to the club. Margie and her late husband Geoff have been true stalwarts of the club, with Margie being an integral part of the community campaign to save Mosman Rowers. Margie has also been instrumental in the club serving on the social committee, organising countless events, looking after memberships, arranging volunteers, and fundraising, Margie is tireless in her work and commitment to the club. I would like to congratulate Margie for her achievements and contributions to the club and for receiving this award. I was also pleased to assist Mosman Rowers in securing funding through the 2019 round of the Community Building Partnership Grants, for repairs to their spectator deck. I would like to acknowledge Kathrina Doran who is President of the Mosman Rowers for advocacy of this project. Congratulations once again to Margie George for receiving her Honorary Life Membership.

VALE SYBIL O'DONOGHUE

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I acknowledge the extraordinary life of Mosman resident Sybil O'Donoghue. Sybil was born in London in 1920 to artistic parents, and pursued her passion for singing and signed on as a singer at the Savoy Theatre. It was while singing in the chorus in late 1946 that she met her husband, Irish tenor Terence O'Donoghue. Sybil recalled that they were mostly untroubled by the Second World War and still performed even during the Blitz, remarking that "Bombs were falling right and left, we never took any notice". Sybil and her family emigrated to Australia in 1956 and have lived in the same house in Mosman for more than 60 years. It was here that Sybil and Terence raised their three children Bridget, Damon, and Rory. Sybil led a glamorous and extraordinary life in the world of opera, and until recently continued to host dinner parties three nights a week at home. Sybil passed peacefully this week at Royal North Shore Hospital, and my thoughts are with Sybil's family.

MAITLAND RSL SUB-BRANCH

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—One month ago Maitland RSL Sub-Branch celebrated its 101st anniversary of the first Annual General Meeting of the West Maitland Sub-Branch of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League, as it was known. Today the Maitland RSL Sub-Branch has over 120 members and is one of the few Sub-Branches in the state to provide a Monday to Friday service to members. The Sub-Branch hosts many of the city's commemorative services for veterans but was challenged by COVID-19 this year, and the Korean War Memorial Commemoration Service last Monday week was cancelled due to an east coast low. Despite COVID adversity the group continues to support our troops and the Veteran community. It donates to "Pens for Troops", which sends deployed Australian Defence Force members a memento of their service, and the Auxiliary continues to send care packages to those deployed overseas. Chaplain and President Eric Bell and the welfare and visitation officers Richard Kidd, Jeff Dunn and Peter Huber have been an amazing support to many veterans and

their families. Thank you to the executive including Fred Goode OAM, Deborah Howe, Graham Solomons and Henry Meskauskas for your service to our community and veterans.

YOU HAVE A FRIEND

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I am full of admiration for John and Robyn Lee's Tweed Heads-based charity You Have A Friend which provides excellent support to the homeless, marginalised and single parents and their children across the Tweed Valley. Registered in May 2008, this not-for-profit organisation has 80 volunteers and an Op Shop in Machinery Drive, Tweed Heads South. You Have A Friend provides over 300 meals plus fruit/vegetables and grocery items each week on the streets of Murwillumbah, Uki and surrounding areas in my electorate of Lismore. The charity also reaches out to Tweed Heads, Coolangatta, Chinderah and Wooyung. They feature in the non-government sector profiles of my Housing Ends Homelessness Report and Advocacy Paper, which forms my submission to the Housing Strategy for NSW Discussion Paper released by NSW Minister for Water, Property and Housing, The Honourable Melinda Pavey MP. You Have A Friend President John Lee shows great compassion as he tirelessly advocates for the homeless community living in the State electorates of Lismore and Tweed. During the drought, You Have A Friend volunteers also took food packages and drinking water to farming families doing it tough in Tenterfield Shire.

COVID-19 AND CLEANERS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—June 15 this year marked International Day of Justice for Cleaners, and I want to salute the hard work of hundreds of cleaners on the Northern Rivers and Northern Tablelands regions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Local cleaners working in our hospitals, GP practices, day care centres, primary and secondary schools, Southern Cross University campuses, and in offices and businesses in our Central Business Districts are stopping the spread of COVID-19 and all of us owe them a huge debt of gratitude. The United Workers Union used the 30th anniversary of the International Day of Justice for Cleaners to highlight the need for cleaners to have personal protective equipment (PPE), decent wages, respect in the workplace and paid leave when impacted by COVID-19. I want to personally thank the women who clean my Electorate Office – Noreen Crummy and Kathryn Anderson – and our building – Jo Buckley – for their professionalism and smiles when we bump into each other. My Senior Electorate Officer Carmel Cook previously worked as a school cleaner for 10 years and then served for 18 years as a regional secretary and organiser for what is now the United Workers Union.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: According to the suspension of standing and sessional orders passed earlier today, I shall leave the chair until the ringing of one long bell.

[*The Assistant Speaker left the chair at 17:42. The House resumed at 19:37.*]

Bills

DEFAMATION AMENDMENT BILL 2020

Returned

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

GAS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MEDICAL GAS SYSTEMS) BILL 2020

Returned

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments.

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments.

Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 6 August 2020

No. 1 **OPP No. 1 [c2020-101R]**

Page 3, Schedule 1[4], section 4(1), proposed definition of *maintenance*, line 23. Omit all words on that line. Insert instead—
mechanical services and medical gas work has the same meaning as in the *Home Building Act 1989*.

No. 2 **OPP No. 2 [c2020-101R]**

Page 3, Schedule 1[4], section 4(1), proposed definition of *medical facility*, paragraphs (b) and (c), lines 26–29. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

- (b) an aged care facility,

- (c) a veterinary hospital within the meaning of the *Veterinary Practice Act 2003*,
- (d) another place where medical gas is supplied or removed (except as prescribed by the regulations).

No. 3 **OPP No. 3 [c2020-101R]**

Page 3, Schedule 1[4], section 4(1), proposed definition of *medical gas installation*, lines 32–37. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

medical gas installation means a reticulated system of pipes, hoses or lines that conveys or controls the supply or removal of medical gases, including associated fixtures or fittings and any other thing prescribed by the regulations, but not including anything connected to and extending or situated beyond a wall outlet or NIST fitting.

No. 4 **OPP No. 4 [c2020-101R]**

Page 3, Schedule 1[4], section 4(1), proposed definition of *medical gas technician work*, line 38. Omit "maintenance,".

No. 5 **OPP No. 5 [c2020-101R]**

Page 3, Schedule 1[4], section 4(1), proposed definition of *medical gasfitting work*, lines 40 and 41. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

medical gasfitting work means the construction, installation, replacement, repair, alteration, maintenance, testing or commissioning of a medical gas installation and includes incidental design work.

No. 6 **OPP No. 6 [c2020-101R]**

Pages 4–5, Schedule 1[6], proposed section 38A, line 30 on page 4 to line 9 on page 5. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 7 **OPP No. 7 [c2020-101R]**

Page 5, Schedule 1[6], proposed section 38B(1), lines 11 and 12. Omit "or medical gas technician work". Insert instead ", medical gas technician work or mechanical services and medical gas work".

No. 8 **OPP No. 8 [c2020-101R]**

Page 5, Schedule 1[6], proposed section 38B(1)(a), lines 13 and 14. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

- (a) the relevant Australian standards or, if a particular Australian standard is prescribed by the regulations in relation to the work, that Australian standard,
- (a1) any relevant standards of the International Organization for Standardization that are prescribed by the regulations in relation to the work,

No. 9 **OPP No. 9 [c2020-101R]**

Page 5, Schedule 1[6], proposed section 38C(1), lines 37–41. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

- (1) A person responsible for a medical gas installation at a place must, to the best of the person's ability and knowledge, ensure that the installation is, while it is connected to the source of the supply of medical gas, maintained in accordance with—
 - (a) the relevant Australian standards or, if a particular Australian standard is prescribed by the regulations in relation to the installation, that Australian standard, and
 - (b) any relevant standards of the International Organization for Standardization that are prescribed by the regulations in relation to the installation.

No. 10 **OPP No. 10 [c2020-101R]**

Page 6, Schedule 1[6], proposed section 38D(2), lines 17 and 18. Omit "take reasonable steps to make the installation safe". Insert instead "notify the person responsible for the installation (within the meaning of section 38C) of that fact".

No. 11 **OPP No. 11 [c2020-101R]**

Page 6, Schedule 1[6], proposed section 38E(1), line 22. Insert "or medical gas technician work" after "medical gasfitting work".

No. 12 **OPP No. 12 [c2020-101R]**

Page 6, Schedule 1[6], proposed section 38E(1), lines 22 and 23. Omit ", within the period prescribed by the regulations,".

No. 13 **OPP No. 13 [c2020-101R]**

Page 6, Schedule 1[6], proposed section 38E(2), line 29. Insert ", medical gas technician work or mechanical services and medical gas work" after "medical gasfitting work".

No. 14 **OPP No. 14 [c2020-101R]**

Page 6, Schedule 1[6], proposed section 38E(2), lines 29 and 30. Omit ", within the period prescribed by the regulations,".

No. 15 **OPP No. 15 [c2020-101R]**

Page 6, Schedule 1[6], proposed section 38E. Insert after line 34—

- (2A) Notice of a defective gas installation required to be given under this section must be given—
- (a) in relation to notice referred to in subclause (1)—as soon as practicable after the defective gas installation is discovered, and
 - (b) in relation to notice referred to in subclause (2)— within 24 hours after the defective gas installation is discovered.

No. 16 **OPP No. 16 [c2020-101R]**

Page 6, Schedule 1[6], proposed section 38E(3), line 36. Insert ", medical gas technician work or mechanical services and medical gas work" after "medical gasfitting work".

No. 17 **OPP No. 17 [c2020-101R]**

Page 6, Schedule 1[6], proposed section 38E(4), definition of "responsible person", line 40. Insert ", medical gas technician work or mechanical services and medical gas work" after "medical gasfitting work".

No. 18 **OPP No. 18 [c2020-101R]**

Page 7, Schedule 1[6], proposed section 38F(a), line 7. Insert "or mechanical services and medical gas work" after "medical gasfitting work".

No. 19 **OPP No. 19 [c2020-101R]**

Page 9, Schedule 1. Insert after line 21—

[17A] Section 75(3A)

Insert after section 75(3)—

- (3A) Despite subsection (3), the regulations cannot exempt, or provide for the exemption, of a person from the requirements of Part 5A.

No. 20 **OPP No. 20 [c2020-101R]**

Page 9, Schedule 1[18], lines 22–31. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 21 **OPP No. 1 [c2020-101R as amended]**

Page 10, Schedule 2. Insert after line 1—

[1A] Sections 15A–15C

Insert after section 15—

15A Unqualified mechanical services and medical gas work

- (1) An individual must not do any mechanical services and medical gas work (whether or not it is also residential building work) except—
 - (a) as a qualified supervisor in respect of that work, or
 - (b) as the holder of a tradesperson certificate authorising its holder to do that work under supervision, but only if the work is done under the supervision and in accordance with the directions, if any, of a qualified supervisor.

Maximum penalty—1,000 penalty units in the case of a corporation and 200 penalty units in any other case.
- (2) Despite subsection (1), an apprentice or trainee may do mechanical services and medical gas services work even though the apprentice or trainee is not a qualified supervisor or holder, but only if a qualified supervisor—
 - (a) is present at all times where the work is being done by the apprentice or trainee, and
 - (b) is available to be consulted by, and to give directions relating to how the work is to be done to, the apprentice or trainee.
- (3) A qualified supervisor who is supervising any mechanical services and medical gas work being done by an apprentice or trainee as referred to in subsection (1)(b) must—
 - (a) give directions that are adequate to enable the work to be done correctly by the apprentice or trainee performing it, and
 - (b) personally ensure that the work is correctly done.

Maximum penalty—1,000 penalty units in the case of a corporation and 200 penalty units in any other case.
- (4) A qualified supervisor who is supervising any mechanical services and medical gas work being done by an apprentice or trainee as referred to in subsection (2) must—
 - (a) give directions that are adequate to enable the work to be done correctly by the

apprentice or trainee performing it (which, unless the qualified supervisor considers it unnecessary, must include directions requiring the apprentice or trainee to advise in detail on progress with the work), and

- (b) be present when the work is being done and be available to be consulted by, and to give directions relating to how the work is to be done to, the apprentice or trainee, and
 - (c) personally ensure that the work is correctly done.
- Maximum penalty—1,000 penalty units in the case of a corporation and 200 penalty units in any other case.
- (5) Despite subsection (1), a person may do mechanical services and medical gas work that is also the following—
- (a) plumbing and drainage work within the meaning of the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2011*,
 - (b) work declared to be refrigeration work or air-conditioning work by the regulations under the *Home Building Act 1989*,
 - (c) roof plumbing work within the meaning of the *Home Building Act 1989*,
 - (d) specialist work within the meaning of section 34 of the *Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020* in relation to a medical gas installation,
- if the person is—
- (e) the holder of an endorsed contractor licence, or of a supervisor or tradesperson certificate, authorising its holder to do that work, or
 - (f) under the immediate supervision of the holder of a contractor licence or supervisor certificate that is endorsed with respect to that work.
- (6) This section applies to an individual acting in the course of his or her employment by the Crown.
- (7) In this section—

apprentice has the same meaning as in the *Apprenticeship and Traineeship Act 2001*.

qualified supervisor, in respect of a class of work, means the holder of an endorsed contractor licence, or a supervisor certificate, authorising its holder to do that work.

trainee has the same meaning as in the *Apprenticeship and Traineeship Act 2001*.

15B Unqualified medical gasfitting work

- (1) An individual must not do any medical gasfitting work (whether or not it is also residential building work) except—
- (a) as a qualified supervisor in respect of that work, or
 - (b) as the holder of a tradesperson certificate authorising its holder to do that work under supervision, but only if the work is done under the supervision and in accordance with the directions, if any, of a qualified supervisor.

Maximum penalty—1,000 penalty units in the case of a corporation and 200 penalty units in any other case.

- (2) Despite subsection (1), an apprentice or trainee may do medical gasfitting work even though the apprentice or trainee is not a qualified supervisor or holder, but only if a qualified supervisor—
- (a) is present at all times where the work is being done by the apprentice or trainee, and
 - (b) is available to be consulted by, and to give directions relating to how the work is to be done to, the apprentice or trainee.
- (3) A qualified supervisor who is supervising medical gasfitting work being done by an apprentice or trainee as referred to in subsection (1)(b) must—
- (a) give directions that are adequate to enable the work to be done correctly by the apprentice or trainee performing it, and
 - (b) personally ensure that the work is correctly done.

Maximum penalty—1,000 penalty units in the case of a corporation and 200 penalty units in any other case.

- (4) A qualified supervisor who is supervising medical gasfitting work being done by an apprentice or trainee as referred to in subsection (2) must—
- (a) give directions that are adequate to enable the work to be done correctly by the apprentice or trainee performing it (which, unless the qualified supervisor considers it unnecessary, must include directions requiring the apprentice or trainee to advise in detail on progress with the work), and
 - (b) be present when the work is being done and be available to be consulted by, and to give directions relating to how the work is to be done to, the apprentice or trainee, and
 - (c) personally ensure that the work is correctly done.

Maximum penalty—1,000 penalty units in the case of a corporation and 200 penalty units in any other case.

- (5) Despite subsection (1), a person may do medical gasfitting work that is also mechanical services and medical gas work, if the person is—
- (a) the holder of an endorsed contractor licence, or of a supervisor or tradesperson certificate, authorising its holder to do that work, or
 - (b) under the immediate supervision of the holder of a contractor licence or supervisor certificate that is endorsed with respect to that work.

- (6) This section applies to an individual acting in the course of his or her employment by the Crown.

- (7) In this section—

apprentice has the same meaning as in the *Apprenticeship and Traineeship Act 2001*.

qualified supervisor, in respect of a class of work, means the holder of an endorsed contractor licence, or a supervisor certificate, authorising its holder to do that work.

trainee has the same meaning as in the *Apprenticeship and Traineeship Act 2001*.

15C Unqualified medical gas technician work

- (1) An individual must not do any medical gas technician work (whether or not it is also residential building work) except—
- (a) as a qualified supervisor in respect of that work, or
 - (b) as the holder of a tradesperson certificate authorising its holder to do that work under supervision, but only if the work is done under the supervision and in accordance with the directions, if any, of a qualified supervisor.

Maximum penalty—1,000 penalty units in the case of a corporation and 200 penalty units in any other case.

- (2) Despite subsection (1), an apprentice or trainee may do medical gas technician work even though the apprentice or trainee is not a qualified supervisor or holder, but only if a qualified supervisor—

- (a) is present at all times where the work is being done by the apprentice or trainee, and
- (b) is available to be consulted by, and to give directions relating to how the work is to be done to, the apprentice or trainee.

- (3) A qualified supervisor who is supervising medical gas technician work being done by an apprentice or trainee as referred to in subsection (1)(b) must—

- (a) give directions that are adequate to enable the work to be done correctly by the apprentice or trainee performing it, and
- (b) personally ensure that the work is correctly done.

Maximum penalty—1,000 penalty units in the case of a corporation and 200 penalty units in any other case.

- (4) A qualified supervisor who is supervising medical gas technician work being done by an apprentice or trainee as referred to in subsection (2) must—

- (a) give directions that are adequate to enable the work to be done correctly by

the apprentice or trainee performing it (which, unless the qualified supervisor considers it unnecessary, must include directions requiring the apprentice or trainee to advise in detail on progress with the work), and

- (b) be present when the work is being done and be available to be consulted by, and to give directions relating to how the work is to be done to, the apprentice or trainee, and
- (c) personally ensure that the work is correctly done.

Maximum penalty—1,000 penalty units in the case of a corporation and 200 penalty units in any other case.

- (5) This section applies to an individual acting in the course of his or her employment by the Crown.
- (6) In this section—

apprentice has the same meaning as in the *Apprenticeship and Traineeship Act 2001*.

qualified supervisor, in respect of a class of work, means the holder of an endorsed contractor licence, or a supervisor certificate, authorising its holder to do that work.

trainee has the same meaning as in the *Apprenticeship and Traineeship Act 2001*.

No. 22 **OPP No. 1 [c2020-113A]**

Page 10, Schedule 2. Insert before line 2—

[1A] **Sections 33E–33G**

Insert after section 33D—

33E Additional requirements for obtaining endorsed contractor licenses and supervisor and tradesperson certificates relating to mechanical services and medical gas work

- (1) A supervisor or tradesperson certificate must not be issued, and a contractor licence must not be endorsed to show that it is the equivalent to a supervisor certificate, that authorises its holder to do mechanical services and medical gas work unless the Secretary is satisfied that the applicant—
 - (a) has successfully completed one of the following VET qualifications—
 - (i) Certificate III in Plumbing (Mechanical Services),
 - (ii) Certificate III in Plumbing, and
 - (b) has successfully completed the following units of competency in the Construction, Plumbing and Services Training Package—
 - (i) Install medical gas pipeline systems,
 - (ii) Carry out WHS requirements, and
 - (c) has not less than 2 years of experience in mechanical services and medical gas work after the completion of that qualification.
- (2) A reference in this section to a VET qualification or a unit of competency includes a reference to a qualification or unit that replaces that qualification or unit.
- (3) In this section—

VET qualification has the same meaning as in the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* of the Commonwealth.

33F Additional requirements for obtaining endorsed contractor licenses and supervisor and tradesperson certificates relating to medical gasfitting work

- (1) A supervisor or tradesperson certificate must not be issued, and a contractor licence must not be endorsed to show that it is the equivalent to a supervisor certificate, that authorises its holder to do medical gasfitting work unless the Secretary is satisfied that the applicant—
 - (a) has successfully completed one of the following VET qualifications—
 - (i) Certificate III in Plumbing (Mechanical Services),
 - (ii) Certificate III in Plumbing,
 - (iii) Certificate III in Gas Fitting, and
 - (b) has successfully completed the following units of competency in the Construction, Plumbing and Services Training Package—
 - (i) Install medical gas pipeline systems, and

- (ii) Carry out WHS requirements, and
- (c) has not less than 2 years of experience in medical gasfitting work after the completion of that qualification.
- (2) A reference in this section to a VET qualification or a unit of competency includes a reference to a qualification or unit that replaces that qualification or unit.
- (3) In this section—

VET qualification has the same meaning as in the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* of the Commonwealth.

33G Additional requirements for obtaining endorsed contractor licenses and supervisor and tradesperson certificates relating to medical gas technician work

- (1) A supervisor or tradesperson certificate must not be issued, and a contractor licence must not be endorsed to show that it is the equivalent to a supervisor certificate, that authorises its holder to do medical gas technician work unless the Secretary is satisfied that the applicant—
 - (a) has successfully completed one of the following relevant VET qualifications—
 - (i) Certificate III in Plumbing (Mechanical Services),
 - (ii) Certificate III in Plumbing,
 - (iii) Certificate III in Gas Fitting,
 - (iv) Certificate IV in Engineering, and
 - (b) has successfully completed the following units of competency in the Construction, Plumbing and Services Training Package—
 - (i) Install medical gas pipeline systems,
 - (ii) Carry out WHS requirements, and
 - (c) has not less than 2 years of experience in medical gas technician work after the completion of that qualification.
- (2) A person is taken to have satisfactorily completed a relevant VET qualification if the person has a degree in engineering or another discipline that, in the opinion of the Secretary, is suitable for a person to do medical gas technician work.
- (3) A reference in this section to a VET qualification or a unit of competency includes a reference to a qualification or unit that replaces that qualification or unit.
- (4) In this section—

VET qualification has the same meaning as in the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* of the Commonwealth.

No. 23 OPP No. 22 [c2020-101R]

Page 10, Schedule 2. Insert after line 13—

[2A] Section 140(2A)

Insert after section 140(2)—

- (2A) Despite subsection (2)(k), regulations cannot be made for or with respect to—
 - (a) the exemption of a person from the requirements of sections 15A–15C, or
 - (b) the exemption of work from the definition of *mechanical services and medical gas work*.

No. 24 OPP No. 23 [c2020-101R]

Page 10, Schedule 2[3]. Insert after line 15—

mechanical services and medical gas work means—

- (a) the construction, installation, replacement, repair, alteration, maintenance, testing or commissioning of a mechanical heating, cooling or ventilation system in a building, which is associated with the heating, cooling or ventilation of that building, and includes the following—
 - (i) any valve, regulator, register, pipe, duct, flue, tank, heating or cooling pipe or surface, boiler, burner, solid fuel heater, coil or other item that is used in the system,
 - (ii) in the case of a cooling tower, any water pipe, valve, pump, automated dosing device or automated bleeding device or any other mechanical component that

- affects the cooling tower's cooling water flow rate or wastewater disposal,
- (iii) roof sheeting and roof flashing that is necessary for the purpose of any work described in this paragraph or paragraphs (b)–(d), and
- (b) medical gasfitting work, and
 - (c) the installation, commissioning and any incidental design work that is associated with the installation and commissioning of—
 - (i) any part of a single head split system, or
 - (ii) a ceiling cassette system, or
 - (iii) an add-on condenser unit for a ducted system,
 that is associated with the heating and cooling of a building, and
 - (d) any design work that is incidental to, or associated with, any work described in paragraphs (a) and (b),
- but does not include the following—
- (e) gasfitting work,
 - (f) any work on a cooling tower drift eliminator,
 - (g) any treatment of cooling or heating water,
 - (h) any cleaning of a cooling tower,
 - (i) disassembly or reassembly of a flue terminal for the purposes of cleaning a solid fuel heater,
- the connection or disconnection of a system referred to in paragraphs (a)–(d) from a water supply other than disconnection of the system from a water supply at an isolating valve adjacent to a mechanical component of that system.

No. 25 OPP No. 24 [c2020-101R]

Page 10, Schedule 2[4], lines 20–23. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

[4] Schedule 1, clause 1(1), definition of "specialist work"

Insert after paragraph (a)—

- (a1) mechanical services and medical gas work,
- (a2) medical gasfitting work,
- (a3) medical gas technician work,

No. 26 OPP No. 25 [c2020-101R]

Page 10, Schedule 2[5], proposed clause 158(1), line 31. Insert ", 15A–15C" after "12".

No. 27 OPP No. 26 [c2020-101R]

Page 10, Schedule 2[5], proposed clause 158(1), line 32. Insert ", mechanical services and medical gas work" after "medical gasfitting work".

No. 28 OPP No. 27 [c2020-101R]

Page 10, Schedule 2[5], proposed clause 158(2), lines 34 and 35. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

- (2) In this clause, *transitional period* means the period commencing on 1 November 2020 and ending—
 - (a) in relation to medical gasfitting work and medical gas technician work—at the end of 30 April 2021, and
 - (b) in relation to mechanical services and medical gas work—at the end of 30 April 2022.

No. 29 OPP No. 28 [c2020-101R]

Insert "and in mechanical services and medical gas work" after "facilities".

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (19:37:57):

I move:

That the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

It gives me great pride to welcome the passage tonight of the Gas Legislation Amendment (Medical Gas Systems) Bill 2020. This bill is the culmination of hard work and consultation with key stakeholders including NSW Health, the building and health sectors, training providers, medical gas suppliers and medical service providers. This is an important piece of legislation because, at its core, it is about improving safety outcomes for every single person in New South Wales.

On behalf of the Government, I commend those opposite and those in the other place for negotiating in good faith and for working constructively on amendments that strengthen the bill. Their support has ensured that the tragic circumstances that unfolded at the Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital in 2016 may never be repeated. No family should ever again have to endure the heartbreak and anguish that these two families suffered. I again extend my deepest sympathies to the families of John Ghanem and Amelia Khan, and give my commitment to ensure that the passage of this legislation is just a final step.

We have also introduced strong compliance and enforcement measures to deter anyone who thinks they can operate outside of these new rules. I thank the Hon. Mark Buttigieg for his contribution and willingness to work together. As was noted in the other place, there are few things more rewarding than when both sides of the Parliament come together to work on legislation that provides a genuine benefit to the people of New South Wales. This straightforward, commonsense reform is first and foremost about the safety of our citizens. The days of unlicensed medical gasfitters in this State are over. The Government does not oppose the proposed amendments.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (19:40:10): Like the Minister, I too acknowledge the comments that the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones, MLC, the Parliamentary Secretary for Health, made in the other place not so long ago. As I watched the debate in that place with much interest, what really piqued my interest was when she said, as the Minister has just said, "We are best when both sides of Parliament work together." Those words are so true, but it was such a shame that this approach was not adopted a number of weeks ago when the bill introduced in the other place by the Hon. Mark Buttigieg—who I acknowledge is in the Chamber tonight, and I acknowledge his presence and his hard work—the Building Amendment (Mechanical Services and Medical Gas Work) Bill 2020, was voted down in this Chamber by this Government and the member for Tamworth in what could only be described as a disgraceful set of circumstances.

Amelia Khan's father, Daniel, sat in a chair in the gallery and watched a bill voted down that could have been so easily supported by the Government. The Government could not get past the politics of allowing the Labor Party to deliver on that day something practical and something that would save lives. I note that we are dealing with Labor amendments from the upper House that have been supported in absolute totality by the Government and the member for Tamworth. Before we pass these amendments it is most important to recall, for the benefit of members, the commentary that was made by the member for Tamworth in two of his recent speeches in this Chamber. In question time, when justifying his position on the Building Amendment (Mechanical Services and Medical Gas Work) Bill, which was Labor's private member's bill, moved, as I said, in the upper House by my colleague the Hon. Mark Buttigieg, the member for Tamworth said:

Earlier today I outlined a number of issues in the Opposition's bill that together would have meant that the proposed licensing scheme would have failed to lift the standards of those doing that important work.

He went further in his comments earlier this week in the second reading speech he delivered on the Government bill—the bill we are now amending—when he said:

To pick up other parts of the Opposition bill at this time would cause an unintended consequence and upheaval for the 23,000 people and businesses who are already licensed in New South Wales by introducing a new licensing class. It is not appropriate at this time to include mechanical services in New South Wales.

Of course that is not the case. It is reasonable, it is correct and it will soon be in the law. So we are very pleased now that the Government and the member for Tamworth have come into the Legislative Assembly and adopted Labor's amendments to this bill after all. The Hon. Mark Buttigieg, MLC, on behalf of the Labor Opposition, moved over 20 amendments to fix this bill and to ensure that there is absolutely no room for error and no room for negligence. We have said from the outset that the Government's bill was just a watered-down version of the private member's bill that the Hon. Mark Buttigieg introduced in June and which was rejected by the Government. We should also not forget the farcical display of procedural incompetence that occurred when the member for Tamworth and Temporary Speaker Felicity Wilson accidentally passed the bill and then staged a bogus division to undo the passage of that private member's bill. All the while Amelia's father, Daniel, was sitting in the gallery.

I provide that context because it is significant that we are here tonight, in the simplest sense, to pass amendments that essentially fix a Government bill so that it substantially replicates the measures put forward by the original Labor bill. As I have said in this place this week, yet again Labor is governing from Opposition. It is not the first time and it will not be the last time, but we are most grateful to the member for Tamworth for yet another opportunity in that respect. I note that the amendments ensure that only Certificate III qualified and

licensed people can perform medical gas installations, as specified in the legislation; that only licensed and qualified people will be able to carry out the installation and maintenance of medical gas installations; and that a new category of specialist work known as mechanical services and medical gas will now be licensed and qualified, subject to an 18-month introduction.

I further note that the amendments ensure that existing plumbing trades of sanitary, roof plumbing and gasfitting will be able to install medical gas subject to completing medical gas units of competency and at least two years' experience in addition to any apprenticeship experience; that all work must fully comply with the relevant Australian standards; that there will be no exemptions for aged care facilities and veterinary surgeons; and that the definitions of medical gas installations have been tightened up. Labor moved amendments to achieve these outcomes because our priority from the outset has been to ensure that we save lives and prevent tragedies caused by the incorrect installation or maintenance of medical gas services. We acknowledge the cooperative spirit and collegial nature of the Legislative Council, which has delivered these amendments. I commend the amendments to the House.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (19:47:19): I am very pleased that the Government has agreed to the Labor Opposition's amendments to the Gas Legislation Amendment (Medical Gas Systems) Bill 2020. I also congratulate the Hon. Mark Buttigieg on introducing the Gas Legislation Amendment (Medical Gas Systems) Bill 2020 in the other place. The Gas Legislation Amendment (Medical Gas Systems) Bill 2020 has been amended in the upper House, and thank goodness there is a House of review. I am pleased that the Minister in this House has also agreed to the amendments. I reflect on the comments of the shadow Minister and Deputy Leader in her contribution and support what she has had to say.

This legislation is necessary to protect lives in New South Wales. Often we hear regulation decried by members opposite as "red tape stifling business growth" and "an impediment to increased employment". Sometimes this may be correct, but we do need to ensure that our regulations and laws benefit our community, not slow our development. Increased regulation for mechanical services and medical gas is a necessity. It will save lives and ensure that our community can be confident when they are attending our hospitals and healthcare providers.

The Gas Legislation Amendment (Medical Gas Systems) Bill 2020 sets out minimum qualifications and requires licensing for individuals, partnerships and corporations involved in the installation of mechanical services and medical gas. This bill has the ability to save lives. As members of this House are acutely aware, tragically in 2016 two babies were administered the wrong gas at the Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital. Instead of receiving oxygen they were poisoned. One child died and the other sustained irreversible brain damage. It is crucial that works to medical gas systems be carried out by qualified tradespersons—by specialists—to reduce the risk of this catastrophic outcome.

The Gas Legislation Amendment (Medical Gas Systems) Bill 2020 amends the Home Building Act 1989 to institute these important reforms. The amendment will insert section 15A aligning the regulation around the suitable qualification of persons undertaking mechanical services work with that of those undertaking electrical work. Section 15A will make it an offence, punishable with a fine of up to \$110,000 for corporations or \$22,000 for individuals, to undertake mechanical services work without having the correct qualification and licence. Apprentices and trainees will be able to continue conducting work if supervised by a qualified supervisor at all times. It amazes me we did not have this type of reform before. It is incredible. How can we put a gas supply into hospital systems without checking it? It is quite stunning that we got to a point where we were blasé about what would happen, which is what led to these tragedies.

Supervisors of mechanical services work must give appropriate directions to individuals performing the works and personally ensure that the work is completed correctly. Breaches of this duty are punishable by a fine of up to \$110,000 for corporations and \$22,000 for individuals. This legislation will also insert a definition of mechanical services work and medical gases. These definitions ensure that it is clear what constitutes mechanical services and medical gases that require qualified and licensed tradespersons.

Now is the time for this legislation. Our State has suffered due to lax regulation in building and construction. The most tragic consequence was the death of John Ghanem and the life-altering and permanent damage sustained by Amelia Khan. These tragedies that occurred in our public hospitals were preventable. This was a breach of trust with the people of New South Wales—particularly those who are perhaps our most vulnerable, the small children in our communities. This was an entirely preventable tragedy; if only the installer had tested the system. This incorrect installation of the gas line should have been noticed. If a properly trained installer had tested the system, and if a supervisor had ensured that this it was tested, then a life would have been saved and a baby would not have sustained such horrific injuries.

These tragedies must never be repeated, but with the delaying actions of the Government and the voting down of the original bill introduced by the Labor Opposition in the other place there was a very real risk that this tragedy could have been repeated. It is past time that we regulate the construction, installation, replacement, repair, alteration, maintenance, testing and commissioning of medical gas supply systems. Following this tragedy at the Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital the Queensland Government immediately took action, updating and strengthening regulation regarding medical gas. [*Extension of time, by leave.*]

Those laws will help to keep Queensland residents safe. The fact that even though this tragedy occurred in New South Wales and, until now, no legislation had been passed to improve safety in New South Wales is appalling. Every delay increased the risk of another tragedy. Medical gas systems continue to be installed across New South Wales by unqualified tradespersons. To ensure the safety of our families at our public hospitals and community trust in our health system we must ensure that all installations are performed by properly licensed tradespersons. It is an important reform and one I support; a reform that will protect lives. I commend the amendments to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (19:53:38): I speak very briefly to support the comments of the shadow Minister the member for Swansea. I am really pleased the Government has agreed to the amendments Labor made to the bill in the other place. The bill is a fitting tribute to Amelia Khan. All members of this place should reflect on how this bill has come before us, and how, if we had adopted a different attitude, we might have achieved a solution earlier than we have done. Having said that, it is great that we are here now. Finally, I pay tribute to the Hon. Mark Buttigieg. His tenacity and hard work has brought us here today. Well done, Mark. I support the amendments and commend them to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

**The House adjourned pursuant to standing and sessional orders at 19:55 until
Tuesday 15 September 2020 at 12:00.**