



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Tuesday, 15 September 2020**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Bills .....	3127
Strata Schemes Management Amendment (Sustainability Infrastructure) Bill 2020 .....	3127
Returned.....	3127
Roads Amendment (Toll-free Period) Bill 2020 .....	3127
First Reading.....	3127
Casino Control Amendment (Inquiries) Bill 2020 .....	3127
Returned.....	3127
Announcements .....	3127
California Bushfires .....	3127
Business of the House.....	3127
Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Question Time .....	3127
Bills .....	3128
Adoption Legislation Amendment (Integrated Birth Certificates) Bill 2020 .....	3128
Second Reading Debate .....	3128
Announcements .....	3137
Photography in Legislative Assembly .....	3137
COVID-19 .....	3137
Members .....	3137
Death of Colin William Markham, Former Member for Keira and for Wollongong.....	3137
Death of the Hon. John Joseph Fahey, AC, Former Premier and Former Member for Southern Highlands and for Camden.....	3137
Bills.....	3137
Defamation Amendment Bill 2020.....	3137
Gas Legislation Amendment (Medical Gas Systems) Bill 2020 .....	3137
Personal Injury Commission Bill 2020.....	3137
State Revenue Legislation Amendment (COVID-19 Housing Response) Bill 2020 .....	3137
Casino Control Amendment (Inquiries) Bill 2020 .....	3137
Assent .....	3137
Question Time .....	3137
The Hon. John Barilaro.....	3137
The Hon. John Barilaro.....	3139
The Hon. John Barilaro.....	3139
The Hon. John Barilaro.....	3140
Sydney Night-Time Economy .....	3140
Supplementary Answers .....	3141
Icare .....	3141
Documents .....	3141
NSW Ombudsman .....	3141
Reports .....	3141
Independent Commission Against Corruption .....	3141

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Reports .....	3141
Auditor-General .....	3141
Reports .....	3141
Committees .....	3142
Legislation Review Committee .....	3142
Reports .....	3142
Petitions .....	3142
Petitions Received .....	3142
Responses to Petitions .....	3142
Business of the House .....	3142
Business Lapsed .....	3142
Bills .....	3143
Adoption Legislation Amendment (Integrated Birth Certificates) Bill 2020 .....	3143
Second Reading Debate .....	3143
Third Reading .....	3150
Police Amendment (Promotions) Bill 2020 .....	3150
Second Reading Debate .....	3150
Public Interest Debate .....	3162
COVID-19 and Healthcare Workers .....	3162
Private Members' Statements .....	3169
Cootamundra Electorate Emergency Services .....	3169
Ku-ring-gai Housing Strategy .....	3170
Hunter Manufacturing Industry .....	3171
Inno Salasoo .....	3172
Bayside Council .....	3172
Tribute to Neil Mcnamara, OAM .....	3173
Manly Fun Run and Walk .....	3174
Assyrian Universal Alliance .....	3175
Centro Sociale Italiano .....	3176
Hunter Manufacturing Industry .....	3176
Active Care Network .....	3177
Hunter Manufacturing Industry .....	3178
Mungindi Community .....	3179
Advance Diversity Services .....	3180
Sydney Olympic Games and Fairfield Electorate .....	3180
Mudgee Cultural Precinct .....	3181
Jesuit Refugee Service .....	3182
Chester Hill Development .....	3183
Four-Wheel Drive Vehicles Beach Access .....	3183
Bert Le-Merton .....	3184
Blacktown Electorate Infrastructure .....	3185
Harmony Day .....	3186

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Tribute to Edward Laurence Grace.....	3186
Western Sydney University Innovation Quarter.....	3187
Port Stephens Electorate Koala Protection .....	3188
Community Recognition Statements .....	3189
Mark Nielsen, Sr.....	3189
Nichole Sansom.....	3190
Ken Cameron .....	3190
Mates in Construction.....	3190
Keith Ostler.....	3190
Tribute to Joel Dark .....	3191
Matisse Letherbarrow .....	3191
Tribute to the Hon. John Fahey, AC.....	3191
Tyler King.....	3191
Ray Perry .....	3191
Cabramatta Public School Scrabble Club.....	3191
Picnic Point High School.....	3192
Tea Gardens Public School.....	3192
Michael Medway .....	3192
Yerin Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Centre.....	3192
Central Coast Surf Life Saving Clubs .....	3193
NSW Police Force Class 342.....	3193
Tony Adams and Joan McLean .....	3193
Sharlotte Fisher.....	3193
Gundagai Public School .....	3193
Rachel Willis .....	3194
Metella Road Public School .....	3194
Kangy Angy Residents Action Group .....	3194
Edmondson Park Car Park.....	3194
Central Coast COVID-19 Testing Facilities.....	3195
Shellharbour Anglican College.....	3195
Central Coast Surf Life Saving Clubs .....	3195
Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games .....	3195
St Raphael's Catholic School 150th Anniversary .....	3195
Nowra Show Society .....	3196
Azahlia Stevenson .....	3196
Melva and George Thompson and Coraki Art Prize .....	3196
Tribute to Bundjalung Elder the Late Reverend Dorothy Harris-Gordon.....	3196
2020 Minister's Awards for Women in Local Government.....	3196
Dick Payten Park .....	3197
Ms Kate Hoang.....	3197
Darwich Sido .....	3197
Todd Blackwell.....	3197

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Emma Newell .....	3198
Callum Wesley.....	3198
Ganeshotsava .....	3198
John Cootes OAM .....	3198
Associate Professor Seamus Fagan OAM .....	3198
Bank of Queensland.....	3199
Paul Zielinski .....	3199
Stephanie Schultz—Unicyclist .....	3199
Samantha Wortelhock.....	3199
Western Sydney Community Legal Centre .....	3199
Zen Tea Lounge .....	3200
The Toongabbie Demons.....	3200
Focus on New Fathers Program.....	3200
Girl's Night in .....	3200
History Week Randwick Library.....	3201
Share Hurstville .....	3201
Hampers of Hope.....	3201
Closure of Hurstville City Probus.....	3201
St George Netball Association.....	3201
Hornsby Connect .....	3202
Year 12 2020—Fairfield High School.....	3202
Ajay and Arya Maitra .....	3202
Granville Boys High School.....	3202
Wanda Slsc—Sutherland 2 Surf .....	3202
State Swimming Championship 2020 .....	3203
NSW Minister's and Secretary's Awards for Excellence .....	3203
St Mary's Catholic College .....	3203
Ariba Omar and Karen Murray.....	3203
Jack McGrath.....	3203
Rory Southwell .....	3204
Lilli Pilli Football Club.....	3204
St Catherine's Netball Club.....	3204
Tharawal Public School.....	3204
William Tipple Smith .....	3204
Rotary Celebrates Dal and Maurine Osborn.....	3205
Norm Burton Life Membership .....	3205
Tony McGrane Scholarship .....	3205
Wear it Purple Day- 10 Year Anniversary .....	3205
International Overdose Awareness Day .....	3206
Mr and Mrs Moulds 60th Wedding Anniversary .....	3206
'sydney's Flowers to the World' Meets Premier.....	3206
Orange Grove Public School P&c .....	3206

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Campaign Against Moral Persecution .....	3206
Kings Cross Rotary .....	3207
Hills Off-Road R/c Club .....	3207
Glenhaven Public School P&c.....	3207
Patrick Fogg.....	3207
Clarence Valley Council.....	3207
Police Action at Mittagong RSL.....	3208
George Dummer .....	3208
Holgate Public School .....	3208
Copacabana Community Association.....	3208
Ansto's Partnership with National Robotics and Automation Group .....	3208
Organic Processing Facility at Stotts Creek .....	3209
Fresh Fodder .....	3209
Westfields Sports High School .....	3209

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Tuesday, 15 September 2020**

**The Speaker (The Hon. Jonathan Richard O'Dea)** took the chair at 12:00.

**The Speaker** read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

## *Bills*

### **STRATA SCHEMES MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT (SUSTAINABILITY INFRASTRUCTURE) BILL 2020**

#### **Returned**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with an amendment. I order that consideration of the Legislative Council's amendment be set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

### **ROADS AMENDMENT (TOLL-FREE PERIOD) BILL 2020**

#### **First Reading**

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

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that I have received a written authority from the Hon. John Graham, MLC, advising that the member for Strathfield will have carriage of the bill in this House. I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a future day.

### **CASINO CONTROL AMENDMENT (INQUIRIES) BILL 2020**

#### **Returned**

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

## *Announcements*

### **CALIFORNIA BUSHFIRES**

**The SPEAKER (12:04:18):** On behalf of members of the Legislative Assembly and the people of New South Wales I have sent a message of condolence to the Speaker of the California State Assembly, our sister State in the United States, expressing sympathy to the Californian people impacted by the wildfires burning across their State. Recently California requested assistance from Australia as authorities struggle to bring the blazes under control. New South Wales firefighters are well equipped to take on the request after only recently experiencing our own devastating bushfire season. Our people are working with the teams on the ground in the current fight. This year marks the twentieth year of the exchange of firefighters between Australia and the United States.

*Members and officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect.*

## *Business of the House*

### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: QUESTION TIME**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (12:05:31):** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide that during each Question Time in the sitting weeks commencing 14 and 21 September 2020 no question shall be asked after the answering of five questions.

Physical distancing requirements in response to COVID-19 mean that not all Ministers can be present in the Chamber at any one question time. The Government is seeking to suspend standing and sessional orders to reduce the number of questions in question time to five for the next two sitting weeks. Ministers will not be asked questions by Government members in question time in that period. The Ministers present in question time will vary from day to day for the next two sitting weeks. With the consent of the Opposition the following will apply for the next two sitting weeks. First, by 12 noon on a sitting day the Government will notify the Opposition and crossbenchers which 12 Ministers will be present in question time that day and, second, the Ministers present in question time will not answer questions on behalf of other Ministers.



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

**Motion agreed to.**

[Notices of motions given]

*Bills*

**ADOPTION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (INTEGRATED BIRTH CERTIFICATES) BILL 2020**

**Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 5 August 2020.**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (12:23:17):** I lead for the Opposition on the Adoption Legislation Amendment (Integrated Birth Certificates) Bill 2020. The Opposition does not oppose the bill. The object of the bill is to amend the Adoption Act 2000 and the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995. The overview of the bill points to these amendments in particular: to provide that the registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages may issue a certificate containing the information recorded for an adoption on the Births, Deaths and Marriages Register and the corresponding information, if any, known to the registrar about the birth contained on the register—an integrated birth certificate; to require an integrated birth certificate to be issued by the registrar for an adoption registered on or after the commencement of the proposed Act in addition to existing requirements; to provide for access entitlements in relation to an integrated birth certificate with respect to both adoptions given effect to by an adoption order made on or after the commencement of the Adoption Amendment Act 2008 and adoptions given effect to by an adoption order made before the commencement of that Act; to specify the way an application for an integrated birth certificate is to be made; and to provide for the management of a contact veto in relation to the supply of an integrated birth certificate.

The bill is presented accurately as a further step on the path taken by this jurisdiction to an open adoption approach away from the historic approach of closed adoptions. Currently when someone is adopted, a post-adoption birth certificate is issued, which records the child's adoptive parents and family. It makes no reference to the birth parents or birth family. Presently, the original birth certificate no longer has effect as a valid document of identity. The main change proposed in the bill is to allow what is called an integrated birth certificate—which I suspect is fated to be called an IBC—to be issued also. The IBC will include information about the birth family, that is birth parents and birth siblings, as well as an adopted person's adoptive parents and adopted siblings.

The existing post-adoption birth certificate will also remain. That is, there will be two different types of birth certificates available for someone who has been adopted. Both will be legitimate identity documents. Adopted persons can choose which of these certificates they use. The bill is presented as a modernisation of the law in this jurisdiction. As the Attorney General said in his second reading speech, this reflects the contemporary shift towards open adoption in the State. These provisions come into effect after the commencement of the Act. There is a series of provisions dealing with how this applies to adoptions that occurred prior to the commencement of the Act. In 1997 the NSW Law Reform Commission tabled its report on the *Review of the Adoption of Children Act 1965 (NSW)*. What it said in part in introducing its proposals was this:

In 1965, community attitudes towards ex nuptial birth, the roles of men and women in society, de facto relationships, sexual orientation and many other aspects of family life were significantly different from attitudes which currently prevail. The nuclear family, headed by a legally married husband and wife, was not only perceived to be the norm but was considered by many to be the only truly acceptable form of family. In Australia, at least, reproduction technology had barely begun to be explored. Australia had yet to establish itself as an essentially multi-cultural society. There was not a developed and widespread awareness of the values of other cultures: in particular, that of indigenous peoples. The process of reconciliation with indigenous peoples had not begun. It was in this climate that the *Adoption of Children Act 1965 (NSW)* was drafted.

Since that time, legislation in many fields has been enacted or amended to reflect social changes. This is particularly apparent in the areas of Family Law, laws relating to indigenous peoples, anti-discrimination and reproduction technology. In addition, an international trend in the development of children's rights, and legislation to protect children, has placed new international obligations on Australia.

That lengthy quote is a useful way to describe the context in which closed adoption developed and the way society has changed. The commission also went on to say this about that particular report:

The Commission recommends that the *Adoption of Children Act 1965 (NSW)* be rewritten so that adoption:

is characterised by openness, and is no longer shrouded in secrecy;

conforms with Australia's international obligations; and

is brought into line with other areas of child law, as well as with prevailing community expectations and attitudes.

It made the point in 1997 that one of the most distinctive aspects of recent practice and thinking in this area is:

... law should not facilitate deception or secrecy, but should promote openness and honesty.

The bill and the development of IBCs clearly follows in that tradition of thinking. Adoptions since 1 January 2010 have been described as open, allowing for open rights to access information. The legislation before the House means that birth certificates have caught up with this and catches up with the Law Reform Commission recommendations of 1997, specifically recommendation 63. I have set out the situation where an adoption occurs after the commencement of the Act. Where an adoption was registered prior to the commencement of the Act a person will be able to apply for an IBC. Logically, different provisions apply depending upon the time at which the adoption was registered. The relevant dates marking different requirements are 1 January 2010 and 26 October 1990. These chart successive legislative changes. For post-1 January 2010 adoptions an adopted person is entitled to receive an IBC provided the adoption has been registered and that an adopted person under 18 retains the consent of the adoptive parents.

There are also provisions dealing with applications for an IBC for persons adopted prior to 1 January 2010 but after 26 October 1990. These will require a number of conditions to be fulfilled, broadly in line with existing access requirements set out in the Adoption Act. There are circumstances in which, effectively, the Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice, by refusing to issue an adoption information certificate, can refuse the issue of an IBC. The secretary alternatively can authorise the release of the certificate subject to conditions. There are also provisions related to adoptive parents obtaining an IBC. There are similar differences between post- and pre-2010 adoptions. Adoptive parents can apply for an IBC for a pre-2010 adoption if the adopted person is over 18 years and consents to the IBC being received by adoptive parents.

There are also provisions relating to birth parents receiving an IBC. There are no changes in this bill to the access rights of siblings of an adopted person. Non-adopted siblings are not entitled to receive an adopted person's birth certificate, and that includes an IBC. There are also some circumstances in which an IBC can be provided to a relative or spouse of a deceased adopted person or a deceased birth parent. Those provisions are broad and are consistent with current access requirements. The current regime allows an adopted person, if the adoption occurred before 26 October 1990, to lodge a contact veto, which remains in force until the applicant decides to remove it or has died. These provisions are not substantively changed in this bill, nor are the provisions concerning the advance notice system for adoptions in the period 26 October 1990 to 31 December 2009. IBCs are defined as formal information and thus are dealt with under these regimes for the period prior to 26 October 1990. The Opposition does not oppose the bill.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (12:30:31):** The Adoption Legislation Amendment (Integrated Birth Certificates) Bill 2020 will amend the Adoption Act 2000 and the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995 to introduce integrated birth certificates in New South Wales. Since 1965, when an adoption order is made in New South Wales the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages has issued a new birth certificate for the adopted person. That certificate records the child's adoptive parents and any siblings, but it does not refer to the child's parents or siblings at birth. Those post-adoptive birth certificates reflect the legal effect of adoption: The law treats the child as if the child had been born to the adoptive parents and it makes no reference to the child's parents at birth. In fact, the original birth certificate is marked "Not for Official Use" and cannot be used for identification purposes. Suffice it to say, that approach is not consistent with modern adoption practices that now try to encourage the connection of adoptees to their birth family and cultural heritage.

This bill ushers in the integrated birth certificate, which will be a new post-adoption birth certificate that includes information about an adopted person's parents and siblings at birth as well as their parents and siblings after adoption. That is the right thing to do. The changes go to promote openness and to support the ongoing relationships between adoptive families and birth families. A person's sense of identity is shaped as much by their birth family as it is by their adoptive family and each is important. Open adoption can provide a permanent and safe home for young people who cannot live safely with their family or kin. However, until fairly recently only a small number of young people in care in New South Wales were being adopted each year, despite research showing the benefits of open adoption.

In support of the bill I will briefly reflect on the important work the New South Wales Government has done to increase open adoptions during its term in office. Having served as both Minister for Family and Community Services, and Attorney General, I played a small part in ensuring this bill was brought before the House. One of the important early steps by the Government was for the New South Wales Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 to be amended in 2014 to emphasise the importance of permanency for children. Further, the New South Wales Government established an independent Institute of Open Adoption Studies to lead with up-to-date research on adoption practices, to encourage a change in culture within the child protection sector around adoption and to improve support for people involved in the open adoption process. It also changed the court process giving effect to adoptions, which historically was cumbersome and slow. The importance of that reform is that an adoption order made by the Supreme Court of New South Wales legally

transfers all parental rights and responsibilities, guardianship and custody from the child's birth parents, or anyone who has parental responsibility for the child, to the adoptive parents.

The Government has taken many other steps along the way since 2014—which was a pivotal time when permanency was embedded in the Act—including with this bill, to realise the benefits of open adoption, where it is appropriate, for our young people. The bill before the House does not change the legal impact of adoption because both the post-adoptive birth certificate and the integrated birth certificate [IBC] will clearly identify the adoptive parents as the legal parents of the person. The bill will amend section 25A of the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act so that the NSW Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages [BDM] is authorised to issue two birth certificates. Where an adoption order has been issued by the Supreme Court and then registered by the Registrar of BDM after commencement of the reforms, both certificates will be issued upon application to the registrar for a birth certificate. An IBC can be used for a person who was adopted in New South Wales before the commencement of the bill. The requirements will differ depending on whether the adoption occurred before or after 1 January 2010 because that is when open adoption reforms commenced in New South Wales.

The access provisions in the bill mirror the existing entitlements for adopted persons, adoptive parents and birth parents to obtain information about adoptions before and after that date. If the person was adopted on or after 1 January 2010, the Registrar of BDM will issue an IBC to the adopted person. Of course, if that person is under 18 years of age, the consent of the adoptive parents will be required. If the person was adopted before 1 January 2010, the Registrar of BDM will require an authority to supply prescribed information, such as a birth certificate. An adoption information certificate provided by the Department of Communities and Justice [DCJ] constitutes the authority to supply that prescribed information. For people adopted before 2010, chapter 8, part 2, division 2 of the Adoption Act 2000 already deals with the provision of that information. It is important to note that although the changes reflect a changing approach to adoption, which has been in train since 2014 in this House under our Government, there was a need for extensive internal and external consultation because it is such an important step.

The Department of Communities and Justice, which had charge of preparing the bill, hosted a six-week online survey to learn what people with experience of adoption would prefer in a birth certificate format. It was gratifying that 600 people completed the online survey. More than 85 per cent of respondents agreed that adopted people should have a birth certificate that includes information of the birth family and adoptive family. Just to be sure, a sample IBC was shared and more than 90 per cent of respondents found the document easy to understand. During the development of the IBC proposal, the Department of Communities and Justice also consulted—as it should—with members of the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee and the Aboriginal outcomes unit.

There was extensive consultation with government and non-government agencies, including the Department of Education, NSW Health, Service NSW, Transport for NSW, the Office of the Children's Guardian, the NSW Police Force, the Australian Banking Association, the Law Society of New South Wales, Legal Aid NSW, the Crown Solicitor's Office and the Office of Sport. Pleasingly, the respondents were overwhelmingly supportive of the bill's amendments, which is why the bill is before the House. Some stakeholders identified concerns about the risk of confusion by frontline staff when relying on the IBC as an identity document, but those concerns have been addressed through the development of the IBC communication plan, which is led by DCJ, and through training frontline staff in its implementation.

DCJ also consulted the Department of Home Affairs as the national lead on identity security matters and the operator of the Document Verification Service, which is an online, Commonwealth-run service that Commonwealth, State and Territory public sector agencies and private organisations use to verify the integrity of people's identity documents, including birth certificates. A key issue explored through that process was whether issuing two legally recognised birth certificates concurrently that contain different information could give rise to any identity security risks. That issue has been resolved by ensuring that both the post-adoption birth certificate and the IBC have the same registration number. In summary, one can see that through that extensive and thorough consultation the proposal in this bill received broad support across a range of stakeholders—including the peak bodies and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups.

Before closing I mention related government reform that has made it faster and easier for New South Wales residents to access birth, death and marriage certificates through the Service NSW Click & Collect service, which gives New South Wales residents the option to apply online for any birth, death and marriage or replacement change of name certificates. They can then collect the certificate from either the Chippendale or Parramatta registry office or have it delivered by registered post to their homes. Since going live in April of this year more than 3,000 customers have opted for the Click & Collect service, with birth certificates accounting for 71 per cent of all online applications. Residents can already use Service NSW online platforms to access important documents, so this is just another way in which the New South Wales Government is making things easier for our community.

This is New South Wales Foster Care Week. I acknowledge our State's amazing foster carers, who open their hearts and their homes to our children in care. As family and community services Minister, I met a number of carers and they are truly remarkable people—often dealing with very difficult circumstances but opening their hearts and their homes to young people and making an irreplaceable difference to their lives. The New South Wales Government's priority is to put children into permanent care through open adoption and guardianship, with out-of-home care being an important part of that process.

An estimated 350 carer households are needed across New South Wales to meet demand, with options including part-time care, restoration care, kinship care, guardianship and open adoption. The New South Wales Government is strengthening support for foster and kinship carers—and I acknowledge the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, Gareth Ward, who is in the Chamber—through the \$7 million My Forever Family NSW program, which commenced yesterday with a recruitment campaign that will address that demand for new foster carers.

In conclusion, we know that birth certificates may be required by a wide range of agencies, businesses and organisations because they are unique, life-defining documents. Any local member who has had somebody come to them with difficulty obtaining a birth certificate will know how stressful it can be when those documents are not readily available. They are used by schools, employers and banks and are often associated with the most important decisions that frame our lives. They are used to access government benefits and services as well as being required to create other secondary documents such as driver licences or passports. This reform—though incremental—is very important and will allow adopted people to choose which certificate they wish to use for legal identification purposes. It is a huge step forward in bringing the post-adoptive certificates in line with our modern times and the work this Government has done. It further supports all of that work I have referenced and I am pleased to support the bill.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (12:43:11):** As humans evolve, we are increasingly aware of the importance of birth, of place and of stories to the way in which we define ourselves and hence the world around us. The processes surrounding adoption in previous generations have been an impenetrable barrier for some in finding their truth. The objects of the Adoption Legislation Amendment (Integrated Birth Certificates) Bill 2020 are to amend the Adoption Act 2000 and the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995 to allow, with the least harm, all children who have been adopted and the parents who adopted them to find that truth.

The bill seeks to navigate the sensitive issues around adoption for adoptees, adoptive parents and parents who have relinquished their children through adoption by allowing for the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages to issue an integrated birth certificate; by providing for access entitlements in relation to an integrated birth certificate; by specifying the way an application for an integrated birth certificate is to be made; and by providing for the management of a contact veto in relation to the supply of an integrated birth certificate. From a practical perspective, as someone who has significantly benefited from knowing my genetic make-up, I know how powerful this knowledge can be to one's health in terms of the diagnosis of many conditions and the taking of appropriate preventative or management steps. But this kind of knowledge is also essential for our mental health, our identity and the development of our sense of self.

Many of us are familiar with the story of someone finding out that they are adopted after not knowing the truth. For many people the first time they see their birth certificate is when they apply for a driver's licence. We find our truth during those tumultuous hormone-charged teenage years, which is a time of great self-reflection and the emergence of our individual identity. Thankfully, children who have been adopted more recently or at an older age are more likely to have always known that they were adopted, as adoption has become a normal and natural part of their life story. Tony Hodgkinson contacted me just six weeks ago. His story is indicative of the issues that people may face, regardless of when they learn that they are adopted, whenever they have to deal with government and their birth certificate, and it can cause trauma and distress. I note the concerns around the introduction of this legislation that were raised by the member for Vacluse, but Mr Hodgkinson's story is indicative of how it is already happening and it is confusing for people who have been adopted.

On 1 July 2020 Mr Hodgkinson contacted me after trying unsuccessfully to get a birth certificate reissued by NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages as he needed to access Centrelink due to COVID-19. After my office was able to assist him in resolving the issue, Mr Hodgkinson asked me to include his story "in any submission the Parliament needed to help achieve this as it would actually show the truth". For the most part forthwith I have used an abridged version of Mr Hodgkinson's words from his emails to me to honour his wishes and to pay him the respect of hearing his truth. He wrote:

I apologise in advance as this may be a confusing and long-winded email but please bear with me as there is a great deal to explain. It will appear emotional at times and possibly irrelevant at others, but it's all here to convey the trauma and loss created by government interdepartmental ineptitude.

To begin, I was born August 1 1972 at Royal Newcastle Hospital, and instantly removed from my mother as she was only 17 at the time. The hospital staff named me Julian (after the delivering doctor) with the surname Fox (my mother's surname).

I was then adopted at under one month of age, on 30 August 1972. At this point I would like to note that it was accepted practice to adopt babies out at less than three months of age. However when my mother gave birth they held a white sheet in front of her face, so she couldn't see me, and then told her I had died. When I was one week of age she was told/coerced to sign a document on her 18th birthday, 08 August 1972: my Adoption papers.

My identity had now been stolen by the government for the first time. I managed to locate [my mother] many years later but the damage had already been done and she ultimately moved interstate to protect her new Christian family from me (she became a devout Pentecostal after my birth, and well, let's face it, I am a sin).

I was then adopted by Kenneth Douglas Meere and his then wife Denyce Lillian Meere ... By 1977 they were divorced. Ken had been my "father" for a whole 5 years.

Then came the decade long custody dispute which my brother and I were forced to ensure, culminating in the DOCs delivering us to a violently abusive "father" AGAINST the advice of child advocates and THEIR OWN child psychologists.

So I ensured 8 years of physical and mental/emotional abuse until at 13 years of age I also became violent and I also became the abuser.

I hit my "father", a 42 year old grown male with everything I had. I was 13 and in my first year of high school, I split his mouth open, he bled profusely, and I waited for the onslaught that I expected to follow, petrified and alone. But he ran like the coward he was.

I last spoke to him two weeks before my 21st birthday ... on one occasion at around 27 years of age he spoke to me whilst in the company of my mother and brother's wife in a public shopping mall in Forster. I do not remember this as I blacked out. My brother's wife said I had spoken to him but sounded like I was a child and seemed distraught.

After I hit Ken I went to live with my Mother Denyce and her new husband Walter Hodgkinson, the only man that ever treated me as a son and the father whose name I proudly carry.

[I] ... had issues with substance abuse, I believe, due to the torment ... endured, at the hand of this man and by the decree of the government.

In October of 1990, at 18 years of age I wanted to remove all association I had with Kenneth Douglas Meere, and I undertook a legal name change via deed poll with a solicitor firm. The deed poll was registered on the 6th December 1990 with the NSW lands titles office ... The NSW lands titles office dealt with these things from 1897 to April 1996 when Births Deaths & Marriages "took over".

This is also where my problem begins, and my identity was stolen for a second time by the government.

I have NEVER needed a birth certificate, until now apparently.

Centrelink, who have had me on record since the 90's, as Tony Hodgkinson, suddenly wanted one and wouldn't accept the documentation I had, which had been acceptable up until I applied for unemployment after losing my job thanks to Covid 19.

For 30 years I have been Tony Hodgkinson, everywhere, including:

- on the electoral roll
- on my driver licence
- on my firearms licence
- on my trade papers
- on my school certificates and all training

Most importantly, I pay TAX as Tony Hodgkinson and have done so for my entire working life.

The irony of this is that I have two teenage children who carry the name HODGKINSON not Meere.

On my children's birth certificates their father is listed by Birth Deaths & Marriages as Tony Hodgkinson yet the same agency refuses to issue a birth certificate for me in that name, they refuse to recognize the legal change of name performed in 1990.

How can a department override an existing legal name change, no less one that had been operating for nearly 6 years and why did they not inform EVERYONE affected by this "decision"...

...The irony of all of this is they wouldn't release my birth certificate (in the incorrect name of MEERE) WITHOUT first receiving a copy of the deed poll that THEY WILL NOT RECOGNISE, for Tony Hodgkinson.

They then sent this document via registered post addressed to Tony Hodgkinson, but the birth certificate is in the name of Tony Meere, so basically a worthless and useless document containing false and inaccurate information that cannot be used by Tony Hodgkinson as he has no supporting identification in the name of Meere.

And it cannot be used by Tony Meere as, well, because, basically he doesn't exist and has absolutely NO supporting identity documents.

*[Extension of time]*

Mr Hodgkinson spoke of the immense stress and anxiety of having to drag that all back up to the surface unnecessarily, and that was indeed evident in his dealings with my office. The pain and frustration at the failure of government to recognise his identity is shown in another piece of correspondence Mr Hodgkinson wrote to me, in which he said:

If I'm arrested, I'll be charged, tried and incarcerated, if necessary, as Tony Hodgkinson.

If I die tomorrow, Tony Hodgkinson will be issued a death certificate, as that's what all my identification says, that's what's on the medical records, and that's who NSW Health has listed.

Tony Meere will become immortal as he was born but will never die and Tony Hodgkinson will die having never been born. Absurd.

As an adopted person Mr Hodgkinson is strongly supportive of the introduction of integrated birth certificates for adopted children, particularly considering, as he said:

... the nonsense I just endured to even get a birth certificate.

Despite his own experience with his adoptive father, he said:

I do not support the omission of adoptive parents. This integrated idea is fantastic. It shows the truth.

Formerly, children who were adopted were often born into an environment of shame or secrecy, denying their heritage and their parentage. It raised for them the question of why they were adopted and of second-guessing motivations. It may even bring back painful memories of hurt and abuse. For parents who adopted their children out it was often a painful reminder of a terrible time in their lives when they had to acknowledge that they were unable, for whatever reason, to give their child the life they would have hoped for—or perhaps, where the decision was taken out of their hands, the memory of coercion and powerlessness. Parents who adopted children under those circumstances worried if, when and how they should tell their children, and how that would impact on the child they had grown to love.

When adoption happens the legal relationship between the child and the biological parents is severed, but nothing can sever the relationship of that child with its birth parents except for not knowing it existed. The approach from another time was to keep the child in ignorance for as long as possible—sometimes forever. The legislation leaves that most basic relationship and our fundamental knowledge of our heritage intact. It catches up with changes to open adoption introduced in 2010 by the former Labor Government. It takes away the ambiguity of decision-making around if and when a child should be told by decreeing it and providing a capacity for contact to be vetoed if requested by another party. It normalises adoption and hopefully takes away a misplaced stigma that never should have been there. Importantly the bill ensures that a person must have a post-adoption certificate so that they can use their information—their truth—as they see fit. They can choose who they share that truth with. Mr Hodgkinson's experiences indicate that whatever our truth is it needs to be told, but it must be our choice to share it. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (12:54:39):** It is my great pleasure to join my friend and colleague the Attorney General in co-sponsoring this important legislation, the Adoption Legislation Amendment (Integrated Birth Certificates) Bill 2020. Adoption is a beautiful thing. I am proud that we saw a record number of adoptions in New South Wales last financial year. Each and every child deserves a safe, stable and loving home, and permanency is fundamental. It is a fundamental building block for any child's future. Today this House considers reform that gives adopted people more choice about how to reflect their life's journey.

The Adoption Legislation Amendment (Integrated Birth Certificates) Bill 2020 will amend the Adoption Act 2000 and the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995 to introduce integrated birth certificates [IBCs] for adopted persons in New South Wales. This will provide access to IBCs to adopted persons and other persons. The approach of this State to adoption has changed significantly over recent decades. Only issuing a post-adoptive birth certificate, which does not make any reference to a person's birth parents, is not in the spirit of open adoption. Open adoption encourages contact with birth families in connection to an adopted person's culture and their heritage. The introduction of integrated birth certificates will ensure adopted people also have a birth certificate that reflects their history and identity before and after adoption. It will support adopted people to maintain their heritage and provide them with more autonomy by allowing them to choose the identity document they wish to use.

Many reports and inquiries have recommended introducing IBCs as they better reflect an adopted person's full life story. New South Wales has been on a journey towards modern open adoption practice, learning from both our history and a clearer understanding of the best interests of the child. In 2008 the Adoption Act 2000 was amended to establish the practice of open adoption. Those amendments established equitable and open rights to access information such as birth certificates and applied to all applications for adoptions from 1 January 2010. Since that reform, all adoptions in New South Wales are open. Under the current law an adopted person is issued with a post-adoptive birth certificate following adoption. The post-adoptive birth certificate records the child's adoptive parents and any siblings but makes no reference to the child's parents or siblings at birth.

Post-adoptive birth certificates are consistent with the legal effect of adoption but they do not reflect contemporary open adoption practice, which promotes connection to birth family and cultural heritage wherever

possible. Once a post-adoptive birth certificate has been issued an adopted person's original birth certificate is no longer a valid identity document. This bill will not change that process but will introduce a new birth certificate that will better provide for an adopted person after adoption. The new birth certificate, which is known as an integrated birth certificate, will include information about an adopted person's birth parents and birth siblings as well as their adoptive parents and adoptive siblings. The certificate will make clear that the adoptive parents are the legal parents of the adopted person and the person's adopted name is their legal name.

A person's post-adoptive birth certificate and integrated birth certificate will both be valid identity documents. That will allow adopted people to choose which certificate they wish to use for legal identification purposes. The bill provides that, going forward, all adopted people in New South Wales will be issued with both a post-adoptive birth certificate and an integrated birth certificate. If a person's adoption was registered in New South Wales prior to the commencement of the bill and an adopted person wishes to obtain an integrated birth certificate they will be able to apply to the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages for an integrated birth certificate, subject to access requirements. The bill will provide adopted people with a birth certificate that reflects the truest possible account of their history and can be used as a legal identity document. It will also give them the ability to choose which certificate they wish to use for identity purposes and, in the case of adoptions that occurred prior to the commencement of the bill, whether to apply for an integrated birth certificate at all.

Throughout the journey towards modern, open adoption practice, many Australian reports and inquiries have recommended introducing IBCs. In 1997 the NSW Law Reform Commission recommended that adopted people have the option of obtaining an IBC. The 2012 report of the Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs recommended that:

- all jurisdictions adopt integrated birth certificates, that these be issued to eligible people upon request, and that they be legal proof of identity of equal status to other birth certificates ...

In 2017 the Victorian Law Reform Commission's review of the Adoption Act 1984 recommended that integrated birth certificates be made available to all children who are adopted and all people who have been adopted. In 2018 the Australian House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs recommended that a national law for adoption provide for integrated birth certificates to include the names of both birth parents and adoptive parents, while conferring full parental and legal responsibility for adopted children on the adoptive parents.

The bill will authorise the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages to issue an IBC to all persons adopted in New South Wales moving forward. The Registrar will also be able to issue an IBC in relation to a person who was adopted in New South Wales prior to the commencement of this reform. It will not be mandatory for people adopted before this reform to apply for a retrospective IBC and all adopted persons will continue to be able to use their post-adoptive birth certificate as an identity document if that is their preference. That approach recognises that adopted people will have different views on whether they want to obtain or use an IBC. To make sure that is clear, an explanatory note will also be provided whenever an IBC is issued. The note will explain that both a post-adoptive birth certificate and an IBC have been issued, that both certificates are legally valid for identification purposes and that the recipient may elect which certificate to use.

The New South Wales Government has drawn on the recommendations of preceding reviews and inquiries to develop an approach that will work for adopted people in New South Wales. The community has made clear that for some people affected by closed and/or forced adoptions, post-adoptive birth certificates represent their true identity and background. Many have called for the introduction of integrated birth certificates that include both birth- and adoptive-family information. In fact, in an online survey conducted by the Department of Communities and Justice more than 85 per cent of the 600 responses suggested that adopted people should have a birth certificate that includes both birth- and adoptive-family information.

As Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, I have had the privilege of hearing the responses of adopted people and adoption agencies to the bill. I understand that this reform will have a positive impact for many adopted people in our State. Agencies such as The Benevolent Society's Post Adoption Resource Centre NSW and International Social Service Australia have publicly welcomed the bill. Three key messages were conveyed to us during consultations: first, the importance of modern open adoption practice; secondly, the need for an identity document that acknowledges and reflects the full identity of an adopted person; and thirdly, that adopted people should have autonomy in choosing the identity document they wish to use. Those messages from the community highlight why the New South Wales Government has introduced this bill.

The bill is consistent with the contemporary shift towards open adoption in New South Wales. Modern adoption practice is characterised by an open exchange of information that enables the child to remain connected to their birth family and understand their background and cultural heritage. It is a clear contrast to the closed adoption practices of the past, which were defined by secrecy. International Social Service Australia commented

that the bill is "an historic step to remove secrecy from adoption". The Post Adoption Resource Centre noted that it represents "a significant step toward honesty and transparency in an official record of an adopted person's identity".

I am proud that we are taking another next step forward in modern open adoption practice in New South Wales through the introduction of the bill. International Social Service Australia explained that it believes "an integrated birth certificate offers a true reflection of an adopted person's identity by acknowledging both their biological origins and their adoption status". The Post Adoption Resource Centre noted that some adopted people feel "that their current amended birth certificates, after adoption, are dishonest as they do not reflect their origins. An integrated birth certificate represents their full identity on the one document." I am pleased that this bill will allow an adopted person's full life story to be acknowledged and that the introduction of integrated birth certificates will give adopted people access to a birth certificate that reflects the truest possible account of their history. [*Extension of time*]

This bill will provide adopted people in New South Wales a choice in the birth certificate they prefer to use for identity purposes. International Social Service Australia, in particular, noted the importance of privacy and choice. It said, "Adopted people should also have an amended birth certificate for instances in which they do not wish to share their adoption status." This bill acknowledges that adopted people should have access to a birth certificate that reflects their life story in line with modern open adoption practice. It also acknowledges that adopted people should be able to choose whether, or in what circumstance, they wish to use an integrated birth certificate.

The introduction of IBCs will not change the legal effect of an adoption. The adoptive parents will remain the legal parents of the adopted person. Both the post-adoptive birth certificate and the IBC will clearly identify the adoptive parents as the legal parents and the person's adopted name as their legal name. I know that all members have stories of various people who have had varied interactions with the child protection system. I note that my friend and colleague the member for Vacluse reflected that this is Foster Care Week. I am sure all members of the House join me in commending people who open their hearts and their homes to vulnerable children for the tremendous work they do.

I also acknowledge that last week was National Child Protection Week. As I mentioned in my introductory remarks, it might interest members to note that during the last financial year New South Wales recorded the highest number of open adoptions in the State's history. I am also pleased to report that we are seeing more families restored and remaining together and that, as a result of reforms that the Government has undertaken, the State has the lowest rates of children entering care in the past 10 years. The reforms include MultiStemic Therapy, Functional Family Therapy and family group conferencing. Those programs are all about keeping families together. I am very proud of those reforms.

Last year New South Wales had a record number of guardianship orders, which I am also very proud of. I am sure all members of the House would agree that ensuring we have the most permanent solutions and the safest places for children is absolutely critical and fundamental. No-one wants to see children being removed from their families, but when that happens our aim is to make sure it happens in the safest and most caring way possible. Adoption is certainly a pathway towards achieving that. I take this opportunity to be clear about some misconceptions. When people think about adoption many may turn their minds to films they may have seen depicting a child being left in a basket at a church's doorstep. That is not the way adoption happens presently.

Most children are adopted from out-of-home care. They are children who, for whatever reason, had to be removed from their families. They are children who have had a traumatic life journey. It is so important that adoption gives a child the stability and safety they need. I am very pleased that Parliament generally supports a permanency approach. I am proud to state that adoption has been a bipartisan issue that all members support. When it comes to child protection and issues affecting vulnerable children and young people, it is not a Liberal or Labor thing to do: It is the right thing to do.

I am pleased that this legislation will provide adopted children with the opportunity—perhaps in their adult years—to reflect on their life story and journey. I note that other jurisdictions either have commenced adoption reform or are considering it. Post-adoption certificates have been in existence in South Australia for quite some time. I understand that the Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly currently is considering post-adoption certificates. I am pleased that New South Wales joins other jurisdictions that have adopted this pathway.

I acknowledge all the organisations that have been involved in adoption reforms, not least of which is Families and Community Services [FACS] in the Department of Communities and Justice cluster, and organisations such as Barnardos, which has done a tremendous job in working with FACS to promote adoption as an option. I acknowledge in particular the CEO of Barnardos Australia, Deirdre Cheers, for the great job she



does. I understand that recently Key Assets New South Wales was accredited as an adoption agency, and I am sure the agency will do a great job of adoption in line with the great job they have done formulating family policy and providing family supports. I thank all members who contributed to debate on the bill. I commend the Adoption Legislation Amendment (Integrated Birth Certificates) Bill 2020 to the House.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (13:09:36):** On behalf of The Greens I make a brief contribution in support of the Adoption Legislation Amendment (Integrated Birth Certificates) Bill 2020. The bill provides that adopted people in New South Wales will be able to have both their birth and adopted families included on a birth certificate. Currently a birth certificate that is issued after a person is adopted can only record the child's adoptive parents and any adoptive siblings, making no reference to the birth parents. If the bill passes both Houses, both the birth and adoptive parents will be included on the birth certificate for all people adopted since open adoption commenced in New South Wales on 1 January 2010. For adoption prior to that, integrated birth certificates will only be issued at the request of the adoptive person.

After consultation with stakeholder groups, The Greens support the bill. It creates an integrated birth certificate, which will for the first time include the birth mother and father—if the latter is known. It requires both the integrated birth certificate and the post-adoption birth certificate, which shows only the adoptive parents, to be provided in the first instance for the same single fee. The bill does not alter any substantial law to try to redeem adoption or address the many longstanding issues with it but tries to address one issue in a relatively straightforward way. I thank local residents who have approached me. In particular, I thank Catherine for taking the time to have a Zoom meeting with me and for sharing her experience and how important this matter is to her and the wider community. She wrote:

I have never written something like this before so I don't really know where to start. It is a deeply personal and emotional topic which also makes it hard to discuss.

I am an adoptee.

She goes on to say that she had "loving adoptive parents and a relatively happy childhood". She also said:

The practices of late are thankfully being recognised as improper and more thought is being given to the effects adoption has on children. There IS a happy medium to suit all parties but adoption as we know it, isn't it.

She is a supporter of the proposed changes to birth certificates and her discussion with me was incredibly powerful. It opened my eyes and allowed me to better understand the issue that so many people are facing and why the bill is important. She said to me:

Having our history acknowledged on our birth certificates means the world to the adoptee community. It tells our story instead of pretending our pasts didn't occur or erasing them ...

She was encouraged to contact me as her local MP to express her interest in the matter and I am delighted that she did. I am grateful that she took the time to explain the situation as she saw it. What was powerful for me was when she said that one of the hardest things about being an adoptee was that "your life is like a game of pretend" and basically based on—for want of a better word—lies; that it is hard to explain and even harder to live. I am glad that the Parliament is moving forward in this way.

I note that we have had representations from stakeholder groups asking us to oppose the bill. Some of those groups are critical of adoption as a whole and want the institution abolished; some want only the birth parents to be listed on any birth certificate. We recognise they have valid experiences and criticisms, but the point of the bill is not to overhaul or abolish the institution of adoption. This change represents a positive step in the right direction. We have consulted with other stakeholder groups that support the changes. I thank all of those who have worked so diligently on the bill. I also thank every person who contacted me, whether they support the bill or otherwise, and the local members of the community who I have spoken with on the phone. Again, I thank Catherine. I encourage members to support the bill, to continue the evolution to ensure that the future for children and parents is based on all of the best information, that it respects everyone involved and, most importantly, that children are the priority.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (13:14:21):** I contribute to the debate on the Adoption Legislation Amendment (Integrated Birth Certificates) Bill 2020. I begin by saying that adoption is an important but distant resort for those needy families where the child's best interests cannot be served in any other way. It is not a dirty word. It is an important word. Adoption needs to be available to give kids certainty, stability, safety and succour in times of need when their parents are unable to provide that for them. I am a strong supporter of the bill and will continue my contribution about the particular aspects of the bill when the House resumes.

**Debate interrupted.**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

*Announcements***PHOTOGRAPHY IN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**The SPEAKER:** I bring to the attention of members that there are photographers in the Cooper Gallery. I ask that they remain separated consistent with social distancing. Those photographers are authorised to be here.

**COVID-19**

**The SPEAKER:** I remind members to follow best practice COVID-safe guidelines. Those guidelines are available for perusal in the Parliament's pandemic plan. A copy of that plan and associated information are being circulated, and will be available in your email inbox presently. I ask members and all within the precinct to be mindful of those guidelines.

*Members***DEATH OF COLIN WILLIAM MARKHAM, FORMER MEMBER FOR KEIRA AND FOR WOLLONGONG**

**The SPEAKER:** It is with regret that I have to inform the House of the death on 6 September 2020 of Colin William Markham, a former member of the Legislative Assembly who served as the member for Keira from 19 March 1988 to 5 March 1999, and as the member for Wollongong from 27 March 1999 to 28 February 2003. On behalf of the House I extend to family the deep sympathy of the Legislative Assembly in the loss that they have sustained. I ask members to stand in silence as a mark of respect.

*Members and officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect.*

**DEATH OF THE HON. JOHN JOSEPH FAHEY, AC, FORMER PREMIER AND FORMER MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS AND FOR CAMDEN**

**The SPEAKER:** I bring to the attention of the House the death on 12 September 2020 of the Hon. John Joseph Fahey, AC, a former Premier of New South Wales, who served as the member for Camden from 24 March 1984 to 22 February 1988, and as the member for Southern Highlands from 19 March 1988 to 1 February 1996. In 1996 John Fahey made the move to Federal politics when he was elected to the House of Representatives as the member for Macarthur, where he served as finance Minister in the Howard Government. He dedicated 17 years of his life to politics before retiring in 2001. On behalf of the House I extend to his family the deep sympathy of the Legislative Assembly in the loss that they have sustained. I note that the death of the Hon. John Joseph Fahey will be the subject of a motion of sympathy on a future day. I ask members to stand in silence as a mark of respect.

*Members and officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect.*

*Bills***DEFAMATION AMENDMENT BILL 2020****GAS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MEDICAL GAS SYSTEMS) BILL 2020****PERSONAL INJURY COMMISSION BILL 2020****STATE REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (COVID-19 HOUSING RESPONSE) BILL 2020****CASINO CONTROL AMENDMENT (INQUIRIES) BILL 2020****Assent**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of messages from the Governor notifying Her Excellency's assent to the bills.

*Question Time***THE HON. JOHN BARILARO**

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:24:12):** I direct a question to the Deputy Premier. Last Thursday the Deputy Premier alleged that the Premier's answer to a question about the koala protection State environmental planning policy at *The Daily Telegraph's* bush summit was, "contrary to what we thought had been agreed in settling this issue". Does he stand by his accusation that the Premier did not tell the truth at the bush summit?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:24:34):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question on an issue and a policy position that are so important to the communities of regional and rural New South Wales. If this issue was not as

important as it is to our communities, we would not have had the outcry from regional and rural communities and from many of our stakeholders, like NSW Farmers. When the Leader of the Opposition was asked about Labor's position on koala policy relating to the State environmental planning policy [SEPP], her answer was that Labor will announce something closer to the election.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question is: Does the Deputy Premier stand by his accusation that the Premier did not tell the truth at the bush summit?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** It is typical of the Opposition that it is only concerned about election time and votes rather than a policy that is so important to the regions. For the Labor Party to wait until 2023 to take a position on koalas and the SEPP is disturbing for me as the leader of The Nationals because the Opposition is the alternate government going forward and it will sell out regional New South Wales. *The Daily Telegraph* Bush Summit down in Cooma—which was an absolute success—raised a number of issues. In particular, the issue of the SEPP was raised by the NSW Farmers and it was a matter that was part of the discussion the whole day. The issue was the impact of the SEPP on farmers, on regional and rural communities and on property rights. It may be called the koala SEPP but really it is a property rights SEPP. That SEPP takes away the ability of farmers and regional landholders to do the right thing in relation to their land. This is not about destroying koala habitat. The statistic that we should talk about is 4 per cent—

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

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** In the recent fires only 4 per cent of the koala habitats that were impacted were on private property.

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

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question is: Does the Deputy Premier stand by his accusation that the Premier did not tell the truth at the bush summit, yes or no?

**The SPEAKER:** The Deputy Premier will continue.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** As I have said, we have to go through the detail to understand the impact of the SEPP on koala habitats. That is why it is an important issue. We want to see the growth of the koala population and that can be achieved with a koala strategy that identifies the greatest impacts on their habitat. The bushfires of last summer destroyed a lot of national parks and we lost a lot of koala habitats but only 4 per cent of that was on private property, yet the SEPP is trying to transfer the obligation to private landholders. Private landholders are keen to support the growth of koala habitats.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** If the Leader of the Opposition is raising the same point of order, I am satisfied that the Deputy Premier is being generally relevant to the question. It was a very long and wideranging question. I take the point that your subsequent finalisation was narrow. The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** The question was: Does the Deputy Premier stand by his accusation that the Premier did not tell the truth at the bush summit? It is pretty short.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition will not interrupt me. I have indicated that the Deputy Premier is being relevant. Does the Leader of the Opposition have a different point of order?

**Ms Jodi McKay:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. Does the Deputy Premier stand by his accusation that the Premier did not tell the truth at the bush summit, yes or no?

**The SPEAKER:** The Deputy Premier may continue.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** And what has—

**Mr Ryan Park:** This is unbelievable. We are in the middle of a pandemic and these two can't get on.

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

**Mr Ryan Park:** A real stable government.

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

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** I can assure the member for Keira that the reason I stand in the House today and indicate we have come to an agreement to resolve this issue, which is so important to the regions, is because of how tight the relationship is between the Premier and me. It is about respect. We can resolve this issue. Let me make this clear: At the bush summit the issue around the SEPP was raised by NSW Farmers because it is an

important issue and a matter of concern to its members and to many of my MPs, who for over six months have been debating and trying to find a resolution throughout government. The Premier has involved herself in trying to find a solution. The NSW Farmers members and my MPs want an answer. It was an answer: We now have a pathway to resolving this issue and our focus will always be on the outcome on behalf of regional and rural communities.

**THE HON. JOHN BARILARO**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (14:29:47):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Last week the Minister said that the Deputy Premier's position was "untenable" and his actions were "one of the greatest acts of bastardry in quite some time". Does the Minister stand by those comments today? It sounds like it is a yes, so the Minister can stay in his seat maybe.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (14:30:22):** Once again, she got it wrong. If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is accusing me of being passionate about the Government, I am guilty as charged. If she is accusing me of being defensive of my leader, I am guilty as charged. If she is accusing me of wanting stable government, I am guilty as charged. I tell you what I will not do; I will not come into this Chamber and be lectured on leadership by those opposite, particularly when, with just a quick Google, I find out about the Labor Party's attempt at leadership: "Child sex cover-up", "Dirty secrets", "McKay's mayhem stacks up", "Rotten to the core" it says about the NSW Labor Party; "ALP branch's disgrace", "The trashes". I am only halfway through.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister will resume his seat.

**Ms Kate Washington:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. Clearly this is entirely irrelevant and the Minister does not want to answer the question. He is required to answer the question. The question is: Does he stand by his comments?

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** I am guilty of the charges of being defensive, loyal and passionate.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister is in the first minute of his response and he has been generally relevant. The Minister will continue.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** As I said, I am guilty of being passionate, loyal and defensive.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** You've got no guts. You can't come in here and say it. You've got no guts.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** I said it in front of about five million New South Welshmen. "Stacks of trouble for Finn"; "Party amnesty", this is the leadership—

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

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** She wants to lecture me on leadership when branch records are being—

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

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** My favourite is this one, "As usual Labor turns on itself". What we have seen in the last week is what happens—

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** I will read about your comments tomorrow because you're only good when you've got a camera in front of your face.

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

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** How dare she interrupt me like that. Everything that I have needed to say on this matter is now on the public record. I do not need to come in here and repeat it. But what I have said is that I am very much looking forward to this matter being before Cabinet again and I will certainly have discussions with the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Ministers responsible and ensure that I take a considered opinion.

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

**THE HON. JOHN BARILARO**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:33:07):** I direct my question to the Minister for Transport and Roads. On Sunday the Minister said, "Leadership is not what we saw on display last week from the Deputy Premier." Does the Minister stand by those comments today?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (14:33:39):** It is pretty obvious what is going on here. I am going to give an answer and I am going to stand by what I said. I want to

make this point: The robustness of the processes around Cabinet is important and it is important for the State. Next month there will be a discussion on this important issue. Having been through the bushfires and having seen what they have done to our native flora and fauna, it is appropriate that we do everything to protect the koala. At the same time we have to make sure that our farmers in particular are able to continue to feed us all, which they do every day.

What I saw last Friday upset me, quite rightly. Bushfire victims have lost everything—close to 1,000 homes. What happened in my electorate last Friday was unacceptable. They were forwarded maps that were subject to the key decision and robust processes around Cabinet, as they should be. There is no doubt that to see people in the country upset over this is unacceptable. Yes, I am looking forward to seeing an appropriate review of this. I must recognise particularly the Ministers who have been able to assist those bushfire victims to rebuild their homes. I also recognise there are other concessions on the table, particularly as it relates to private native forestry.

Yes, there has been a dispute that should have been held at the kitchen table, but it was held on the front lawn. I will never walk away from what I said. Again I make it crystal clear: In respect of what has occurred and what needs to happen now, it is about acting in the interests of the people of New South Wales in their entirety—no matter whether you live in Sydney or in the bush. I was particularly upset about this nonsense around the divide between the city and the country. That was not the way in the old days. Everyone cared about each other and that is the way it needs to stay.

#### **THE HON. JOHN BARILARO**

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:34:28):** I thought the previous answer was very genuine. My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. Given that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Minister for Transport and Roads, the Minister for Customer Service, the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, senior Liberal Party member the Hon. Catherine Cusack, and the Hon. Trevor Khan and the Hon. Benjamin Franklin, both of whom are members of his own junior Coalition party, have failed to express their support for him, will he now do the honourable thing and resign, to restore stable government in New South Wales?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:36:54):** No.

#### **SYDNEY NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (14:37:10):** My question is directed to the Minister for Customer Service. How will the Government reduce red tape, streamline planning and licensing processes, and support the recovery of Sydney's night-time economy?

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Swansea that she is on three calls to order.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (14:37:38):** I acknowledge the ongoing interest and advocacy of the member for Sydney in relation to the night-time economy and particularly acknowledge his contribution as the Deputy Chair of the Joint Select Committee on Sydney's Night-Time Economy. Most members would agree that the committee delivered a first-class report, which laid the foundation for the bill that we will introduce into this House shortly. In January we removed the lockdown and drink restrictions from Sydney CBD venues, increased last drinks times to 3.30 a.m. in the CBD precinct and extended takeaway trading hours across the State. To support small bars, we also lifted the patron limit for this licence, meaning they can now host up to 120 patrons. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic the Government has been quick to respond with temporary measures, including annual liquor licence fee and application fee waivers, as well as allowing takeaway trading for restaurants, cafes and small bars.

We will introduce a Liquor Amendment (24-hour Economy) Bill into the Parliament shortly to progress these important liquor reforms. This next stage will see even more red tape reduction and further streamlining to support a vibrant and safe 24-hour economy. The bill will consolidate three sanctions schemes under the Liquor Act into a single, integrated system, which, for the first time, includes incentives for well-run venues such as ongoing fee discounts. Venues that do the wrong thing and breach the liquor laws will continue to be subject to close review by regulators and to escalating sanctions. This single system will make it easier for venues to understand and comply with the liquor laws—reducing the regulatory burden on the industry.

The bill also provides further support for small bars by allowing those small businesses to provide more diverse services during the day and early evening, such as dining, small arts and entertainment, bookshops and record store services. Small bars will be added to the Government's fast-track approval process for restaurants and cafes. I thank the planning Minister in that regard. This means eligible small bars, providing they have

development consent, will be able to start up and trade as soon as they make a liquor licence application, which is a big step forward. Importantly, the bill also supports more live music and entertainment. It removes outdated and onerous noise conditions from liquor licences and makes it easier for venues to have live entertainment conditions reviewed. Other changes in the bill will see the removal of the liquor licence freeze in Kings Cross and the CBD. In its place there will be a more sophisticated, evidence-based framework for managing the density of licensed premises. Collectively, these risk-based measures in the bill will bring about a significant shift in the way industry is regulated.

I am very pleased to say that this Government has just released a comprehensive strategy for the 24-hour economy in Sydney, announced by the Treasurer and Minister Ayres yesterday. As part of this strategy, we have committed to further cutting red tape and improving regulation across the board. This will include improving applications processes to make it easier and faster for venues to start up and trade, and make changes to trading conditions. This is a major priority for the Government and builds on steps it has taken in recent years to better align the planning and liquor licensing processes. The Government definitely looks forward to working closely with industry, councils and the community to make this happen. Again, I thank the member for Sydney for his contribution.

**The SPEAKER:** I understand that under Standing Order 131 (7) the Treasurer has some additional information in relation to a question asked of him on Thursday 6 August by the member for Kogarah.

#### *Supplementary Answers*

#### **ICARE**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:41:35):** On 6 August 2020 I was asked a question by the member for Kogarah regarding a meeting held with EML in December 2019. In the main I took that question on notice. I can advise and I confirm that I met with Mr Coyne from EML on 6 December 2019, as I meet with many stakeholders from across my portfolio. We noted that the Dore Report was upcoming in that meeting and I informed him that I looked forward to reading it.

#### *Documents*

#### **NSW OMBUDSMAN**

##### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 31AA of the Ombudsman Act 1974, I announce receipt of the Special Report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled *Investigation into actions taken by SafeWork NSW Inspectors in relation to the Blue Mountains City Council workplaces*, dated 21 August 2020, received out of session on 21 August 2020. I order that the report be printed.

#### **INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**

##### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 78 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, I announce receipt of the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled *Investigation into the alleged corruption practices of a headlease coordinator at the NSW Department of Family and Community Services*, dated August 2020, received out of session on 27 August 2020. I order that the report be printed.

#### **AUDITOR-GENERAL**

##### **Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the Performance Audit Reports of the Auditor-General entitled:

- (1) *Health capital works*, dated 12 August 2020, received out of session on 12 August 2020 and authorised to be printed.
- (2) *Governance and internal controls over local infrastructure contributions*, dated 17 August 2020, received out of session on 17 August 2020 and authorised to be printed.
- (3) *Credit card management in Local Government*, dated 3 September 2020, received out of session on 3 September 2020 and authorised to be printed.

*Committees***LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE****Reports**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** On behalf of the Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 19/57*, dated 15 September 2020. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** I also table the minutes of the committee meeting regarding *Legislation Review Digest No. 18/57*, dated 4 August 2020.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

**The SPEAKER:** I announce that the following paper petition signed by more than 10,000 persons has been lodged for presentation:

**Jervis Bay Road Flyover**

Petition requesting that the Government approve Option 5.3.1 of the Strategic Options Report, prepared by Transport for NSW, and the construction of a flyover at the Jervis Bay Road and Princes Highway intersection within the 2020-21 financial year, received from **Ms Yasmin Catley**.

**The SPEAKER:** I set down debate on the petition as an order of the day for a future day.

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

**Sydney Metropolitan Region 8 Bus Route**

Petition calling on the Government to take immediate steps to cease and desist from its actions to franchise the publicly owned and operated Region 8 bus route, received from **Mr Chris Minns**.

**Lake Macquarie Coal Haulage**

Petition calling on the Government to reject Centennial Coal's application to move a million tonnes of coal a year on public roads in Lake Macquarie and to ensure that future applications for coal haulage on public roads in Lake Macquarie are rejected, except in circumstances of emergency short-term need to provide ongoing power generation, received from **Mr Greg Piper**.

**RESPONSES TO PETITIONS**

**The CLERK:** I announce that the following Ministers have lodged responses to paper petitions signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Paul Toole—Gocup Road Intersection Upgrade—lodged 10 September 2020 (Dr Joe McGirr)

The Hon. Brad Hazzard—Wentworth District Health Facility—lodged 8 September 2020 (Mrs Helen Dalton)

The Hon. Rob Stokes—Wallacia Resource Recovery Facility—lodged 3 September 2020 (Mrs Tanya Davies)

The Hon. Rob Stokes—Drinking Water Catchments—lodged 31 August 2020 (Mr Adam Marshall)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—Hoxton Park Traffic Management—lodged 2 September 2020 (Mr Paul Lynch)

The Hon. Matt Kean—Blue Mountains and Lithgow Air Watch—lodged 31 August 2020 (Ms Trish Doyle)

The Hon. Matt Kean—Tuggerah Lakes Flood Risk Mitigation—lodged 21 August 2020 (Mr David Mehan)

*Business of the House***BUSINESS LAPSED**

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 (3) general business notices of motion (general notices) Nos 1089, 1093 [Gender Pay Gap] and 1094 to 1162 have lapsed.

*Bills***ADOPTION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (INTEGRATED BIRTH CERTIFICATES) BILL 2020****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (14:46:05):** As I was saying earlier, promoting adoption in those rare and difficult circumstances where natural parents cannot look after their own children and providing those children with the start in life that every child deserves and would aspire to is a fundamentally important measure that the State has available to it. We know that life holds many vicissitudes for lots of people and not everybody is fortunate. In some circumstances it is not possible for parents to perform their role in a way that would protect the best interests of the child. In those rare and unusual circumstances, it is important that the State provides permanency, safety, love and security to allow for a good start in life for children in those circumstances. In Australia we have moved towards modern, open adoption practice and have implemented significant legislative reforms in New South Wales that better reflect our contemporary understanding of the best interests of the child.

Adoption has not always been done properly and transparently. Bad policy in the past, however well-intentioned, has resulted in some sad, unfortunate and tragic circumstances. We are learning the lessons of that history and are working towards ensuring the future of and a good start in life for adopted children. Many Australian reports and inquiries have recommended introducing integrated birth certificates [IBCs], in keeping with modern and open adoption practice. The NSW Law Reform Commission's 1997 Report 81, entitled *Review of the Adoption of Children Act 1965 (NSW)*, recommended that adopted people should have the option to apply for both the current post-adoptive birth certificate, which shows only the details of the person's adoptive parents, and the integrated birth certificate, which details both the person's adoptive and birth parents.

In February 2012 the Australian Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs tabled its report on Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices. Recommendation 13 of the report recommended that all jurisdictions adopt integrated birth certificates, that IBCs be issued to eligible people on request and that they be legal proof of identity of equal status to other birth certificates. In 2015 a South Australian review of its Adoption Act 1988 suggested that an adopted person's birth certificate must reflect the truest possible account of the biological parentage of the child. In many circumstances throughout life, a proper understanding of the genetic or medical history of a family makes a difference to a person. They need to be able to trace that lineage for their own health benefit, so the truest possible account of biological parentage can be practically important. In 2017 the Victorian Law Reform Commission published its review of the Adoption Act 1984. Recommendation 24 recommended that, subject to security and cost considerations, IBCs should be available to all children who are adopted as well as all people who have been adopted in Victoria.

In 2018 the Australian House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs concluded its inquiry into local adoption and published its report *Breaking barriers: a national adoption framework for Australian children*. That report went so far as to recommend a national law for adoption that provided for IBCs. However, it noted that full and legal responsibility for adopted children must remain clearly with the adoptive parents. Those reviews and inquiries demonstrate the level of support for IBCs across a range of Australian jurisdictions. Importantly, the New South Wales Government has considered the views of the adoption community in the development of the important reform. The overwhelming majority of respondents to an online survey about certificates agreed that information about the birth and adoptive families should be included. We are taking action in New South Wales to ensure that adopted people have access to a birth certificate that reflects their truest possible history for use as a legal identity document. The bill draws on the recommendations of these reviews and inquiries. It will authorise the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages to issue IBCs as recommended, taking the next step in the implementation of open adoption practice in New South Wales.

I conclude by saying that adoption is firstly, secondly and thirdly about the needs of the child. While the natural longing of adults to have children can be met through adoption and the immense generosity of adoptive parents should never be doubted, it remains for the child's benefit. Adoption is not a dirty word but a necessary option for a child whose natural parents are unable to provide stability, safety and succour. Adoption is necessary primarily because there are children who have already been removed from their natural parents and is only considered if a return to those parents has proved to be impossible. Adoption does not cause child removal but provides a solution for a child in desperate need. I support this practical and sensible bill, just as I support the provision of adoption generally for children in need of it. It is not a solution for everyone, and it is quite rare, but it should be more common than it has been because for some years now we have been afraid of the dark outcomes of the past. That has meant that we have not done the best that we possibly can for children in desperate circumstances. We are finding a way to improve that balance and provide stability and a forever home for children



who would not otherwise have one. I commend the efforts of the Government towards that goal and I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (14:52:29):** The objects of the Adoption Legislation Amendment (Integrated Birth Certificates) Bill 2020 are to amend the Adoption Act 2000 and the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995 to allow the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages to issue two different birth certificates for people who are adopted: a post-adoptive birth certificate and an integrated birth certificate. The post-adoptive birth certificate is currently issued for adopted people. It includes the names of the adopted parents. It must not indicate that the person was adopted. It records the child's adoptive parents but makes no reference to the child's birth parents. The integrated birth certificate will include details of the adoptive parents in addition to details of the person's birth parents and birth siblings. Both birth certificates will be valid identity documents. The NSW Law Reform Commission noted:

Naming birth parents on an IBC supports a child's right to know their origins, is likely to support openness in the adoptive family and may encourage ongoing relationships with birth families.

The new birth certificate system will allow the adopted person to know their full identity and choose which certificate they wish to use. It will empower them and support their understanding of their past and their heritage, which may be very different to the heritage of their adopted parents. Those changes build on the reforms instituted by the former Labor Government in 2008, when the Adoption Act 2000 was amended to establish the practice of open adoption. Those reforms established equitable and open rights to information and applied to all applications for adoptions from 1 January 2010. Since that time all adoptions in New South Wales are open, reflecting contemporary understanding of the needs and best interests of the child.

I know these changes are welcomed by my constituents Catherine and Phillip Moore of Berkeley Vale. Catherine and Phillip have cared for Rilee Hili since 2008, soon after Rilee was born. They are seeking to adopt him. They feel that having a birth certificate which records his adoptive parents as well as his birth parents and siblings will be very important for Rilee as a record of his full identity and heritage. As Rilee maintains contact with his birth family, an official record of this is important to him. Mr and Mrs Moore have expressed their frustration with the length of the adoption process—and I will continue to work with them—but in the meantime this change is a bit of good news for their family. I understand they have been supported in the process by the organisation My Forever Family NSW. I record their appreciation for this support and note my concern that more support is not being provided both to them and Rilee during this process.

However, I note that the proposed Act commences by proclamation and we do not yet have a start date for these changes. I appreciate the Attorney General has explained the benefits associated with a flexible start date, particularly regarding the implementation of administrative arrangements. However, I encourage the Attorney General to direct the necessary resources towards the implementation of these changes to ensure they start sooner rather than later. I also note this week is Foster Care Week. I acknowledge and take this opportunity to thank Mr and Mrs Moore for the loving home they have provided Rilee for the past 12 years. I also acknowledge another family in my electorate, the Votano family of Tumby Umbi. They have cared for several newborns and dearly wish to adopt a child of their own. I thank them for the love they have shown to the children in their care, and I will continue to give them my support in their future endeavours.

I know they too are frustrated by the adoption process. I believe part of their frustration is in response to the contracting out of the adoption oversight and systems process. They can and should be provided with more support. This House should be providing more support to foster families and families navigating the adoption process. Working class families in my electorate do not always have the same skills and resources as others navigating this process. I thank all of the foster families in my electorate. They do a marvellous and important job of helping us build a better society on the Central Coast and in New South Wales. Labor does not oppose the bill. It is a sensible bill and will benefit children involved in the adoption process. It is an important improvement to the practice of open adoption in this State, and I believe it should be supported by this House.

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (14:57:27):** Children need a sense of permanency to thrive. They need permanency in their physical home environment, through secure, loving and nurturing relationships with people who care about them and love them, and in legal arrangements that uphold their best interests. The permanent placement principles in the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 reflect that need by ensuring that for a child who comes into out-of-home care restoration to the child's parents is the first preference. Guardianship and open adoption are the preferred long-term options for children who cannot be restored to their parents, as they are also directed towards permanency for those children.

For this reason the New South Wales Government is focused on improving outcomes for children by increasing the numbers of guardianship and adoption orders. This is about doing all we can to ensure that our most vulnerable children grow up in a safe, secure and permanent home. Open adoption enables children to know their

identity and maintain relationships with their parents, extended families and culture. That can strengthen the child's sense of who they are and where they fit in the world. In open adoption a child understands that they have two sets of parents and families. That helps to provide a sense of belonging, safety and permanency to a child.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, and those from multicultural backgrounds, access to their culture and engagement with their community is imperative to their identity formation and sense of belonging. To support delivery of appropriate care to Aboriginal children and young people and those from multicultural backgrounds in care, the Department of Communities and Justice developed a care and cultural plan. That plan is intended to ensure that children can preserve their cultural identity as well as their connection to culture and family.

Since October 2017 the department has also delivered the Permanency Support Program, which provides tailored services to vulnerable children in partnership with non-government agencies so that those children can grow up in stable, secure and loving homes, whether that be with parents at birth, extended family or kin, or through open adoption or guardianship. This program is one of the most significant changes made to the New South Wales child protection and out-of-home care systems in decades. The New South Wales Government is pleased to see that more children are now exiting care into permanent homes. It shows that the Government's Permanency Support Program is working.

The post-adoptive birth certificate that is issued to adopted persons removes their life history, concealing information about birth parents, siblings, kin and country. Providing this as an adopted person's only legally valid birth certificate is inconsistent with the modern practice of open adoption, which encourages continuing connection to birth family and cultural heritage. The introduction of integrated birth certificates [IBCs], which will record details of both a child's parents and adoptive parents, is in line with the New South Wales Government's commitment to supporting openness in adoption. The introduction of IBCs will better reflect the life story of adopted persons. I am very proud that the New South Wales Coalition Government has brought the Adoption Legislation Amendment (Integrated Birth Certificates) Bill 2020 to the House and I am pleased to support this significant next step in modern open adoption practice.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:01:49):** I acknowledge the excellent contributions to the debate on the Adoption Legislation Amendment (Integrated Birth Certificates) Bill 2020 from the previous speakers from both sides of the Chamber. It is great when good pieces of legislation are agreed to by all in the House. I am very pleased that this bill is before the House today, coincidentally on the second day of the annual Foster Care Week, which is very fortuitous. This Government is committed to finding safe, loving and permanent homes for vulnerable kids and to improving outcomes for children in out-of-home care. Obviously adoption is the next step beyond foster care. This bill makes amendments to the Adoption Act 2000 and the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995 to allow integrated birth certificates to be issued to adopted people in New South Wales.

This is the first change of its type since 1965, when post-adoptive birth certificates were first issued with no reference to the child's parents at birth. Those post-adoptive birth certificates are consistent with the legal effect of adoption but obviously are inconsistent with modern open adoption practices, which encourage connection to birth family and cultural heritage wherever possible. I am pleased that the Government is creating an integrated birth certificate as a new post-adoptive birth certificate that includes information about an adopted person's parents and siblings at birth, as well as their parents and siblings after adoption. An integrated birth certificate better reflects the full identity of an adopted person. It promotes openness and supports ongoing relationships between the adoptive family and the birth family.

The New South Wales Government has closely considered the risk that the introduction of integrated birth certificates may cause confusion because the format of the integrated birth certificate will not be familiar to organisations that use birth certificates for identity verification, such as government agencies, schools, banks and healthcare providers. Without support, those organisations might refuse to accept the certificate or incorrectly enter the birth name as the legal name. The design of the integrated birth certificate is intended to address those risks. The formatting and accompanying explanatory text makes it clear that the adopted name is the name that must be used for identity verification purposes. To support the use of integrated birth certificates an explanatory note will also be provided whenever an integrated birth certificate is issued. The note will explain that both a post-adoptive birth certificate and an integrated birth certificate have been issued, that both certificates are legally valid for identification purposes and that the recipient may elect which certificate to use.

In addition, the Department of Communities and Justice has developed a communications plan to support the implementation of integrated birth certificates. That plan involves the development of education and training material to ensure the agencies and organisations that rely on birth certificates for identity verification are aware both that the integrated birth certificate is available and that it is a legal identity document. The implementation of the communications plan is led by the integrated birth certificate implementation working group. That group is comprised of representatives from Adoption and Permanency Services; policy, reform and legislation; and

communications within the Department of Communities and Justice, as well as the NSW Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages within the Department of Customer Service.

Communications activities to support the introduction of integrated birth certificates include developing fact sheets and frequently asked questions documents; updating agency websites; developing newsletter articles; and distributing briefing packs to relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, the adoption sector and other organisations and businesses that rely on birth certificates as identity documents. It also includes the promotion of integrated birth certificates at interagency meetings and meetings with accredited adoption services providers; and the promotion of integrated birth certificates through social media channels. They are being developed in consultation with affected New South Wales Government agencies and will be circulated to affected non-government organisations and government agencies prior to commencement.

This program of communication, consultation, education and training will help to enable the effective implementation of integrated birth certificates across New South Wales. I commend again the Minister and his staff who took part in the drafting of the Adoption Legislation Amendment (Integrated Birth Certificates) Bill 2020. This is a very good piece of legislation. We know the effect it will have on the families of both adoptees and adopters. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (15:07:46):** I speak in debate on the Adoption Legislation Amendment (Integrated Birth Certificates) Bill 2020. The introduction of integrated birth certificates is a good thing for children and their adoptive parents and for families across New South Wales. The bill amends the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995 and the Adoption Act 2000 to establish a new integrated birth certificate that lists on an adopted child's birth certificate information about their birth parents and siblings. The bill does not change the practice of adoption in New South Wales; rather, the ways we record and disseminate information to those impacted by adoption practices. It reflects a shift in adoption practices towards open adoption where there is transparency around adoption in families and acceptance that a child has both birth and adoptive parents, and a willingness to connect, exchange information and build relationships.

Every decision we make in this place about families is important, and the interests of the child must always be the priority. Open adoption is in the best interests of children; so too is the introduction of integrated birth certificates. Currently when a child is adopted they are issued with a post-adoptive birth certificate—otherwise known as an amended birth certificate—which lists the names of the adoptive parents and any siblings post-adoption. The bill introduces a new kind of birth certificate, an integrated birth certificate, where information about a child's birth parents and siblings is listed alongside that of their adopted family. Adopted children will receive both certificates.

The bill updates both relevant Acts to extend existing provisions around the advance notice system and contact vetoes to integrated birth certificates. The advance notice system, where the adoption occurred before January 2010, allows for birth parents or children to be notified when a person attempts to access their information, acknowledging that either party may require a period of time to inform others or prepare for such a discourse. A contact veto, where the adoption occurred before October 1990, allows for birth parents and adopted children to prohibit their information being shared. The bill requires applicants, where a contact veto is in effect, to sign an undertaking that they will not contact the other party before receiving an integrated birth certificate and it extends the existing penalties for failing to do so.

Finally, the bill acknowledges the need for an extensive information campaign with government departments, schools, childcare centres, hospitals and stakeholders. It provides a period in which those in the community can update their systems and processes around the new certificates. Since 1965 the legislation governing adoption has changed significantly, while the legislation determining how birth certificates are issued has not. In the past adoptions were often closed, only predicated on a "clean break" theory whereby children were separated from their birth mothers at birth with no further contact. We have now moved to a framework of open adoption whereby all parties are allowed a degree of contact or information exchange.

In 2018-19 a total of 134 adoptions were finalised in New South Wales. In the same year around 88 per cent of local adoptions across Australia were classified as open adoptions. An open adoption can take many forms. In some instances there is direct contact between adopted children and their birth families. Families may meet up occasionally, arrange for phone calls or other contact on special days and, in some instances, they may become fixed occasions in each other's lives. In other cases, cards or photographs, or indirect contact is facilitated so that families can check in and remain known to one another but not have a physical presence in each other's lives.

The degree to which an open adoption is open often depends on the circumstances around which the child is separated from their birth family or enters out-of-home care, and that may change over time. However, what remains constant is an acknowledgment that adoption helps to shape a child's life and their family circumstances. While in the past adoption was steeped in secrecy, albeit often with the intention of protecting a child, we no

longer support the adoption practice where a child does not know that they are adopted. The Benevolent Society explains that a person who discovers that they are adopted can cycle through disbelief, confusion, anger, sorrow and loss. I quote:

You are reacting to finding out something vital about yourself that has been concealed from you. This can lead to an extended period of adjustment whilst you come to terms with this whole new perspective on who you are; how you began your life, how secrecy in your family may have impacted on you, how you feel about those who kept the secret, and the long term implications of this revelation for your own identity. Experiencing feelings of sorrow, disbelief, confusion and anger are a normal and expected part of this process.

Open adoption seeks to remove the shock and trauma of discovering one's adoption status by ensuring the information is woven through a child's life from their earliest consciousness. The information is shared in an age-appropriate way and allows for a greater acceptance of how a child's family and identity is formed. One adoptive parent from my electorate who spoke to me about this bill put it this way:

Our kids know we are their family, but they also know we are not their only family.

Open adoption has meant that our family is built on honesty and it's given us all a greater appreciation for how we have come to be a part of one another's lives.

While we don't have direct contact with the kids' birth mother for legal reasons, we talk about her every day; we wonder what she is doing and we get sad about why she isn't more a part of our lives.

We are all grateful for everything she has given us, even though she was unable to parent our kids in the way I am sure she had hoped.

We've had difficult conversations about why our kids came to be adopted, but that has meant they have learned to accept and process their past experiences and trauma.

While it isn't always easy, there is no question it has made us a stronger and more resilient family.

When their friends ask our kids about why they're adopted or why their family looks different to others—our kids are armed with the most powerful defence we could give them: the truth. That lines up with what we know is one of the key advantages of open adoption: It helps adopted children to manage the psychological impacts of separation. We now know that adoption can have lifelong psychological impacts, including grief, guilt, attachment and personality disorders, anxiety and even post-traumatic stress.

Each of these can be exacerbated when the information about adoptive status comes as a surprise or shock. Open adoption can foster a child's sense of affirmation, self-identity and confidence, and weaken feelings of guilt or abandonment. Open adoption can connect a child to the birth family and spark relationships with birth siblings and extended family, cultures and networks. On a basic level, it helps to ensure children have genetic and medical information that can save their lives. While we have moved towards open adoptive practice, the way we document adoptions and family arrangements in New South Wales has remained stuck in the past. This bill will ensure that all adopted children have access to information about how their family was formed. It enshrines best practice and I hope it will further diminish any lingering stigma in our community around adoption or fostering.

It would be remiss of me to speak about adoption without acknowledging the impact of forced adoption practices in our country's past, and particularly their impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Forced adoptions—removing children from unmarried mothers—was a common practice from the 1940s through to the 1980s. The Australian Senate has estimated that as many as 250,000 children were forcibly removed over that time. We do not need to wonder about the pain and profound hurt that that would have caused those mothers and children because I saw it on the faces of those present in 2013 when former Prime Minister Julia Gillard issued a formal apology on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia. We know the terrible scars caused by the forced removal of Indigenous Australians across our State and across the country. The Bringing Them Home report indicated that from 1910 to 1970 between one-third and one-tenth of Indigenous children were removed from their parents and families by governments, churches or welfare bodies to be adopted and raised by white families.

We know the impacts on the Stolen Generation. Of those aged over 50, 89 per cent were in ill health; 50 per cent had been charged by police at some point in their lives and 20 per cent had been incarcerated; and 14 per cent had experienced homelessness. It is important to remember that the trauma of that period reverberates still today. Out-of-home care and common adoption practices need to be mindful of what we have subjected our Indigenous Australians to. We know that Indigenous kids currently make up one in 10 of those in out-of-home care across our State. [*Extension of time*]

Neither forced adoption practices nor the policies that led to the Stolen Generation can be separated from current discourse around adoption practices, and we must rightly be guided by the long shadow they cast. This week marks the tenth anniversary of the passage of same-sex adoption legislation by this Parliament. The Adoption Amendment (Same Sex Couples) Bill 2010 removed the prohibition on same-sex couples adopting and was introduced by Clover Moore—now Sydney's Lord Mayor—following a Legislative Council inquiry referred by then Minister for Community Services Linda Burney. It was shepherded through the Parliament by the Hon. Penny Sharpe, with bipartisan support from former Premier Kristina Keneally, Attorney General John

Hatzistergos and then Leader of the Opposition Barry O'Farrell. The bill recognised that all families have value and that love makes a family.

Importantly, the bill built upon research that shows children fare just as well in a same-sex parent household and that a person's sexuality or gender does not determine their worth as a parent. I cherish the opportunity to see children thrive in same-sex parent households across my electorate of Summer Hill. On the anniversary of the passage of that important legislation through Parliament, I congratulate all those rainbow families across New South Wales who have formed their families through fostering and adoption. That reform is a shining example of how we progress adoption practices in New South Wales to best meet the needs of children across the State. I am proud to support this bill today in the same vein. It will further embed open adoption practices and better support the emotional and psychological wellbeing of children whose lives are shaped by adoption. It is about truth, it is about compassion and it is about integrity. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (15:19:41):** I speak in debate on the Adoption Legislation Amendment (Integrated Birth Certificates) Bill 2020 and state from the outset that I will support this important piece of legislation. I acknowledge that the bill is a significant reform and step forward for many adoptees who have lobbied for it. However, other adoptees still will slip through the cracks of what is a highly complex web of laws and regulations that restrict them from owning their true identity. This is, however, an overwhelmingly positive piece of legislation, and I am very pleased to see such broad and strong support for it in this House. The bill ensures that adopted people will have access to two birth certificates. The first is what we know as the existing post-adoption birth certificate while the second will be an integrated birth certificate that will include information about an adopted person's birth parents and birth siblings, as well as their adoptive parents and adoptive siblings. I stress that each of those certificates will include the names of birth parents and adoptive parents; I will return to that issue a little later.

It is, without doubt, a huge step forward for the many adoptees who were prevented from knowing who their birth parents were. There is little doubt that secrecy and uncertainty should not form part of modern adoptive practices. I am therefore pleased this bill will go some way towards ensuring that laws that were first enacted in 1965 are updated to reflect modern practices and demands. This is an age when the open exchange of information is paramount. Adoption practices were significantly reformed in 2010 and now reflect a more contemporary framework that better serves the best interests of a child. People must always have access to information about their birth parents, not only for their own knowledge but also for their wellbeing. Things such as hereditary health issues, for example, are extremely important and must be part of our contemporary understanding. The bill will give an adoptee a choice between their post-adoption birth certificate and an integrated birth certificate. I support that concept, but for some adoptees it is a useless and unwanted choice.

There are some who do not want their adoptive parents named on their birth certificate. There are some who believe their birth certificate should be an accurate reflection of whom they were born to—a factual birth certificate in its true form, and not something that is often referred to in this current debate as an identity document. I am aware of those people and have had discussions with some. In most cases, the adoptee might have been abused by an adoptive parent and might have little or no contact with them. They do not want that person's name on their birth certificate, particularly when that abuser was not in any reality the actual birth parent. Under this bill, they do not get a choice to remove that name. They get to choose between two certificates that both carry the names of the person's adoptive parents.

I refer the House to a recent case, albeit in Victoria but reflective of the same situation in New South Wales. I add that any child who is now adopted in Australia at any age is issued with a birth certificate that records the person's adoptive parents as if they were born to them because they retain the legal rights over that child. William Hammersley died in September last year, but not before the Victorian courts granted him an adoption discharge. I will not detail Mr Hammersley's case, but it is fair to say that he suffered extensive abuse and neglect at the hands of an adoptive parent. Understandably, he did not want the name of his adoptive father—the one who regularly beat him with a razor strap—recorded on his birth certificate. He wanted his birth certificate to reflect his true identity. He went to court and spent a lot of money on lawyers but got his dying wish when the court ruled in favour of his application for an adoptive discharge, or adoption reversal. The same situation exists in New South Wales. There must be a mechanism where the likes of William Hammersley do not have to apply to the courts for such a discharge. There are many who want a no-fuss, no-fault, no-fee discharge and they should not have to spend their life savings in court to get it. It is my understanding that under the current laws a person can only get an adoptive discharge by proving there was fraud, duress or a special circumstance, which currently takes a lot of money and lawyers to prove. One person wrote to me and said:

I just want my true identity back. I didn't consent to my adoption because I was a child. I was abused as a child by my adoptive father and I don't want his name recorded on my birth certificate. From the age of 18, I should be allowed to get out of that transaction if I want.

We rightfully have laws that give people the right to know their birth parents. Children of sperm or egg donors now also have the right to know the identity of their donor. We also rightfully have laws that allow those with a change of gender to alter or update their birth certificate. It is my view that we must also find a way to accommodate the William Hammersleys of New South Wales and give them the simple choice of having their birth certificate reflect the accurate, factual names of their birth parents. They should have the choice of removing the names of their adoptive parents if they can show that special circumstances exist. Peter Moore is a constituent who heads Adoptee Rights Australia. Peter put it this way:

It's supposed to be a birth certificate, not an identity certificate. If I don't want my adoptive parents named on my birth certificate I should have that choice.

He should have that choice and not have to fight through the courts to have his birth certificate reflect the names of those to whom he was actually born. I have raised this issue with the Attorney General and I am hopeful that it will be considered in further reforms to this sector. As I have said previously, I know the bill will deliver strong reform for the vast majority of people who need and want it. I know of adoptees who have wonderful relationships with both their birth and their adoptive parents. There are others who have those relationships with just their adoptive parents and siblings. I am happy—as I am sure we all are—that that exists but we still have some way to go before we can say that no-one is falling through the cracks and that we have a truly contemporary system that serves everyone and does not leave behind some adoptees who need to have their true identity confirmed in a courtroom.

This is a complex and emotional area. I am very pleased that the matter has been considered in such a genuine and heartfelt manner by the Attorney General and the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services and their staff. I also thank all those groups who have participated in the consultative process to bring about this bill. I am very pleased that the Attorney General is in the Chamber. I understand that he will speak in reply. I trust that we will keep open the opportunity to address these issues, particularly those raised by Mr Peter Moore directly to me. I congratulate the Attorney General on bringing this bill to the House. It is an overwhelmingly positive step, and I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (15:28:20):** In reply: First and foremost, I thank my friend and colleague the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, the member for Kiama. I also thank Government members representing the electorates of Vacluse, Riverstone, Heathcote and Terrigal. I thank the shadow Attorney General, the member for Liverpool, together with members representing the electorates of Maitland, Summer Hill and The Entrance. I thank the member for Balmain and the member for Lake Macquarie on the crossbenches.

New South Wales has been on a long journey away from the secrecy associated with the adoption practices of the past. Modern open adoption policy means that adoptive and birth families know about each other, openly exchange information and, wherever possible, build relationships in direct contact. Adopted people can then stay connected to their background and their cultural heritage. Most importantly, we know that openness and transparency is in the best interests of adopted children. Throughout the history of our State adoption has not always been a positive experience. Some people affected by closed and/or forced adoptions may have experienced trauma, grief and the erasure of their identity and background. I cannot begin to imagine the pain and distress suffered by some of the people whose stories have been shared during this debate. I thank them for their courage in telling their stories and I thank members for sharing them with us today.

I am delighted that the bill has the support of members across this House and with the difference it will make for adopted people. Before concluding, I will address some particular matters that members raised in debate. The member for The Entrance asked about the commencement date. We are committed to these reforms commencing as soon as practicable. To ensure that the introduction of integrated birth certificates does not cause confusion for organisations that use birth certificates, the Department of Communities and Justice has developed a communication plan to support the implementation of integrated birth certificates. The communication plan involves the development of education and training material that will ensure agencies and organisations that rely on birth certificates for identity verification are aware that the integrated birth certificate is available and is a legal identity document.

Communication activities to support the introduction of integrated birth certificates include: developing fact sheets and frequently asked questions documents; updating agency websites; developing newsletter articles and distributing briefing packs to relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, the adoption sector, and other organisations and businesses that rely on birth certificates as identity documents; promoting integrated birth certificates at interagency meetings and meetings with accredited adoption service providers; and promoting integrated birth certificates through social media channels. Those communication activities are being developed in consultation with affected New South Wales government agencies and will be circulated to affected non-government organisations and government agencies prior to commencement.

I was in the Chamber throughout the contribution of the member for Lake Macquarie, and I thank him for his passionate and articulate thoughts and observations on this complex topic. At the moment, those who want their adoption overturned or do not want their adoptive parents recorded on their birth certificate can achieve this by seeking a discharge of adoption through the Supreme Court of New South Wales. People who were adopted during the forced adoption era are able to make an application to discharge the adoption order. The grounds for a discharge order are set out in section 93 (4) of the Adoption Act 2000. It is a discretionary decision for the court. The court may make the order if it is satisfied that:

- (a) the adoption order, or any consent to adoption, was obtained by fraud, duress or other improper means, or
- (b) there is some other exceptional reason why the adoption order should be discharged.

The Benevolent Society, the Post Adoption Resource Centre NSW and the Adoption Information Unit of the Department of Communities and Justice provide support to those impacted by forced adoption. I realise the difficulties surrounding this process, including the need for legal representation and the associated fees and charges. But at the moment this is the only way to change the legal effect of an adoption. However, the Government will continue to review and update its approach, learning from both our history and a clearer understanding of the best interests of the child. The availability of integrated birth certificates for adopted people, reflecting their full life story, is another step in the implementation of open adoption practice in New South Wales.

To conclude, the bill will amend the Adoption Act 2000 and the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995 to introduce integrated birth certificates for adopted persons in New South Wales and allow access to integrated birth certificates by adopted persons and other persons. The Government is pleased to take the next step forward in modern open adoption practice. This reform will modernise birth certificates for adopted people, allowing an adopted person's full life story and history to be acknowledged and reflected in their birth certificate. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## POLICE AMENDMENT (PROMOTIONS) BILL 2020

### Second Reading Debate

**Debate resumed from 6 August 2020.**

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (15:34:52):** I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Police Amendment (Promotions) Bill 2020. The bill amends the Police Act 1990 and the Police Regulation 2015 to modernise the promotions process for non-executive police officers to the ranks of sergeant, inspector and superintendent by replacing the promotion lists process with a merit-based process. It also makes amendments consequential on the establishment of the new process positions. The Police Regulation 2015 contains additional provisions specifying eligibility requirements for placement on a promotion list. The amendments made to the Act and the regulation modernise the promotions process by replacing the promotion lists process with a merit-based process in line with the government sector employment framework.

In 2019 the *Review into the NSW Police Force Promotions System* was undertaken by Elizabeth Broderick at the request of the Commissioner of the NSW Police Force, Mick Fuller. As Ms Broderick noted, the NSW Police Force promotions system has been in operation now for over 12 years. At the time it was seen as an appropriate response to the prior system, which did not provide sufficient protection against corruption and nepotism. However, there is a general view that the system does not at this time ensure that promotion is given to the best candidate. Police officers have also expressed that there is an insufficient focus on leadership development, particularly over the lifetime of an officer's career. The current pre-qualifying stages of promotion are time at rank, pre-qualifying assessment, management performance review, exams, eligibility program and completed years of service. The candidate is then provided with an eligibility mark and placed in mark order on the promotions list.

The current system was introduced to address significant concerns at the time. However, over the past decade the NSW Police Force has continued to evolve and there is overall dissatisfaction with the current system for a modern police force. Ms Broderick noted that women are currently greatly under-represented in leadership

roles and that the existing system has a disproportionately adverse impact on women. In particular, I note the finding that 79 per cent of male police officers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "Men and women have the same opportunities to succeed in the current promotions system", while only 47 per cent of women police officers agreed with the statement. Indeed, the original report was commissioned by the commissioner to ensure equity in the force and he has pledged to drive change to make the promotions system more equitable.

The Broderick report recommended that the NSW Public Sector Capability Framework be used as the basis for a new promotions system. Whilst the report also recommended that the Police Amendment (Police Promotions) Act 2014 be repealed, given the size of the NSW Police Force and its command structure there is sense in enshrining the promotions system within legislation to provide ongoing clarity and surety of the role of NSW Police Force officers. The bill before the House is the result of broad discussions and is widely supported by those in the policing community. The bill itself makes changes to the appointment of non-executive police officers. Schedule 1 [7] to the bill proposes to require the commissioner to appoint by way of promotion to a vacant position of a non-executive police officer a person who has, in the commissioner's opinion, the greatest merit as determined in accordance with the regulations.

This updates the police promotions system by removing all references to promotions lists and provides that vacant positions are filled by the person who has, in the opinion of the commissioner, the greatest merit as determined in accordance with the regulations. Under the current Act, in the case of promotion appointment to a vacant specialist position the commissioner may appoint a person by way of promotion to that position from the promotion list for the rank concerned who has the greatest merit according to rankings on that list of persons and who, in the opinion of the commissioner, has the qualifications or the knowledge, skills or experience required for the position. The bill also proposes to change how the commissioner is required to appoint by way of promotion to a vacant specialist position, as with the appointment of non-executive police officers. For promotion to a specialist position, the commissioner will appoint a police officer who has, in the commissioner's opinion, the greatest merit as determined in accordance with the regulations.

Of course, there are always safeguards built into the system. The proposed changes also require that the commissioner may not appoint an officer who refuses to undergo or fails to satisfy a psychological assessment of the officer's suitability for the position that the commissioner has required the officer to undergo. In relation to a vacant specialist position that requires a specific qualification where none of the applicants for the position holds the qualification, the commissioner may appoint by way of promotion a police officer who does not hold the qualification. The appointment must be on a provisional basis. The commissioner must permanently appoint the officer to the position if the officer obtains the qualifications and has demonstrated satisfactory performance in the position within the provisional period. If the officer is not permanently appointed, the officer is to return to the rank and grade the officer would have held had the officer not previously been appointed.

Regarding temporary appointments, schedule 1 [11] to the bill allows the commissioner to appoint a police officer to act in a non-executive police officer position that is vacant or where the holder of the position is suspended, sick or absent for a period of up to 12 months. The existing legislation allows that the commissioner may appoint temporarily to a vacant position of a non-executive police officer a police officer who is on the relevant promotion list for the rank concerned or is in the process of gaining the requisite qualifications for placement on that list. Under the current requirements, before the appointment can be made the commissioner and officer must agree in writing as to the command in which the officer will serve if the officer is not permanently appointed to the vacant position.

Schedule 1 [12] to the bill requires the commissioner, before appointing a police officer to act in a non-executive police officer position, to require the officer to provide a declaration as to misconduct. An officer who fails, refuses or is unable to provide the declaration is ineligible for appointment to the position. Schedule 1 [14] states it is the commissioner's duty to make inquiries as to the integrity of a non-executive police officer or a person before the officer participates in a process for promotion to the promotion rank and before appointing the person by way of promotion as a non-executive police officer, respectively. As I noted earlier, the bill also makes amendments to schedule 2 to the Police Regulation 2015. The Police Regulation 2015 is there to support the operation of the amended Police Act 1990. The changes to the schedule provide that the new promotions process has the following elements:

- ... an eligibility criteria for participation in the process, being the completion of the required time at rank for the rank below the promotion rank, and the Commissioner being satisfied of the officer's suitability to participate in the process having made inquiries as to the officer's integrity (proposed clause 21) ...

- ... the successful completion of the rank-based assessment for the promotion rank to the Commissioner's satisfaction ...

- ... a decision about promotion must be based on the outcome of the assessment to determine the officer best suited to the requirements of the position where only an officer who meets the pre-established standards for the position may be appointed to the position ...



The changes also include a review process of promotion decisions and the processes that were involved. These legislative changes have been the subject of extensive consultation over a significant period. Many police officers around New South Wales have been keenly awaiting their introduction. The past 12 months have been an extremely testing time for NSW Police Force officers, who have had to face significant, complex challenges, and we are indebted to them for their service. I am sure the introduction of this legislation and its passage through the House will be some welcome good news. I thank all those who were part of the process, including the NSW Police Force, the Police Association of NSW and Elizabeth Broderick. The Opposition supports the legislation.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (15:43:42):** It is a pleasure to speak to the Police Amendment (Promotions) Bill 2020, which is before the House this afternoon. The amendments proposed in the bill build on changes introduced in this Parliament in 2013 that arose from a review conducted by the Hon. Lance Wright, QC, former president of the NSW Industrial Relations Commission. The bill gives effect to changes recommended in a promotions review undertaken by the Commissioner of Police in 2018-2019. The promotions review examined how the promotions system could be updated to meet the needs of a modern police force. The review was publicly released on 2 June 2019. In the 12 months since it was published, the NSW Police Force has implemented successfully all of the non-legislative recommendations in the report.

Importantly this bill gives effect to the legislative components of the commissioner's review. I join with the member who preceded me in this debate to also note the outstanding work being done by the New South Wales Commissioner of Police, Mr Fuller, in this very difficult time in the State—not only the work done by him but also by the organisation he leads, which is holding the State in good stead. The amending bill provides for promotions based on 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 they need to respond to emerging crime patterns and changing community needs.

Some elements of the current system will be retained following the implementation of the bill. For example, specialist positions will be retained and promotions will still be rank based. However the NSW Police Force will move to a more capability-focused and merit-based promotions system. Under the new arrangements officers will need to pre-qualify to apply for advertised positions at a particular rank. Pre-qualification will retain a requirement of a minimum number of years at the current rank, which is in line with the current system. Pre-qualification will still include a rank-based review to assess suitability for promotion based on capability requirements of a higher rank. Through the rank-based review officers demonstrate that they have technical skills and operational knowledge relevant to the promotion rank, and also undergo a management appraisal to objectively assess their suitability for promotion based on the capability requirements of that higher rank.

After pre-qualifying is implemented, the new promotions system will look more like the rest of the New South Wales public sector; that is to say, a vacant position will be advertised, all pre-qualified officers would be eligible to apply, officers' applications and assessments will be based on an assessment of the specific duties required for the advertised position and each individual officer's capability, experience and knowledge will be taken into consideration. The appointment decision will be based on objective assessment criteria that align with the pre-established standards for the position. The promotions review found that 90 per cent of police officers agreed or strongly agreed that the current promotions system needed reform. The review findings and recommendations are largely drawn from experiences and feedback of officers of the NSW Police Force as well as from the advice of senior leaders, the results of a survey, the relevant policies, and data of the NSW Police Force and academic literature, including best practice approaches to the key issues.

The New South Wales Police Association was consulted throughout the promotions review and undertook its own survey, which delivered results consistent with the previous NSW Police Force survey results. The surveys show there is near universal agreement on the NSW Police Force's needs having shifted significantly since the first promotions system was embedded in legislation. Since that time the needs of the New South Wales public sector also changed. The changes introduced by the bill will bring the NSW Police Force into line with the capability framework and recruitment processes of the Government Sector Employment Act 2013. Under the provisions of the bill the NSW Police Force will be able to identify the most suitable candidate for the position, regardless of gender, disability status, parent and caring responsibilities, full-time or part-time employment status and other considerations. That rings true in all sectors, not just in policing, so it is appropriate and commendable that the NSW Police Force is adapting its promotions system to keep the police force fit for purpose.

Having a police force that is fit for purpose will result in the very best officers being on the front line and the very best leaders being available to assist frontline police officers, who do a very difficult job day in and day out. I have no doubt that the new promotions system will back in and support police officers in their day-to-day functions. As a local member of Parliament I see the outstanding performance of police officers every day in the Seven Hills electorate, particularly in the case of the Blacktown Police Area Command leader, Commander

Stephen Egginton, who has been providing good policing work right across the length and breadth of the Seven Hills electorate. Recently the Blacktown Police Area Command engaged in high-visibility tasking throughout my electorate, which includes foot patrols as well as bicycle and vehicle patrols by general duties police officers and beat police.

The good work of the Blacktown Police Area Command includes involvement in Operation Kona, which is conducted every Thursday night in an effort to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour in areas such as the Westpoint Shopping Centre at Blacktown, and the Seven Hills CBD and railway areas. If possible, the Police Transport Command assists when requested to provide high-visibility policing in the Blacktown and Seven Hills train and bus interchanges as well as in surrounding areas. The Police Transport Command works in conjunction with Youth Off The Streets through regular interaction and participation with youth liaison officers, staff and others in attendance. Efforts made by local police officers in my electorate include responding to domestic violence [DV] offences. The Blacktown Police Area Command improvements have included increases of staff in the DV unit, which now consists of a sergeant, a domestic violence liaison officer and a number of domestic violence operatives. With the benefit of increases in staff, safety action meetings have commenced and recently have been run regularly to cover training topics such as legislative powers and investigative tools, which assists in gathering domestic violence evidence and improving the way in which the apprehended violence order [AVO] process is undertaken.

The implementation of a DV suspect target management plan assists in targeting repetitive DV offenders. A number of initiatives and operations have been conducted by the Blacktown Police Area Command, but there is no single effort that better connects the local community with policing than Coffee with a Cop, which is a bimonthly community meeting held at the Westpoint Shopping Centre. Local officers spend an hour or so in different cafes within the shopping centre to engage with members of the community over a coffee. One can imagine that this initiative promotes easy contact between the police and the community and emphasises that the police officers are approachable. It promotes strong bonds within the community and, by improving the relationship between local police officers and the community and consequently the quality of information, results in crime-fighting initiatives being improved and becoming more effective across the electorate.

Recently I had the pleasure of attending the opening of the \$2.1 million Wentworthville police station that is now operational and improving the quality of engagement between the Wentworthville community and its local police officers from the Parramatta Police Area Command. As the Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Justice, I am particularly pleased by the police station having been built right in the heart of the Seven Hills community. The new Wentworthville police station will increase and improve access by the police to the community to provide justice and safety in the local area. On behalf of the Government I am really proud to have delivered on this election commitment to the local Seven Hills community. The new Wentworthville police station is the sixth new police station opened by the New South Wales Government since the Liberal-Nationals Government was elected in March 2019. I know that the Commander of the Parramatta Police Area Command, Superintendent Julie Boon, is buoyed by both the accessibility of the police station to the local community and the capacity of the station to expand police responses to local crime and antisocial behaviour. [*Extension of time*]

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services, David Elliott, and the Commissioner of Police, Mick Fuller, attended last month to officially open the newly constructed Wentworthville police station. The New South Wales Government continues to deliver on its election commitment to invest in police station infrastructure to support the vital work of our police men and women right across the State. As I indicated previously, as part of its commitment to investing more than \$583 million to deliver 1,500 extra police over four years the Government has announced 76 extra police positions for the north-west metropolitan area, which encompasses the Seven Hills electorate.

The new police station at Wentworthville will give police in the Parramatta area the support and the drive they need to push down crime and keep the community safe. I am sure that all members will agree that we should be incredibly grateful for the sacrifices and service of the local police. We should acknowledge that sacrifice and service in the most effective and appropriate manner possible. That is what this bill sets out to do. This bill sets out an easy-to-understand and objectively assessable promotion system, which makes sure the very best of our officers can become leaders to assist those on the front line who do a tremendous job each and every day helping to protect our local community. I thank the Minister and his staff for their preparation of this bill. I commend the bill to the House and encourage my fellow members to support it.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:55:30):** I make a contribution in debate to the Police (Amendment) Promotions Bill 2020. The New South Wales Opposition supports the bill and its amendments. The bill addresses essential reforms in the promotions process for non-executive police officers to attain the rank of sergeant, inspector and superintendent. The proposed amendments intend to modernise the promotion process to best suit the needs of the NSW Police Force. Currently, the NSW Police Force uses promotion lists to determine

which officer should reach a higher rank. However, those lists result in officers being promoted to the next available opening at their rank rather than officers being promoted to a position appropriate to their unique professional skills.

The current system does not work for a modern law enforcement agency. In June 2018 New South Wales Police Commissioner Mick Fuller, APM, surveyed 3,500 police officers online. The results highlighted an overwhelming number of New South Wales police who believe that the promotion system requires reform. Commissioner Fuller has implemented the non-legislative recommendations from the Broderick review published in June 2019 titled *Review into the NSW Police Force Promotions System*. However, to allow the remaining recommendations to be implemented the Parliament must pass legislation allowing promotions to be made according to the merit of an officer for a particular position.

That process is in line with the Government sector employment framework. The promotion list system currently utilised by the NSW Police Force has served its purpose. It is no longer fit for the task of ensuring that an appropriate officer is promoted to the appropriate position. Specialist skills are required for many positions in a modern police force. It is inappropriate to promote an officer into a specialist position based purely on their ability to obtain a higher rank without regard to the unique skills and individual application that may be required. Police must be assigned based on their fitness for rank and their fitness for the job. By creating a two-stage scheme for attaining a higher rank, the NSW Police Force can ensure that officers appointed to higher ranks maintain the high standards required of them and the ability to protect our families, community and State.

These reforms also improve the provisional appointment of officers to specialist positions. Currently, officers may be provisionally appointed to a position with the requirement that they undertake further training to ensure that they are appropriately qualified. That process will be streamlined to ensure that if an officer completes the required training in the time set out they will be permanently appointed subject to satisfactory performance. Further, the Police (Amendment) Promotions Bill 2020 will establish new arrangements for officers to seek review of promotion decisions with which they disagree. A new review panel will be established to make determinations regarding promotion decisions. Officers will be able to seek a review of the promotion from the board. This is an important improvement to procedural fairness ensuring that officers can have confidence that promotion decisions are made fairly.

In the Prospect electorate police from the Blacktown, Cumberland and Fairfield police area commands are dedicated to our community safety and wellbeing. The police area commands in the Prospect electorate are committed to ensuring reduced violence, crime and fear in our community and successfully undertake that responsibility. Every day men and women of the NSW Police Force across the State, and in the Prospect electorate, risk their lives to ensure the safety of our families, friends and communities. Thus, we must be grateful to the New South Wales police and the police area commands for their continued sacrifice and commitment. The reforms before us today assist the NSW Police Force to effectively fulfil their duties and responsibilities to our community. These reforms will help to ensure that appropriate officers are promoted in our police area commands to continue to do their great work.

The provision of high-quality leaders within our police force is vital to its continued success. While 2020 has been a challenging year for us all, officers from all three police area commands within the Prospect electorate have also been working under challenging circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the recent New South Wales-Victorian border restrictions recent assignments have included being posted to monitor the New South Wales-Victorian border. It is critical we acknowledge that sacrifice. Many of our police officers are spending time away from their families and loved ones during this difficult time to ensure the safety of our communities. In times of crisis it is vital that our police have the appropriate local leadership to respond to these circumstances and command their fellow officers during operations. It is essential that the Parliament stands with and supports the sworn and unsworn members of the NSW Police Force.

Legislation governing the roles and procedures of the NSW Police Force must be kept up to date with the evolving nature of our law enforcement. We must be ready to implement legislation allowing promotions to be made according to the merits of individual officers for certain positions. Through consultation with our officers and the Police Association of NSW, reforms like the Police (Amendment) Promotions Bill 2020 can be made in a bipartisan manner that are beneficial to our officers in the NSW Police Force. I look forward to the Government also agreeing to the police association's campaign to increase New South Wales police pay rates and establish a fair pay deal for police on the front lines as they continue to protect and serve our community. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (16:02:07):** I speak in support of the Police (Amendment) Promotions Bill 2020. I thank the Minister for Police and Emergency Services for bringing the bill before the House. The amendments proposed in the bill build on changes introduced in 2013 that arose from a review conducted by Mr Lance Wright, QC, former president of the Industrial Relations Commission. The bill will give

effect to changes recommended in a promotions review undertaken by the police commissioner in 2018-2019. The police commissioner's promotions review looked at how the promotions system could be updated to meet the needs of a modern police force. The review was publicly released on 2 June 2019. I am pleased to note that in the 12 months since it was published the NSW Police Force has successfully implemented all of the non-legislative recommendations.

In addition, the promotion process includes robust and ongoing vetting to guard against the appointment or promotion of officers who have engaged in misconduct. All police officers are subject to independent oversight by the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission as well as the NSW Police Force internal complaints management and disciplinary arrangements as set out in part 8A of the Police Act 1990. Section 71 of the Police Act currently provides for two stages of integrity vetting. The bill will tighten the wording for the first stage of the integrity check to make it abundantly clear that officers must pass an initial integrity check before they can participate in a promotions process. The Act currently refers to checks before selecting a person to "complete" the process, which has the potential for the process to start, with vetting only occurring prior to the person being added to a promotions list. It is much better for the NSW Police Force, and the officer in question, that it does not commence the promotion process if there are any question marks concerning the conduct or integrity of the officer. If, after further investigation, those concerns are not upheld then the officer may be cleared to participate in the promotions process.

Section 71 already provides for a second-stage integrity check before an officer can be appointed to a promotion position. That ensures that any fresh concerns can be identified and addressed before the officer is promoted. That is not changed by the bill. The changes to section 71 carry forward the provisions that integrity checks may involve inquiries being made with the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, the Commander of the NSW Police Force Professional Standards Command or any other person the commissioner considers appropriate.

Stage A of the promotion process—the rank-based assessment at proposed clause 22 of the regulation—includes an individual management appraisal. This provides a further opportunity to raise any conduct or integrity concerns about an officer before they proceed too far down the promotions process. These processes and checks reduce the risk of an officer being promoted if there are conduct or integrity concerns. If any misconduct concerns emerge regarding an officer, the existing provisions in part 8A of the Police Act enable commissioners to take appropriate steps. Ultimately, an officer may be discharged or subject to criminal charges. The integrity checking arrangements in the bill and regulation ensure that the promotion process operates as intended and allows all applicants to be considered on their merits, subject to appropriate integrity and conduct vetting. In that way, the NSW Police Force maintains high standards of integrity for its future leaders.

The Camden local government area has been identified as a major growth centre as part of the New South Wales Government's south-west priority growth strategy, and as such is going through rapid expansion. The local government area has the fastest growing population in the State. The total population for the Camden Police Area Command stands at approximately 160,000. The Camden Police Area Command covers an area of approximately 2,800 square kilometres, with over 52 suburbs, rural localities and townships. The Hume Police District includes stations at Narellan, Picton and The Oaks. The commander is Superintendent Paul Fuller. The Camden Police Area Command continues to host a Community Safety Precinct Committee meeting three times a year, which is well supported by local government, community interest groups, business leaders and shopping centre management teams from both local government areas. Due to COVID-19, meetings have been promoted and held via social media platforms.

The Camden Police Area Command also participates in liquor accord meetings and attends the Camden and Wollondilly meetings three to four times per year. The meetings are attended by licensees and managers from every licensed venue in each local government area. They allow good relationships to form between police and licensees, thereby helping to achieve a safe environment for the public by reducing alcohol-related crime. The Camden Liquor Accord is still in discussions about a "ban from one, ban from all" approach to show a united front and minimise harm in licensed venues. The police area command also participates in school principal forums. Those are hosted twice a year and are well supported by principals from both primary and secondary schools across both local government areas. The forums are attended by the police area command commander, crime manager, crime coordinator and youth liaison officer. Representatives from council and youth organisations are also in attendance. The meetings facilitate a good exchange of information on current issues facing schools and youth.

The Camden Police Area Command also participates in youth action meetings and has worked to develop responses to issues regarding youth, mental health and missing persons. The crime manager and youth officer have engaged with Youth Command and Campbelltown City Police Area Command to utilise the youth action meetings program to engage external agencies and commence plans for several repeat offenders. Youth action

meetings provide a coordinated approach to address the needs of 10- to 17-year-olds who are at risk of becoming either a victim of crime or an offender. Youth action meetings involve key government and non-government agencies coming together on a monthly basis to identify the risks and develop action plans to help identified young persons and reduce their risks. The coordinated approach will allow for a better allocation of resources, tangible and measurable outcomes, and reduce the risk of organisations and service providers duplicating responses to the needs of young people.

Finally, domestic violence prevention is another area of great importance that the Camden Police Area Command participates in. It is unfortunate that, like area commands in many other parts of New South Wales, too much of its time is spent responding to domestic violence. The police area command is strongly involved with the Camden Wollondilly Domestic Violence Committee and the annual Say No 2 DV breakfasts. There is always a strong police presence at those breakfasts. I thank all of the police officers in the Camden Police Area Command and the Hume Police District for the work they do, the sacrifices they make and for putting their lives on the line for the people of our community. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (16:11:51):** The NSW Police Force is Australia's oldest police force and has a strong history and tradition. The vast majority of members, police officers and non-police officers alike have a deep commitment to the force, their work and to the successful future of the organisation. Since it first began as a force largely made up of convicts, known as the Night Watch, the NSW Police Force has evolved into a sophisticated organisation. The NSW Police Force is currently undergoing a transition to ensure that it has the necessary capability to meet the ongoing needs of the New South Wales community, while also meeting the emerging challenges unique to twenty-first-century policing. In order to achieve this, the NSW Police Force requires a workforce that is agile, skilled, flexible and appropriately responsive. It must attract a breadth of talent and its people must reflect the diversity of the Australian community.

I am so proud to have in my electorate the world-class New South Wales Police Force Academy, which is training recruits to be future leaders and inspiring those future leaders to upskill and be the best they can be. The force requires leaders who have the skills and abilities to bring out the best in their teams, including being inclusive and creating an environment where everyone is valued, respected and has equal access to opportunities to thrive. The introduction of the Police Amendment (Promotions) Bill 2020 provides the legislative and regulatory changes needed to provide for a modern, merit-based promotions scheme for non-executive police officers—that is, sergeants, inspectors and superintendents. The proposed new promotions system ensures that all officers have equal access to promotional opportunities regardless of where they live or serve. It also allows applicants to demonstrate the technical, operational and interpersonal skills they have developed across a range of police settings—whether in the country, the city or the suburbs.

The amendments in the bill ensure that the promotions system is fair to all police, including those who work in remote or rural areas who may not have the visibility of their city counterparts. Rural crime costs millions of dollars every year. Theft of livestock, produce and equipment, illegal shooting, trespassing and other crimes affect people's livelihoods and wellbeing. Many farms run on a very slim margin, which has been made worse by the drought and the impact of COVID-19 on the economy. Even one incident of stock theft can be financially devastating. Responding to and preventing rural crime is a key goal of the Government and our hardworking police. The Rural Crime Prevention Team has four zones across New South Wales. Currently the team has 52 members. Each Rural Crime Prevention Team zone comprises a detective sergeant and two investigators.

In July 2019 the Liberal-Nationals Government announced the deployment of a further six rural crime investigator positions to investigate illegal trespass and stock theft. The six new rural crime investigator positions were created in the police districts of Chifley at Bathurst Police Station, Murrumbidgee at Griffith Police Station, Central North at Bourke Police Station and the Hume at Goulburn Police Station plus two positions in Richmond police district based at the Casino Police Station. From the North Coast to the west and down to the southern border, it is fantastic to have these additional officers on board. Why do I mention this? There are unique policing skills developed in the country to deal with rural crime and the needs of rural communities, and there are unique skills needed in urban policing. These important and unique skills will feed into the assessment of an officer for promotion.

I focus for a moment on our rural and regional policing. I am proud to be a part of a government that ensures that police have the powers they need to do their job, including consideration of the particular needs of those serving in regional New South Wales. Under the changes made to the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002, which commenced in September 2018, an owner of stock or a police officer can apply to the Local Court for what is known as a stock mustering order where it is impractical to seek permission to enter a property and recover livestock. It also applies where a landowner unreasonably refuses to give permission to enter and recover stock. Those measures ensure that the NSW Police Force and rural and regional communities have the support needed to appropriately respond to crime in the bush. These types of roles require specialist

skills. The opportunities and skills gained in the police regions are equally valued and rewarded by the new promotions system delivered in the bill.

The NSW Police Force 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 modern law enforcement agencies need to respond. It must also recognise the breadth of tasks senior police now undertake. Many police officers enjoy working in the regions. The proposed new promotions system ensures that all officers have equal access to promotional opportunities, regardless of where they live or serve. It also allows applicants to demonstrate the technical, operational and interpersonal skills they have developed across a range of police settings, whether they are in the country, the city or the suburbs.

The NSW Police Force recognised that the promotions system needed to change to meet the needs of a modern police force. That was reflected in the feedback from officers and from the Police Association of NSW, which represents the interests of around 16,500 members, covering all ranks of sworn police officers in all regions of New South Wales. In 2018 a review was commenced to identify how the NSW Police Force promotions system could be updated to meet these needs. The review looked at the current promotions process and issues that might impact career progression in the NSW Police Force. The promotions review sought feedback from almost 3,500 officers through an online survey, personal interviews and workshops. An overwhelming 90 per cent of police officers who responded to the survey strongly agreed with the statement that "the promotions system needs reform". Overwhelmingly, feedback showed there was internal support for greater development opportunities, improved equity with regard to promotions and an overhaul of the promotions process.

This reform gives the NSW Police Force the opportunity to build emerging leaders at rank, with greater emphasis on experience, including time at rank and relieving duties, performance, ability and leadership capabilities, rather than relying on the promotions system as the only pathway to leadership. The NSW Police Force has been communicating with officers about the forthcoming changes so that staff are ready for them. Based on feedback, the vast majority of police officers want this change and support a move away from promotions lists. The bill recognises the extraordinary contribution police in the country and in the city make to their communities. The amendments in the bill provide for an equitable and fair promotions system by recognising the variety of skills and attributes police possess across this great State. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:20:38):** I support the Police Amendment (Promotions) Bill 2020. As many of my colleagues have said, the bill amends the Police Act 1990 and the Police Regulation 2015 and is designed to update and modernise the promotions process within the NSW Police Force. The key component of the bill is to move from a seniority-based promotions list to a merit-based process. I will talk more about the proposal to shift to a merit-based promotions system that will apply to non-executive officer positions of the rank of sergeant, inspector and superintendent. These amendments will bring the bulk of promotions within the force into line with the existing merit-based processes in the New South Wales government frameworks. The bill and regulation are consistent with the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 specifically as the Act establishes the framework for merit-based appointments in New South Wales.

No longer will appointments be based purely on the person at the top of the list of a rank. Candidates will now be required to demonstrate that they are an appropriate fit for the position being advertised and that they have the appropriate skills for the role. Previous speakers have spoken about the importance of ensuring the right person is chosen for the right job, has the technical and interpersonal skills, has a good understanding of the role and has a capacity to fulfil the role. The key element of the bill recognises that positions are increasingly more specialised. Specialist skills are often required in order for an applicant to be suitable for a role and many other technicalities may be involved. Because of the complexity of the NSW Police Force, a person may be better suited to a particular position. That is not to say they are not capable of a leadership role but they may not be best suited to a specific leadership role. That is where merit-based selection is very important.

The bill allows the Commissioner of Police to appoint an officer to act in a vacant non-executive position or where the holder of the position is suspended, sick or absent for a period of one year. That is important because at times the commissioner—whose job it is to ensure the police force is fully functioning—will have to make an immediate decision. It is an element of the trust and respect that is placed in the commissioner and it shows faith in the officer who is to be placed in a position for up to a year. It is important not to tie the hands of those, such as heads of organisations, who are entrusted to look after us. We have to give them the opportunity to make a decision and with that comes a responsibility. As with any promotion position, the Commissioner of Police is required to carry out integrity checks.

The bill is the result of an extensive process, a review and a lot of consultation. I have been critical of the Government in the past for not consulting adequately. In this case, it seems that the consultation was adequate. The Government spoke to the stakeholders, the Police Association of NSW, its members and others. Where credit is due, it should be given. I commend the Government for including everybody in the process. As the Minister noted, it is encouraging that the core elements of the bill, specifically improving the promotions system and a move to greater equity, has broad-based support within the force.

This is a way of creating a more equitable process. In the long run not only will applicants meet the requirements for the local community but also there will be more opportunities for people who may not have been in the police force for as long. It does not necessarily just come down to whoever has served for the longest. That is certainly not a criticism of people who have served for a long period. There has to be a place for them as well. But if it is simply because "your turn" has come up and you get the next promotion, I do not necessarily think that is the right way to go. In the past people may have been promoted to positions for a particular reason, not necessarily because of merit, and that is a real worry. The new system motivates people to take on new responsibilities and to start thinking about a leadership pathway. It allows somebody to have a decent mentor and learn a great deal more instead of, for example, just sitting in the one spot for 20 years and then being promoted. People talk about 20 years' experience but more often than not that means 20 years of the same experience. You want 20 years of varied experience.

When the education system moved towards merit-based selection, I benefited from that. I became a principal at the age of 33. If it was based on just years of service then I do not think I would have been given that position. I went to a place that I knew would work really well for me. I had the skill subset that was required. I was one of so many who, because of the merit selection process, was given that opportunity. There is a really good combination there. It means people do not give up. They know they can actually make a contribution. I put on the record my admiration for and thanks to the NSW Police Force. The officers and non-officers who serve do so incredibly well. It is a very tough job. At times they face the worst of our society. They have to get up every day and know they are putting their lives at risk. They are doing everything they can to try to protect us as a community. We do not speak often enough or highly enough of the work they do. We do not encourage enough people to join the police force either. We could do more to encourage people to join the police force because that is what makes our community better.

I thank them for all the work they do. At any time of emergency, they are there. They do not say it is too wet, too cold or too hot. They are there. Particularly during the time of the pandemic they have a difficult task. They have to do things that could be quite difficult and they are doing them really well. I particularly thank and acknowledge my local police area commands of Campsie and Bankstown. I do an incredible amount of work with them and see firsthand what they do. Their involvement in the community is exceptional. One of the proudest moments I had was last year when one of my former students whose dream was to become a police officer made it into the Goulburn police academy. I wish him all the very best. I commend the bill to the House.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Lakemba. That was a lovely note on which to finish.

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (16:27:56):** I speak in support of the Police Amendment (Promotions) Bill 2020. I acknowledge my local police area command [PAC] and Superintendent Jason Box, who is doing a fantastic job in the Sutherland PAC. I have a lot to do with the police in my electorate, who are doing a fantastic job. We have implemented more policing on foot and bicycle patrols around my electorate, which are working very well at keeping people calm and secure. The amendments proposed in the bill build on changes introduced in 2013 that arose from a review conducted by the Hon. Lance Wright, QC, former president of the Industrial Relations Commission.

The bill gives effect to changes recommended in a promotions review undertaken by the Commissioner of Police Mick Fuller, APM, in 2018-2019, which looked at how the promotions system could be updated to meet the needs of a modern police force. The review was publicly released on 2 June 2019. I am very pleased to note that in the 12 months since it was published the NSW Police Force has successfully implemented all of its non-legislative recommendations. The effective, responsible and inclusive promotion of police officers is a key duty of the commissioner. I applaud his initiative in this process of improvement.

The amendments proposed in the bill ensure that the NSW Police Force has a promotions system for non-executive police officers that is based on a more modern process than the previous ranked-list process, which other contributors to the debate have mentioned. The current promotion list system has served its purpose and is no longer fit for a diverse and specialised police force. The needs of the NSW Police Force have shifted significantly since 2002 when the promotion list legislation first came into force. The current system involved those at the top of the list being offered a vacant job. If they rejected it, the job was offered to the next person on the list and so forth. Clearly this does not ensure that an officer with a particular skill set can be promoted into a role rather than an officer of similar experience, but with different skills who might not even want it. The old

system promoted on rank only, not on a modern and merit-based, fit-for-purpose assessment against the actual role to be performed by that officer and the skills they bring to that role.

Under the system being proposed in this bill, a senior officer must now be a professional leader who is technically proficient and can mentor others, problem-solve and communicate with both junior officers and the community in an effective and sophisticated manner. Repealing the current provisions will enable a promotions system that is more flexible, more balanced and more fair. The proposed model has been developed in agreement with the Police Association of NSW, which has been in exhaustive consultation with the NSW Police Force. The proposed amendments are the result of this consultation, and reflect a balanced and well-negotiated model.

Some aspects of the current system will still apply. For example, the pre-qualification to apply for advertised positions will retain the requirement for a minimum number of years at current rank plus a rank-based review to assess an officer's suitability to be promoted to the higher rank. We are therefore not throwing the baby out with the bathwater or changing things for change's sake. We are also improving the system to ensure women, those from a diverse background or those with parenting or caring responsibilities have equal access to the promotions system once they have met the minimum requirements.

The NSW Police Force is no different from other employers of choice. It wants—and the people of New South Wales need—the best person for the job. The bill will ensure that there is no disadvantage to these potential police leaders. Under the provisions of the bill the NSW Police Force is able to identify the most suitable candidate for the position. As I said at the beginning of my contribution, the New South Wales police commissioner and the Government are not afraid of making changes to ensure we have the best police force possible. This bill takes the correct step forward.

Within the Heathcote electorate the Sutherland Shire Police Area Command [PAC] community engagement activities are vast. The team is headed by Mary, who is fantastic at public and community activities. Recent and upcoming community engagement events include preschool visits by youth officers, averaging one per week. There were none early in the year due to COVID, but they are returning to previous practice at centres that are happy to have external visitors. Walk the Walls is an initiative with Sutherland Shire Council [SSC]. That program involves walls being legally painted by street artists and involves local youth. It last took place in November 2019. A similar project was planned for Cronulla and its redevelopment through the Cronulla Chamber of Commerce and SSC. Plans have been placed on hold due to COVID and a change of personnel at Sutherland Shire Council.

There are seven planned community engagements, two per month, throughout the PAC in different suburbs. Each engagement will be advertised on Facebook and the local MPs and council will be invited. The crime prevention officer has locked in two dates in September, but nothing prior to COVID. The Next of Kin program is being coordinated by visiting retirement villages. A total of 20 premises have been visited and over 100 new registrations have been created. Crime prevention officers have also taken on the role and administer the program. Facebook is regularly maintained with community messages on personal safety, scams, traffic awareness and safety tips, good arrests by Sutherland PAC and requests for community assistance in relation to ongoing local crime.

In relation to the liquor accord, the PAC has been working with all licensed premises to reduce their classifications. As a result of targeted action, the PAC is now on track to meet its business plan targets. There has been action to reduce prohibited drugs. As a part of the PAC ongoing commitment to reduce the prevalence of prohibited drugs within the local area and to reduce the risk of harm to individuals in the community, strike forces Mathison, Oberton, Belowrie, Haywood, Drees, Redbean, Mookoo and Fitzsimmons have all been proactively targeting the supply of methamphetamine, cocaine and heroin in my local area. I congratulate my local police. I am proud of the police commissioner and Minister for taking this forward and of the work that has been done in this space. It will make the NSW Police Force one of the most modern and progressive police forces in the world. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (16:36:37):** I add my voice to the chorus of those calling for reform to the current promotions system within the NSW Police Force. The Police Amendment (Promotions) Bill 2020 is a response to the overwhelming majority of police officers surveyed who believe the promotions system must be overhauled and who have indicated it is no longer fit for purpose. The NSW Police Force is constantly evolving to change with the times and better reflect the community it serves. The bill is simply the next step in this evolution of enabling our officers to get their vital work done while serving the community and finding fulfilment in their careers. Our police officers are an incredibly important part of our communities. They are on the front line of society's fringes, working hard to make our lives safer and facing increasing scrutiny.

I have had the pleasure of being a mentor in the Lead 2 Win program in the Riverina Police District, which is working to empower female police officers as they move into leadership roles. This mentoring program is



helping women to support one another through their careers in law enforcement and to share experiences and advice. At their most recent gathering guest speaker former superintendent Deb Wallace shared her advice and experiences of her long and illustrious career with the New South Wales police. When Ms Wallace joined the force it was still expected that female officers would mark their reports with a clear "F", so supervising officers would know the gender of the author. This antiquated expectation was rightfully questioned by the young recruit, who refused to follow this practice until it was stopped. While in retrospect this was clearly an antiquated and ineffective practice, at the time it was simply how things were done.

Ms Wallace's time in the NSW Police Force was marked by both tragedy and triumph. It was a young Constable Wallace who accompanied detectives to inform Grace and Garry Lynch that their daughter Anita Cobby had been violently tortured and murdered, and who re-enacted the young nurse's final journey, leading to a break in the case. It was Detective Superintendent Deb Wallace who became the first female head of the New South Wales State Crime Command Gang Squad. Having the privilege to meet Deb Wallace and hear her address to young female officers emphasises to me that promotions in the police force need to operate on a system of personal interest in a role, the opportunity for mentorship and seeking the right candidate for positions, not simply the next in line as the current arrangements function. If this does not happen, then the talents of individuals who can have an enormous positive impact may not be fully recognised.

Seniority is not always an indication of suitability for a role. While it must be considered, the current structure of positions being systematically offered to a ranked promotions list is not effective and does not always mean that people find their place in the police force. The bill introduces a system where vacant positions are advertised and all pre-qualified officers are eligible to apply, meaning the most suitable candidate can be found for a role and vocation. Each individual officer's capability, experience and knowledge will be considered through objective assessment criteria. As Ms Wallace discussed with young officers, finding a niche within the force can be a matter of being in the right place at the right time. In the same vein, officers should be able to pursue promotions in areas they are passionate about without always having to be next on the list. The bill has the support of the Police Association of NSW, which represents the interests of 16,500 members, covering all ranks of sworn officers in New South Wales.

In 2018 a review was commenced to identify how the NSW Police Force promotions system could be updated to meet the needs of our officers. The review looked at the current promotions process and issues that might impact career progression in the NSW Police Force. The promotions review sought feedback from almost 3,500 officers through an online survey, interviews and workshops. Overwhelmingly, the feedback showed that there was internal support for greater development opportunities, greater equity with regard to promotions and an overhaul of the promotions process. Cementing that need was a survey undertaken by the police association that delivered results consistent with the commissioner's review. The promotions review made 30 recommendations. They included the introduction of a new, shorter promotions process that focuses on performance, experience and achievements, and workplace feedback, which is based on the Government Sector Employment Act 2013; equitable training and leadership opportunities for all officers, regardless of their gender, geographic location and flexible working arrangements; stronger mechanisms to develop, mentor and sponsor officers; greater flexibility for promotion and development across a wider range of roles; and a visible commitment from all senior officers to a zero-tolerance approach to sexism and sexual harassment within the force.

The Police Amendment (Promotions) Bill 2020 will mean that vacant positions are filled by the person who has, in the opinion of the commissioner, the greatest merit as determined in accordance with the regulations, meaning that merit-based appointment is enshrined in legislation. The amendments to the bill have been developed with the agreement of the Police Association of NSW, which has been in exhaustive consultation with the NSW Police Force. The NSW Police Force has already been preparing for these changes with regular internal updates to the force so that officers who are preparing for promotions are ready for the changes. Since the publication of the promotions review the NSW Police Force has successfully implemented all the non-legislative recommendations. This has improved the leadership opportunities for all employees. The promotions process will now be shortened and conducted more frequently, with rank-based assessments continuing so that officers can determine for themselves when it is right for them to commence their promotion journey.

The bill moves the NSW Police Force away from a promotions system for police officers that is based on ranked lists and towards a merit-based promotions system consistent with the recent amendment made to the Police Act 1990 by the Government Sector Employment Legislation Amendment Act 2016. It is vital that our police officers experience job satisfaction and feel recognised and rewarded for their service, particularly given the extraordinary tasks that they have been asked to complete this year. Those tasks have ranged from enforcing border closures, which have not been seen for a century, to checking to see whether businesses are complying with COVID safety plans. Prior to 2020, most officers would not have envisaged undertaking these measures which have been vital in protecting public health.

Rarely does anyone start a career with an accurate idea of where it will take them. Would retired Detective Superintendent Deb Wallace have foreseen playing a key role in one of the most disturbing murder cases that shaped our truth in sentencing laws? Where will the young women in the Riverina Police District Lead 2 Win program end up? What mark will they make on law and order in New South Wales? It is impossible to know, but we can be certain that those extraordinary people need our support, respect and the correct laws to do their job. They need a promotions system that supports, encourages and rewards them. On behalf of the people of the electorate of Cootamundra, I thank the police officers across the four districts that serve our electorate—Chifley, Hume, Riverina and Murrumbidgee. I often use the term "unerring admiration" to describe the way that our people feel about the courage that they demonstrate to keep us all safe. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:46:28):** I speak in support of the Police Amendment (Promotions) Bill 2020. I thank the men and women of the NSW Police Force and in particular those stationed at the Manning-Great Lakes command. The objects of the bill are to amend the Police Act 1990 and the Police Regulation 2015 to modernise the promotions process for non-executive police officers to the ranks of sergeant, inspector and superintendent by replacing the promotion lists process with a merit-based one; make amendments consequential on the establishment of the new process; and make other savings and transitional provisions.

When I joined the NSW Police Force, a system of seniority was purely, absolutely and rigidly adhered to. When you joined you got a number, and that number stayed with you for your entire career. At every station there was a seniority book. It was one of those books where you could take pages out and put new pages in. Every day, almost without exception, in every station throughout New South Wales, someone of about the rank of senior sergeant would get out his pen and ruler. He would take a police magazine or gazette and, with a smile, strike a line through the name of anyone who had retired, because that meant that he had gone one step higher. If anyone died he showed almost a hint of glee as he ruled out another person from the ranks. Year by year up the ranks people would go.

In my day you would go in as a constable. At around the five-year mark you were allowed to do the constable first class exam. At around the 10-year mark you would automatically become a senior constable and at around the 15-year mark you would be allowed to take the sergeant's exam. Under that system, it did not matter how wonderful a police officer you were or how ingenious your methods. It also did not matter how bad you were—and in my day there were some bad ones. I do not mean they were corrupt; I just mean there were some really dumb police. No matter whether you were good or bad, you would rise up through the ranks. Some officers rose to positions that far exceeded their ability. That system was finally removed and replaced by a merit-based system. However, that opened the door for nepotism and there was often a lot of questioning of promotions. A certain number of people would apply for a position, someone would get it, and those who were unsuccessful would then appeal the decision, which could take months. As a result, often when a position became vacant it was temporarily filled or an officer from another station or another command was awarded it. Somebody would appeal that decision and then suddenly you would be in a state of inertia where things did not run as optimally as possible.

The bill proposes a new system, and I hope and trust that it will fix the problems that have been identified. The current police officer promotions list system is no longer fit for purpose. The 2019 review into the NSW Police Force promotions system found that 90 per cent of police officers agreed or strongly agreed that the current system needed reform. The bill will ensure that promoted police officers have the best fit of knowledge, experience, capabilities and attributes for a specific role. The police force has communicated with officers and the Police Association of NSW regarding the forthcoming changes. I understand that the police association is supportive of the changes. As with any organisation, it is crucial that the rank and file—in this case, the men and women of the NSW Police Force—have been fully consulted on and are agreeable to the changes. Police officers who are already on an existing promotions list will have to be transitioned. They have been told about that. The police force has tried to minimise the number of officers affected by the changeover by reducing the number of new lists created and by letting officers on existing lists know up front that changes have been foreshadowed.

When considering my contribution to this debate I decided to go straight to the authority, so I searched the *Hansard* and found the Minister's second reading speech. I will draw on some of his comments. He described the bill as giving effect to a merit-based and modern promotions system for non-executive police officers—that is, sergeants, inspectors and superintendents. He said that the promotions would be based on the merit of a candidate and matched to an advertised position, as occurs in the broader public sector, rather than officers being allocated using a promotions list for the next available vacancy. I do not know if everyone has noticed, but New South Wales is a big place. The next officer on the list could be from Tweed Heads but the vacancy could be at Broken Hill. That could mean the officer is not fit for purpose. Or maybe they do not want to move, so the opportunity then tumbles down to the next person. That is obviously not the best way to go and it is why the changes are being made.

The Minister also said that bill has been introduced following a July 2019 promotions review conducted by former Australian Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick, AO, at the request of police commissioner Michael Fuller, APM. The promotions review consulted 3,500 members of the Police Force and examined the current promotions process and potential obstacles to women's career progression in the police. I pause there to say that Chief Inspector Christine George at the Manning-Great Lakes command does an outstanding job. She is highly regarded not only by the police hierarchy and the men and women of the police force at the Manning-Great Lakes command but also by all of the community. There is a policewoman going above and beyond the call of duty to deal with matters for the entire community. I have been out when there has been, for example, a natural disaster. Christine George was not on duty but came out to help with that natural disaster a couple of years ago. I thought I would mention what an outstanding job she is doing. [*Extension of time*]

In his second reading speech, the Minister—who is the font of all knowledge when it comes to policing in New South Wales—stated that while the non-legislative recommendations of the promotions review have already been implemented, the bill now enacts a recommendation that a merit-based recruitment process be adopted. He further noted that the reformed promotions process has been developed in agreement with the Police Association of NSW, which I spoke of a little earlier. Association president Tony King is doing an outstanding job. There were some concerns before he took on that position, but I think all of those concerns have been allayed. He is doing an outstanding job for the rank and file police. This bill has the support of the Police Association and the broad support of most of the NSW Police Force. The Minister described how the process has been modified. He said:

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.

That is one of the things this bill does and I think it is absolutely fantastic. I spoke about the problems in the old system; hopefully this new system will be appreciated by the police and will work in a fair and just way for the officers. I spoke of the Manning-Great Lakes command; I have to say that it is the foremost command in regional New South Wales and is kicking goals by achieving its key performance indicators. There is a new \$18 million police station; what a great place to work and what a wonderful command. Superintendent Chris Schilt has been there for several months now and he is doing a fantastic job. Chris came to us from Goulburn and took the place of a man giant, Shane Cribb—a monster of a man, a great man and a fantastic footballer when he was younger. After being trained so well by me and some of the others in the community, Shane has been transferred to Port Macquarie. We trained Peter McKenna, who is a superintendent now out at Dubbo. We have also trained—I know this bloke will love me saying it—Peter Thurtell, who is assistant commissioner in Sydney. He is bringing practical solutions from the regional area of Manning-Great Lakes, taking them down to Sydney and doing an outstanding job there. I would like to look next at some of the programs that have been introduced.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Public Interest Debate*

## **COVID-19 AND HEALTHCARE WORKERS**

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (17:00:21):** I move:

That this House acknowledges the ongoing efforts of our frontline health workers throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and recognises the invaluable contributions of the entire health system in New South Wales.

On any one day in New South Wales more than 140,000 staff are working in the New South Wales health system, with a budget that is closing in on about 40 per cent of the entire State budget. It is those 140,000 staff on the front line who have made such a difference to our State in the past nearly nine months. It was late January, as I recollect, when we first heard of cases in New South Wales. Victoria had a case of COVID and then we had four cases: three men and one 21-year-old woman, all in January. As the COVID issue closed in on us in New South Wales, we realised that we would have to take major steps and work with our staff to ensure that absolutely everybody was equipped to deal with what could come at us. In Wuhan in China's Hubei province, we were seeing various messages. We knew and appreciated there was a huge challenge in the People's Republic of China, but we did not quite understand some of the messaging, particularly whether there was transmission from human to human. But we had to operate on that basis—on the assumption—and we moved very quickly.

I thank first of all the very senior staff who have been so involved in making sure that our State was well equipped. I particularly thank Secretary Elizabeth Koff and Deputy Secretary Susan Pearce. In prior days Susan Pearce was very actively involved—often at two o'clock or three o'clock in the morning, making arrangements for ambulances to be redirected. That was in the normal days. During this period she has been involved at the State emergency headquarters at Homebush on a daily basis. I thank Kerry Chant. No description could be possible

other than to say that, in my view, she is far and away the most outstanding chief health officer in the country. In nine months she has never stopped working; she has just kept at it.

We have had to force her to take even half a day off to go and look after herself for a bit. She has been there every day and has been always available and always supportive of her very extensive team. I thank the entire team. I perhaps should not name everybody, but Michelle Cretikos works very closely with her. They are an incredible team and have done incredible work in the past nine months. I thank everybody at the State Emergency Operations Centre, who have also been at the front line. For those who have not visited the centre, it has the most amazing facilities where we have every possible agency, including the Australian Defence Force and the police. I thank Deputy Commissioner Worboys, Assistant Commissioner Joe Cassar and Commissioner Mick Fuller for working with our frontline health staff and all of the other government and non-government organisations in the State emergency headquarters.

I thank the contact tracing team on doing an amazing job. No matter what time of the day or night I go to the fifth floor of the NSW Health headquarters in Christie Street, St Leonards, massive teams are working to support their frontline staff by adequately tracing a contact. I thank HealthShare NSW—the cleaners, the food providers, the porters and the linen services. All of those services are crucial in a pandemic. I particularly thank Gerard Hayes and his team at the Health Services Union who created ideas along the way to make sure that frontline staff were well looked after. I thank the nurses, midwives, doctors, allied health professionals and administrative staff. I also thank NSW Health Pathology and the private pathology services that have come on board and worked with us.

At any stage our nurses and midwives have a tough time in dealing with all of the issues faced in our hospitals. For example, it was only last week that Bec Davis was assaulted at the emergency department at Westmead Hospital in the most vile way by somebody who has since been charged. If he is found guilty he deserves the book to be thrown at him; the assault on Bec was appalling. I spoke to Bec. She is a quietly spoken, committed nurse—typical of the people on the front line for the past nine months of COVID-19. We have a staff of 140,000 odd, each year three million people come through our emergency departments and we have 1.9 million patients. Our nurses, doctors, medical staff and allied health staff have had to respond to the messages from the centre. I also thank our 15 local health districts and each of the executives—the board chairs and board members—for supporting their frontline health staff.

I thank Teresa Anderson at the Sydney Local Health District who set up our health hotel. Currently we have roughly 17 police hotels and another four health hotels. The police hotels are managed by the police and security. In New South Wales if a person gets sick—a bit different to other States—gets COVID-19 or has mental health issues he or she does not go to a police hotel. If in the early stages they did, they were transferred to the health hotels to be looked after by our frontline health staff. Chief executive officer Teresa Anderson has done a fantastic job on that front. Similarly, I thank Deb Wilcox at the Northern Sydney Local Health District, each of the chief executives and all the frontline staff at every one of those facilities. I do not think one bad word can be said against any of our staff; they have been extraordinary. I also include the private health staff who have joined us in this battle, this war, that we have been waging now for nine months. It was during the worst days, the dark days, that the private hospitals came on board and their nurses and doctors were doing similar things. [*Extension of time.*]

The nurses, doctors and other frontline staff were as scared as every one of us. I was certainly scared but they were the ones on the front line. I had regular conversations with various staff who knew the dangers but were also worried by what they did not know about this terrible virus. Nevertheless they still showed up to work, day after day, even in the early phase when we were worried whether we had enough personal protection equipment. People were also still working when we were uncertain whether we could get enough reagents for the pathology testing. Other States and Territories were having similar issues and we were all working together. At one stage one State, which I will not name, was down to two days with reagents for testing. No-one in the health team made any negatives comments about the other States because we all worked together. Every single nurse, doctor, cleaner and person on the front line knew they were leading us in battle to keep the rest of the community safe.

I will never be able to thank all of the frontline health staff. There are not enough words to thank them because the front line was a long, deep line—all the way from Secretary Elizabeth Koff to the Chief Health Officer, the nurses, doctors, allied health staff and cleaners. Gerard Hayes went to the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital when we celebrated International Cleaners Day. We heard the cleaners speak about being on the front line and knowing the dangers but they were stepping up to make sure that our hospitals were kept particularly clean and doing all those extra procedures in our war against COVID-19. There is nothing more any of us can say other than to send the biggest thankyou to all of our frontline staff. I hope they realise that the New South Wales Parliament in a bipartisan way is absolutely behind NSW Health staff, the private health staff who supported us and all of the

teams from all of the other government agencies that came in to help us fight in this terrible war against this vile virus.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (17:10:05):** I thank the Minister for his motion, which the Opposition supports, but I wish to make a small amendment to it. I move:

That the motion be amended by adding the following after "New South Wales":

"And calls on the Government to reverse its decision to cut the pay of frontline health workers across New South Wales."

Towards the end of January the Minister for Health and Medical Research informed the Opposition that New South Wales was starting to get COVID-19 cases. At that time when I listened to the Minister for Health and Medical Research and to Dr Kerry Chant I never thought that we would be waging a war for so long. Like the Minister I want to personally thank the thousands of frontline nurses, doctors, health workers, allied health professionals and contact tracers to whom the Minister referred. They have done an outstanding job and we would not be in the position that we are in today without their outstanding work.

The Minister is correct. I have spoken to frontline health workers who over the past nine months have been doing their job in the face of the unknown. They did not know how bad this transmission would be or how easily it could be caught. There were also challenges with personal protective equipment. But they turned up to work day in, day out. Dr Kerry Chant could easily become this year's New South Wales Citizen of the Year. She has done an outstanding job. On behalf of the Opposition I thank her for her leadership.

I also thank Elizabeth Koff and other senior staff in NSW Health. I thank all local area health districts across the State, including chief executive officer Margot Mains of the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, who the Minister knows very well. I thank Dennis King who has provided strong leadership to our district. Recently, with the member for the Blue Mountains, I visited the Hazelbrook General Practice. It was a testing centre. We spoke to doctors who have been working long shifts under very difficult circumstances to try to contain this virus. They have done an outstanding job. At Concord Hospital I met a nurse named Alison—I am sure the Minister has heard many similar stories—who was treating people suffering from COVID-19. She was not 100 per cent sure of how safe she or her family were. This is something that many of us would never have experienced before.

Nurses at Blacktown, Westmead, Royal North Shore and Queanbeyan hospitals have also experienced appalling abuse, which should be condemned. The Opposition thanks nurses, doctors, frontline health workers and cleaners. The Minister spoke about the International Cleaners Day. On that day my colleagues in the Illawarra and I went to Wollongong Hospital and met with frontline cleaners. They are some of the lowest paid workers in the health system but, arguably, they do some of the most outstanding work. I put on record my thanks to them.

I thank the Health Services Union, under the leadership of Gerard Hayes, and the Nurses and Midwives' Association, under the leadership of the Brett Holmes. Together they have worked to support the health system to be as strong as it can be in the fight against COVID-19. But it is also important during this time that those workers get recognised and acknowledged. The Opposition urges the Government to use common sense and make sure that those workers get the pay they deserve. That is good for the economy, it is good for them and it is good for their families. It is exactly the sort of stimulus we need now. Increasing wages to frontline health workers across New South Wales acts as a stimulus right across New South Wales. I think that is something all members should support today.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:15:26):** I support the health Minister's public interest debate motion acknowledging our frontline healthcare workers. I say to the Minister that they are the best in the world. They have outstanding commitment and dedication. Those qualities have been exemplified through these very challenging times. In the Mid North Coast Local Health District the dedication of our frontline health services is epitomised by two of its staff members, whose stories I will share today. Grainne Ducat is a registered nurse and management intern at Port Macquarie Base Hospital. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit she immediately signed up to work at Port Macquarie Base Hospital's COVID testing clinic, where her organisation and management skills quickly came to the fore. Grainne is responsible for the management of staff and overseeing the efficient flow of people through the clinics. She also liaises with the North Coast Public Health Unit, keeps up to date with the evolving health advice and ensures that new staff are trained in the workings of the clinic.

In response to the call for more testing across New South Wales, there has been a significant increase in presentations at mid North Coast COVID clinics and the district is very well prepared should there be any new cases. Grainne put her hand up for this role because she really wanted to contribute to the local health response to COVID-19. She says that health professionals always feel that urge when something like this is happening to just want to jump in and help. Grainne says that all frontline health workers have been overwhelmed by the support of the community, whether it be the generosity being shown through meal donations from local individuals and

businesses, those special messages we have been reading on social media or just the smile they get when they go down the street and receive thanks.

Another outstanding frontline healthcare worker is Trish Lemin. She is a clinical nurse consultant – trauma who is now heavily involved in Mid North Coast Local Health District's COVID-19 response team. Trish's courage and dedication in the face of adversity have taken her from COVID-19 ground zero in China to the firegrounds of the New South Wales South Coast in 2020. As a trauma expert and a nurse of almost 40 years, Trish's skill and professionalism is widely sought. She is a go-to person in times of crisis. As the world was gripped by the reality of the COVID-19 emergency in February, Trish flew to Wuhan province—the epicentre of the emerging pandemic—on deployment with Australian Medical Assistance Teams, or AUSMAT. The three-week mission brought home 273 Australians, including 68 children.

Trish's international deployment came on the back of the New South Wales bushfire emergency, when she was working day and night as part of the coordinated response effort. Being away from home at this frightening time and only able to snatch a few minutes at a time to connect with her loved ones, Trish and her close-knit team of eight nurses and two doctors were charged with setting up and running a field hospital at Batemans Bay. Trish's exceptionally strong work ethic, commitment to safety and quality and her ability to perform under intense pressure are recognised and sought after within the health and emergency sectors.

With care, compassion and empathy at the heart of everything she does, Trish is widely respected for her collaborative and inclusive approach. Trish epitomises all that is expected of a clinical nurse consultant, dedicating much of her time to the education of doctors, nursing and allied health staff. Trish had no downtime after returning from her AUSMAT deployment, going straight into a crucial role within the Mid North Coast Local Health District COVID-19 response team. The commitment of these staff members is outstanding. Over the past few months our frontline workers have really felt the support of our community, which makes them feel proud and also makes them realise they are providing an essential service that each and every one of us greatly appreciates.

In the time I have left I thank the team at the North Coast Public Health Unit under the leadership of Paul Corben. As a director covering both the Mid North Coast and the Northern NSW local health districts since 2005, Paul has certainly stepped up to the challenges of COVID-19. I know that I speak for everyone up and down the coast in thanking him and his team, and acknowledging their ongoing efforts. I also express my sincerest gratitude to the Mid North Coast Local Health District CEO, Stewart Dowrick, and his entire team. They have always been there to pick up the phone and respond to calls from my electorate office in relation to supporting our constituent's inquiries about COVID-19 testing and related restrictions. I know that each and every member in this House is so enormously grateful to everybody who works in our health sector. They have stepped up to the mark like you would not believe. On behalf of my community, I thank them for everything they have done.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:20:35):** I am honoured to be invited to speak today on this very important public interest debate topic. I salute, bow to, curtsy to, wave to, love-heart and cannot thank enough our frontline workers for what they have done during this pandemic. They are praiseworthy and they are our heroes. I, and all members of Parliament, have felt for them and their genuine fear for their own wellbeing from the outset of the looming pandemic. We have felt for them in fearing for their safety in the workplace and their need and desire to have all the appropriate personal protective equipment, training, security and systems in place to protect them and their families from this looming threat. All members of this Parliament absolutely appreciate the efforts that these workers have made to protect their own vulnerabilities and fragile health anomalies so they can best address the needs and wellbeing of the people of New South Wales whom they have been caring for during this very challenging time.

We appreciate the workers in our hospitals, both public and private; our frontline aged-care support workers within and outside our aged-care facilities; our GPs, who have made massive adjustments and supported their patients to move to telehealth and have been working over and above to make sure everyone is safe; those in roles caring for people with disabilities in share housing and across the community; our allied health workers within the health system and out and about in the community; those professionals caring for people in aged-care facilities and in the community; and those working in cancer care, wrapping love and support around people who have compromised immune systems.

We appreciate the efforts of those in our prison systems who are supporting health and wellbeing; our cleaners and COVID cleaners across New South Wales; and our pharmacists and their teams for caring, listening and giving advice and support despite the risk to their own wellbeing. Our teachers, going online and then back into the classroom, have become health workers and family supports, staying safe and protecting their colleagues while continuing to deliver the best education they possibly can. I give special thanks to the Health Services Union and the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association for supporting all their members in the amazing work that they have done, and I thank all those I have missed on my list. Members cannot thank them enough for the work they

have done. I also give a shout-out to all those people involved in COVID testing, pathology and clinical investigation of the virus in diagnosis and solution seeking.

As the member for Gosford, I give massive thanks to every person working at Gosford and Wyong hospitals, and at Gosford and Brisbane Waters private hospitals, and to the fabulous teams at Peninsula Village, BlueWave Living, HammondCare and BaptistCare aged-care facilities. I also give special thanks to all our community members who have been so generous in their support of our frontline workers, with coffee, sandwiches, barbecues, cakes, flowers, takeaway food, cleaning, lawn mowing, love and encouragement. I also thank Dr Chant and her team for their stoic work to deliver information, guidance and protection to the people of New South Wales. In this Parliament I sincerely thank the health Minister for the work that he and his team have done to support electorate offices and people across this State with his guidance and leadership. It really has been appreciated.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** Good on you!

**Ms LIESL TESCH:** However, it is tough when members in this Chamber and the Liberal-Nationals Government are not prepared to support the pay rise for our health workers. Tonight I thank the shadow Treasurer for his amendment to the Minister's motion, which gives the Government the ability to walk away from its crushing decision to refuse a pay rise during a pandemic for some of the hardest-working, most at-risk public servants in our State. Tonight is the chance for Government members to make good on the words they have said today and support those workers in a real, practical way. It is easy to be in this House and say the Government appreciates what they have done, but now it is really important for the Treasurer to deliver.

The frontline staff in our regional communities are the spenders across New South Wales. Last week we heard from the father of superannuation, Paul Keating, that to get through a recession we need to act early and support households so that they can continue spending. It is the teachers, nurses, frontline health workers, the cleaners and especially the women in our community who are due to receive a salary increase of 2.5 per cent, yet the Government is spending millions on legal cases simply to avoid paying them. At the same time as the Government should be paying that increase in pay, Premier Gladys Berejiklian is defying Parliament by taking the pay case to the Industrial Relations Commission—spending money that would otherwise be spent in my local economy on the Central Coast. It is the cafe workers and others on the ground who we need to keep employed.

The State is in recession. We must stimulate our economy to support jobs and recovery—not take money out of people's pockets and curtail their ability to spend at their local shops. I thank the member for Keira for moving his amendment. I encourage members of the Government to support this important push to better support our frontline workers. As a member of the New South Wales Parliament, I congratulate the Victorian Premier, Dan Andrews, on the work he is doing to keep his community safe. He is a fantastic leader and I applaud his efforts. My heart goes out to everyone in Victoria.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:25:48):** I support the motion. I acknowledge the ongoing and amazing contributions of frontline health workers across New South Wales, across the country and indeed across the globe. In particular I acknowledge the work of those associated with the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District who have played an integral part in the management of the COVID-19 response. It is not just luck that has given New South Wales the upper hand in our battle against COVID; rather, it is the tireless efforts of our nurses, doctors, pharmacists, paramedics, midwives and other support staff such as tracing staff who have all played a critical role in the vanguard of this fight.

I acknowledge the presence in the Chamber of the Minister for Health and Medical Research, who has done an outstanding job in one of the worst pandemics Australians have ever seen. This Government is doing all it can to assist frontline workers by upgrading hospitals and medical facilities, by training medical staff and by providing additional staff. To put into perspective the Government's efforts, I point out that the New South Wales Government has provided more than \$1.8 billion to support the health system's response to COVID-19 throughout the 2019-20 and 2020-21 financial years. My local health district's public health unit has been working closely with testing clinics and COVID wards throughout my local community. They have been identifying at-risk localities, directing isolation for contacts of positive cases and managing services such as infection control and procedure compliance in retail premises.

Typically the public health unit has a nursing team of five members but that has been increased to 45 to deal with COVID. Today the Government announced it will fast-track delivery of the next stage of the redevelopment of the St George Hospital, which is two years earlier than planned. That has been made possible because of an additional \$105 million of funding that will boost local jobs, provide more health services for residents and, importantly, ensure that frontline hospital staff will be working in modern facilities and supported by the best available technology. As a result of today's announcement the St George Hospital is now up to stage three of its \$700 million redevelopment. This is a long-term investment that has resulted in the reopening of the

hydrotherapy pool, the completion of the new emergency department and new acute services, the refurbishment of the birthing delivery suites and the provision of additional parking.

The Government also is investing in more frontline staff to take pressures off our health system. During the pandemic the Government has undertaken more recruitment, more training and more support for health staff by employing final year medical students, hiring more security staff and providing training for nurses currently working in intensive care units. I acknowledge that my local community is actively supporting frontline health workers. As history shows, it is the way we as a community come together that really gives us our greatest advantage. In response to seeing the tireless work of local nurses, doctors and frontline medical staff, the students and staff of the Peakhurst Public School led a drive for donations to create special care packages. The school community came together to deliver 105 care packages and 30 boxes of drinks to staff at the St George Hospital. Each bag contained a unique letter of thanks from the students, which I am sure was gratefully received by the staff. Without the dedication, compassion and courage of our frontline workers our fight against COVID would be very different from how it is unfolding today.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (17:30:02):** On behalf of The Greens I join members in this public interest debate to recognise the efforts of frontline health workers. The Greens thank the Minister for Health and Medical Research for bringing this important matter to the attention of the House for debate. In our party room we have recognised his incredible work over the past nine months. I have not heard anyone in this Parliament or anywhere else who has had anything other than gratitude for his and his department's dedication. I also acknowledge the expertise and efforts of the State's Chief Medical Officer, Dr Kerry Chant. I know that The Greens health spokesperson has remarked upon the generosity of Dr Chant's spirit and I endorse her comments. We can only imagine the work that Dr Chant has done and continues to do. It is remarkable that she makes time available to regularly brief members of Parliament. On behalf of The Greens I also applaud the efforts of the Commonwealth's Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Dr Nick Coatsworth.

We have all been very grateful that the Premier has not been guided by politicians but rather has been guided by the absolute best of the best in health—epidemiologists and medical professionals. That is why people can see that everything from contact tracing to COVID plans implemented by businesses right throughout New South Wales has been based on science and the incredible work of the pandemic team. The world is in awe of our health workers and recognises their expertise. We all remember those incredible scenes in Italy and other European countries of people standing on the balcony and applauding their frontline health workers. None of our nurses, doctors, GPs, allied health workers, paramedics, cleaners and administration staff have said, "You know what? I don't feel safe at work." They have shown up and put their own health and their families' health at risk. Some of them have stayed away from their families for long periods. We recognise and celebrate all their efforts.

Anaesthetists are at high risk when they intubate patients. Over and over they put themselves at risk to do their job. The hospital porters, who are very poorly paid and barely noticed, enter treatment rooms daily. The cleaners are first to go into rooms that have been occupied by infected patients. We welcome any opportunity to increase their pay post-COVID-19. Without the expertise of our contact tracers and the science of epidemiology more of our frontline workers would be placed at severe risk. Laboratory staff and pathologists have worked incredibly long hours to process tests. Psychologists, counsellors and mental health workers have taken up the slack to help people through this crisis. All those I have mentioned have had no choice but to turn up to work. They have made sacrifices and we are all incredibly grateful to them.

I acknowledge the advocacy of the Health Services Union, the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, the Australian Salaried Medical Officers' Federation of New South Wales and the ambulance division of the Health Services Union. As so often is the case, our ambos are doing double shifts to make sure that no-one in the community misses out. I will mention some of the groups in the electorates of Ballina, Newtown and Balmain: Glebe Youth Service; Rozelle Neighbourhood Centre; St Vincent De Paul Rozelle; Chin Chin, Surry Hills; Addison Road Community Centre; Hongs Kitchen, Ballina, who hand delivered fresh cooked meals to nurses and GPs at the Ballina District Hospital; Cherry Street Sports Club for its free meals; and Leesa Maree of Table Grayce for raising funds. The Northern New South Wales Local Health District CEO, Wayne Jones, has been extraordinary. I know that the member for Lismore shares my view. Every frontline health worker across the State has shown themselves to be a hero.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (17:35:13):** I support the motion brought by Minister Hazzard commending the efforts of New South Wales frontline health workers. I thank the Minister and his team for their active support and accessibility during COVID. I ring and text them and I text them on behalf of others and they always respond. I say here and now thank you. It is not an easy job to deal with a pandemic, something we have never had to deal with before. We are all learning as we go and in real time. Everything is out there. My commendation is for each and every frontline health worker. Each and every day they service the health needs of our community, particularly during the COVID pandemic.



I mention the nurses, midwives, doctors, allied health workers, cleaners, health support workers, paramedics and pharmacists. I have been active with the pharmacists locally, who have been on the front line each day with their staff. I mention also disability workers and pathologists. I know I will have missed someone but collectively, together with the contributions from other members, we will recognise each of them today in Parliament. It is the duty of frontline health workers to provide health care for us every day but during COVID they have gone beyond the call of duty. COVID is a virus that we are simultaneously learning about and responding to and treating. There is a lot of fear in the community and frontline health workers are not immune to fear for themselves and their families.

I suffer a wee bit from fear and anxiety when I board a Jetstar flight in Ballina and people disregard physical distancing and hardly anyone wears a mask. The member for Ballina travels on the same flight as I do. I feel a little apprehension. I cannot imagine how frontline workers feel knowing that they will be working where COVID is active and treating people with COVID in order to keep our communities and our families safe. They are heroes; there is no other word for it. I want to mention the State emergency headquarters where I know Dr Kerry Chant is located. Who knew her name before January 2020? I think Minister Hazzard and the member for Keira, the shadow Minister, did. We all know her now and I think we all love her. We love seeing her; we talk about her. I think my husband is in love with her.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** Half the population is. In fact, the whole population is.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** Join the queue, I told him. When my husband watches her he says, "She is formidable." Today in this place my staff executive officer ran into her. Carmel said that she thanked Dr Chant on behalf of all of us and told her that she was doing a wonderful job. Lismore Base Hospital, Nimbin, Urbenville, Kyogle, Tenterfield and Murwillumbah are all in the Lismore electorate. The staff all fronted up, got ready and did the extra training. The Health Services Union, led by Gerard Hayes, has been truly wonderful. The two health district CEOs, Wayne Jones and Michael DiRienzo, and the public health unit, which the member for Port Macquarie mentioned in her contribution, have all been truly wonderful. The amendment moved by my colleague the member for Keira and shadow Minister is a good, practical way to recognise frontline health workers. I direct this proposal to the Treasurer: Find a way to give them the 2.5 per cent pay rise as a way to provide practical support. I commend the motion and thank the member for Wakehurst for bringing it before the House.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (17:40:16):** In reply: I thank the member for Keira, the member for Port Macquarie, the member for Oatley, the member for Gosford, the member for Ballina and the member for Lismore. I do not think there is any doubt that we are all very grateful beyond words to our health team. People have stepped up. I will say more about our NSW Health Pathology. Since the pandemic started, 2½ half million tests have been done. I remember the way in which NSW Health Pathology had to step up to this task. Professor Dominic Dwyer, Director of Public Health Pathology, and his team have done an amazing job, together with private pathology. They have been incredible.

There are 275 locations in this State for the public to be tested for COVID-19 and they are open every day. If there is a need, they are open. Of those, 121 are NSW Health public COVID health clinics, 40 are drive through and 17 are pop-ups. It has been an incredible task. I want to thank the nurses, who have been outstanding, often working in the freezing cold to do the testing with other health staff. One afternoon at two o'clock I received a call saying that we had a problem at the Crossroads Hotel. At three o'clock I was in a meeting with NSW Health. On the way we rang Amanda Larkin, Chief Executive, South Western Sydney Local Health District, and said, "We want a pop-up clinic by five o'clock." By 5.00 p.m. a pop-up clinic was there with queues of people. It shows that people are listening to our message.

Our messages are designed to partner with the New South Wales community. I thank the teams at the airport. When it all started nurses were going out to the airport when everybody was wondering what was going on. I had a press conference a few weeks ago together with a nurse called Sarah Jane Nilsson, who is a health commander. She is one heck of a health commander. She knew how to manage that screening process. People such as Ms Nilsson are at the airport day after day and there are the necessary support staff going to the health hotels. I thank the industry groups who have listened to our call to arms and helped with the provision of new ventilators. At the moment we are up nearly 1,900 ventilators. It has more than tripled, almost quadrupled. We are more prepared than we could ever imagine was possible.

At the end of the day, none of that preparation matters if we do not have the health staff who are able to do the work. Again, on behalf of the New South Wales Parliament, I thank you for the work you have done and the work you still have to do. I have one final comment. I note the amendment moved by the shadow Minister. I do not think there is anyone in New South Wales who would not agree that if the economy was such we would all like to pay them far more. However, at the moment whilst we are in difficult circumstances, all of us, including the members of Parliament, have determined that we will be not be asking for increases this year—unless things suddenly turn around. We are not taking cuts but we are not taking increases. I understand the member's concern

about the issue but, from my point of view as health Minister, that is a matter that is better left to the Treasurer and the Treasury to sort out at another time. I thank all members again for their kind words. It is very appropriate to acknowledge in a bipartisan way and to conclude by saying, in the words of the member for Lismore, "They are all heroes. There is no other word for it."

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that the amendment of the member for Keira be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....42  
Noes .....45  
Majority.....3

#### AYES

Aitchison, J	Doyle, T	Mihailuk, T
Atalla, E	Finn, J	Minns, C
Bali, S	Harris, D	Park, R
Barr, C	Harrison, J	Parker, J
Butler, R	Haylen, J	Piper, G
Car, P	Hoenig, R	Saffin, J
Catley, Y	Hornery, S	Scully, P
Chanthivong, A	Kamper, S	Smith, T
Cotsis, S	Lalich, N	Tesch, L
Crakanthorp, T	Leong, J	Voltz, L
Daley, M	Lynch, P	Warren, G
Dalton, H	McGirr, J	Washington, K
Dib, J	McKay, J	Watson, A (teller)
Donato, P	Mehan, D (teller)	Zangari, G

#### NOES

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

#### PAIRS

McDermott, H	Williams, R
O'Neill, M	Wilson, F

**Amendment negatived.**

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

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Private Members' Statements*

#### **COOTAMUNDRA ELECTORATE EMERGENCY SERVICES**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:55:28):** Today I celebrate the emergency services across the Cootamundra electorate. These courageous individuals play a vital part in our communities. From paid permanent staff to the volunteers who step into crucial roles at times of gravest crises, I am incredibly proud of each and

every one. They are our first responders. During emergencies, our police, paramedics, firefighters, SES and other services are the first on the scene. They are there to try to protect life. They are the first to witness horrific incidents and bear the brunt of disasters—natural and man-made—and as a government it is vital that we provide them with the tools they need to undertake their work.

Happily, a recent visit from my Coalition colleague, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, David Elliott, helped to recognise the hard work of these groups across the Cootamundra electorate. The Ganmain Rural Fire Service is heading into this bushfire season with a brand new CAT 1 tanker—a \$350,000 piece of equipment to help protect not only property and lives but also the crews who use it. That investment was made possible thanks to a record Emergency Services budget. In the north of my electorate, the Cowra region's readiness for fire seasons will be boosted with two new mitigation crews. This increase in local preparedness will bring eight new jobs to the region. It will also help to fast-track hazard reduction, support volunteers and bolster firefighting efforts across Cowra's communities.

Minister Elliott also took the time to meet with local police and to tour Cowra's Police Station, where he heard about the issues local officers are facing and the resources they would like to see in the region. They can rest assured that I will continue to champion these requests. Bricks-and-mortar proof of this Government's commitment to providing state-of-the-art facilities to communities, regardless of postcode, is the brand new South West Slopes Zone Fire Control Centre at Harden. That \$6.1 million facility is a modern fit-for-purpose building, which has the capacity to deal with complex and large emergencies. It will add to the arsenal of not only the Rural Fire Service, but to all emergency services in the South West Slopes and southern New South Wales. The fire control centre will be headed up by an award-winning senior management team. This year they were recognised with a Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation, a NSW RFS Internal Bravery and Service Award. While we hope the capacity of this facility will never be needed, the reality is that we must be prepared.

I am incredibly proud of what we have delivered in Harden, and the tools we have made available to our emergency services, but we can always do more. It is the job of a local member, particularly while in Government, to fight to secure investment and equipment for local emergency services. To create the best possible environments for people to work in, to train and to provide the services our communities need, particularly at the height of crises and natural disasters. Since coming into office, one of my most pressing priorities has been to secure a new police station for Young. On a daily basis our police officers go above and beyond what is required of them. The police station at Young is dated and ageing. It makes the officers' working lives more challenging, rather than facilitating with ease the work that needs to be done. I will not rest until our local police have the facilities they need to do their job effectively and efficiently. I thank Minister Elliott for taking the time to tour the police station and for speaking to the officers. They know, as I do, that the Minister is listening. I am heartened that a proposal for the police station at Young is being considered by the NSW Treasury. I am committed to pushing until a new police station is delivered.

### KU-RING-GAI HOUSING STRATEGY

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (17:59:54):** I rise to speak about the Ku-ring-gai Housing Strategy to 2036, which is for decision at a general meeting of Ku-ring-gai Council in seven days' time. This housing strategy threatens to alter the character of Ku-ring-gai, which is renowned for its many historic houses, trees and wildlife, nature walks and parks. During the current pandemic those features have been highly valued by residents. The housing strategy proposed by council will adversely change the future amenity of 80 per cent of my electorate forever. Ku-ring-gai has a proud history. After the North Shore train line was extended to Gordon in the 1890s Ku-ring-gai became, and has remained, the gold standard of urban living.

In about 2008 Ku-ring-gai was changed. Frank Sartor, a former Labor planning Minister, decided to make a frontal attack upon Ku-ring-gai by playing the politics of envy of the worst possible kind. Frank Sartor imposed upon Ku-ring-gai a local environment plan [LEP] that created new zonings. That LEP led to over 10,000 new dwellings being constructed, mostly units, including many that are not in keeping with the character of the area. Frank Sartor made Ku-ring-gai one of only two places in the State where there was no protection for heritage streetscapes and neighbourhoods, in order to ensure that some of the historic beauty of Ku-ring-gai was forever destroyed. Bad planning policy has a long tail. Many people think that the apartments currently being constructed in my electorate are the work of the current State Government's planning policies. The zonings that permit the units now being built were created more than 10 years ago by the former State Labor Government.

What the Frank Sartor planning changes to Ku-ring-gai show is that once land is up-zoned for greater heights, it can never be reversed. The only saving grace that the Labor LEP had was that the densities were close to the Pacific Highway and to the railway line. But high-rise limited to that corridor is no longer something that my community can take for granted because this year the Ku-ring-gai Council decided to exhibit a new draft housing strategy for public comment in the middle of a 1 in 100 year pandemic. The strategy had three scenarios—none of which I believe represented a good outcome for Ku-ring-gai. In May both of the State members of

Parliament covering the Ku-ring-gai area—Jonathan O'Dea and myself—made submissions to council critical of the draft housing strategy. We both opposed the proposal to council.

In my submission I encouraged councillors to dramatically scale down the proposed strategy in the number of dwellings, how quickly they will be required and the densities proposed in the strategy. I was concerned about preserving the heritage of our area and the capacity of local infrastructure to deal with the further 6,500 new dwellings it proposed. Because of the time and the manner of its exhibition, only 253 submissions were received and almost all of them were not supportive. That draft strategy was changed into the final proposal to be voted on by council next week. The final version was not widely advertised to the local community. It was tucked away in a council agenda and supporting pages to the council meeting of 28 July—almost impossible for people to find.

The concern I have with the proposed housing strategy is that it still suggests inappropriate overdevelopment. For instance, it includes apartment building heights of 20 storeys in Gordon and 15 storeys in Turramurra and Lindfield. It could result in iconic heritage streets such as Ku-ring-gai Avenue, Turramurra, being lined with two- to three-storey townhouses, with five- to six-storey apartments overlooking the Turramurra Memorial Park precinct. The report to council, and Mayor Jennifer Anderson on behalf of the council, in emails to residents suggested that the New South Wales Government had required the council to deliver the dwelling targets that the draft strategy seeks to implement. Last week a clarifying letter from the planning Minister to the mayor made clear that was not correct. Minister Stokes said:

Ultimately council is responsible for deciding the number of dwellings in its local housing supply target and how it is accommodated within the local government area ... the target discussed with the GSC is not a legal requirement upon Council by the Government.

So the councillors cannot try to pass off the responsibility for this inappropriate housing strategy onto the State Government. It is the councillors who are responsible for setting the number of new local dwellings and the housing strategy. I call on councillors to stand up for our area and next week vote against the housing strategy that would terribly harm our area. The residents of Ku-ring-gai are relying on our councillors to do the right thing for the future of our community.

### HUNTER MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (18:05:01):** I am concerned at recent *Newcastle Herald* reports that more than 4,000 local manufacturing jobs have been lost in the last five years. Our region has long held the manufacturing skills to build vital infrastructure for New South Wales. The Wallsend electorate is home to Downer Group's Cardiff rail manufacturing facility, previously Cardiff railway workshops, which was owned by the State Government. Downer Group has the capacity and know-how to build the infrastructure New South Wales needs. In nearby Broadmeadow UGL has the facilities to manufacture rail sets and rolling stock to suit our growing infrastructure.

UGL has been building trains for more than a century under its previous names, Goninan and United Goninan, including the highly popular and successful Tangara rolling stock, which is still in use; the S, K and C sets; double-decker trains; the Oscar train sets; and rolling stock including coal wagons. UGL also built train sets for other States and countries including Hong Kong. The old red rattlers were built at the Walsh Island Dockyard and Engineering Works, as was the old car ferry SS *Kooroongaba*, which operated for many years on Sydney Harbour. The State Dockyard built five of the Lady class ferries and Carrington Slipways built two of them. Carrington Slipways also built two of the Manly ferries, the First Fleet catamaran ferries and the two Stockton ferries.

It worries me that the Premier said, "Australia and New South Wales are not good at building trains. That is why we have to purchase them elsewhere." It worries and offends every New South Wales manufacturing worker and it is a cruel blow to Wallsend workers and Wallsend jobs. During this time of recession and enormous job losses in our region, what does this Government do? It continues to send manufacturing jobs offshore. We have an incredible opportunity with local manufacturing firms Downer and UGL. The Government could employ them to build quality rolling stock and other necessary infrastructure for New South Wales. New South Wales State Secretary of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, Cory Wright, said:

We could see sparks flying again in Hunter workshops like they once were. There is promise of a return to the heavy industry region that the Hunter has been known for—where young people and skilled tradespeople make quality, lasting infrastructure for New South Wales.

I wholeheartedly agree with him. Offshoring transport infrastructure and manufacturing is not value for money. From the new intercity rail fleet trains that do not fit in tunnels to Parramatta River ferries that do not adequately fit under the bridges on the Parramatta River, we know that billions of New South Wales' dollars could have been better spent employing people in the Hunter region and indeed in New South Wales. I ask the Government to stop the offshoring of essential manufacturing jobs that Australians, especially the people in Wallsend, could and should be doing. We have the knowledge, facilities, history and motivation to build the transport infrastructure of

the future right here in the Hunter. All we need is the political will to kickstart the manufacturing sector and the Government to support local industry and jobs.

#### INNO SALASOO

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections) (18:09:35):** Friends in this House and the people of New South Wales, 17 September is Citizenship Day. It is my privilege to share with the House my admiration and respect for a remarkable woman who lives within the great electorate of Lane Cove, a woman who has seen her fair share of challenges and tests and, to her testament, has overcome them with great strength and vigour. This is a story of not just any Australian but one who has come from beyond our borders, one who has had her entire life uprooted and shaken and one who is eternally grateful for the opportunities and life that she has lived here in her home, Australia. As we approach Citizenship Day this Thursday, this story, like that of many other Australians who have travelled far-stretched distances to our sandy shores, echoes and reverberates the rich spirit of our migrant population.

I congratulated Inno Salasoo this year on achieving 91 wonderful years, a milestone for which she says she is eternally grateful. An extremely devout Christian woman, Inno was born in the Republic of Estonia in 1930. During the Second World War, Inno was subjected to harsh living environments by both Soviet and German occupying forces. After the war and with the Iron Curtain tightening, Inno's family managed to escape Soviet-controlled Estonia. Arriving in Adelaide, Inno's first impressions of Australia were that of quarantine processing facilities that all migrants had to endure upon arrival. She was then sent to Mount Gambier Forest Reserve in South Australia, where she would work in a sawmill and contribute to the Australian economy for the first time.

She was later transferred to New South Wales to be reunited with her brother, who had been working as a government railways worker in the Central West of New South Wales. Later she worked as a laboratory assistant at the White Bay Power Station. She also attended the New South Wales University of Technology in the evenings, where she would receive her Bachelor of Science in 1957. Inno continued her research and studies for a further five years, being awarded a degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1963. Her resolve and strength to work and support herself and her family whilst simultaneously finding the time to pursue academic and professional aspirations is truly inspiring. It is a symbolic reminder to us of the wide and vast opportunities that exist if we simply have the courage, like Inno, to reach out and grab them.

Married in 1955 and becoming a naturalised Australian citizen in 1962, Inno has spent the last half century raising her family and working for the University of New South Wales until 1992. She is a proud member of the Estonian Lutheran St John's congregation and is an active member within her local community—a dual contribution that showcases her proud Estonian heritage as well as her long and consistent yearning to be an active member of her local Australian community. In the uncertain times of 2020, the year of her ninety-first birthday, Inno has spent her days writing and publishing her life story and translating it into English for her seven grandchildren.

Inno's story is remarkable. It is a story of great courage and resolve; a story of a brave young girl defying the odds of communist and fascist authoritarianism; a story that saw her uproot her life, travel to distant shores and immerse herself in a different culture and a different way of life. It is a story that highlighted her grit and determination to work hard, make the most of her opportunities and make a better life for herself and her family. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it is a story that encapsulates the Australian spirit. I take this moment, even though it has passed, to wish Inno a very happy ninety-first birthday. What an extraordinary life she has lived. I wish her continued good health and many more happy years ahead. To all our citizens from many origins who wish to make Australia home, especially those in my beautiful electorate of Lane Cove, happy Citizenship Day.

#### BAYSIDE COUNCIL

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (18:13:58):** I advise the House of my outrage at the Liberal and Independent councillors on Bayside Council who last week voted to increase residential rates in the former Botany Bay Council area by up to 51 per cent from 1 July next year. Last week the council, under the pretence of harmonisation of council rates across the amalgamated council area, determined a massive increase in rates to residents in my electorate. All eight Liberal and Independent councillors voted in favour of this plan, which will see rates increase on average by between 28 per cent and 51 per cent from 1 July 2021. All seven Labor councillors voted against it. The Liberals did this during a devastating pandemic and the worst recession since the Great Depression. When the airlines and universities—which support the employment of many of my constituents—are laying off thousands of workers, as are many other employers across my electorate, I will name those Liberal councillors who represent residents in my electorate. Mascot residents are being sluggish by the vote of councillor Michael Nagi and Eastlakes residents are being sluggish by the vote of councillor Paul Sedrak. Their vote for this increase is on the public record and they will be accountable for it.

The Bayside Council amalgamation has been an abject failure. The amalgamation was forced upon the residents of the former City of Botany Bay, despite 90 per cent of residents voting against it at a plebiscite. Complaints of poor customer service and a reduction in service standards flood my office. Councillors and staff meet for hours in secret under the pretence of briefings, with no public scrutiny of the information conveyed to councillors. When the Minister for Local Government, who is in the Chamber, warned the council that its committees were not permitted to meet in secret, the council abandoned its committee meetings. For weeks councillors were locked away with an unresponsive bureaucracy. They were away from pesky, prying, public eyes, being housetrained with various financial models, all designed to get them on board for a massive rate increase. Fortunately, the Labor councillors were not buying it.

The Liberal councillors who want to impose this huge increase on my constituents are the same Bayside Liberals who shot to infamy in 2018 when at a Liberal Party branch meeting they started brawling in the streets of Bayside. A number of attendees were charged with assault occasioning actual bodily harm and assaulting police in the execution of their duty. Not only did the Liberals give us a council that our community did not want, the same Liberals who just two years ago were brawling in the streets of the local government area are now voting to increase residents' rates by 51 per cent. No wonder the Premier does not want the Liberals endorsing candidates at the next local government elections. If others are like the brawlers from Bayside, I do not blame her.

I am loath to blame the legislation at this point. Other amalgamated councils seem to have managed the process. The good, conservative burghers who govern the northern beaches were able to manage a rate harmonisation with the merger of three councils without these extreme increases. I am also conscious of the Auditor-General's report to Parliament and the briefings I received in relation to the council's financial management and procedures, including rates. Voting to increase taxes during a pandemic and a recession at a time of crisis and massive unemployment is outrageous. The councillor who represents Mascot in my electorate, Councillor Michael Nagi, to justify his vote, told the council, "It's less than a dollar a week" and "What does it cost, a cup of coffee?" Councillor Barlow said, "I am just saying it's \$4 a week."

Those councillors should look Qantas workers in the eye and tell them the same thing. I am told that councillors led by Councillor Christina Curry and Scott Morrissey have lodged a rescission motion that will be considered next month. That gives the opportunity for those Liberal councillors to reconsider the significance of what they wish to impose on my community. Councillor Michael Nagi and Councillor Paul Sedrak can utilise the time and do something really novel: Consult with the people of Mascot and Eastlakes, an area that they do not live in or ever visit. They can look them in the eye and say to these struggling people of my electorate, "Your massive increase is only the price of a cup of coffee."

#### **TRIBUTE TO NEIL MCNAMARA, OAM**

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSON (Upper Hunter) (18:18:38):** It is with sadness that I inform the House of the recent passing of Neil McNamara, OAM, a prominent figure and well-respected citizen of the Singleton community who sadly died on 29 August 2020 at the age of 97 years. Neil McNamara leaves behind a legacy that has shaped the local government area of the Singleton district. The dairy farmer from Broke began his political career when elected to the then Patrick Plains Shire Council in 1956, which then amalgamated with the Singleton Municipal Council in 1976, and he became the first shire president of the new Singleton Shire Council. He held that position for an outstanding 23 successive years and later was mayor of Singleton until 1998.

All told, Neil had a 43-year career in local government. It might be noted that only 2½ years after amalgamation of the Patrick Plains and Singleton municipal councils, Singleton won the Bluett Memorial Award for the most progressive council in the State, thanks to Neil's leadership and staff at the time. Neil had a distinguished record of service to the Singleton community. He was an exemplary leader during a period of significant growth and change in the Singleton local government area, particularly when the community needed support and guidance in the early stages of coalmining expansion, developing industrial estates, residential subdivisions and sporting and recreational parks, all to cope with population and industrial growth.

Other achievements during his time in office include the construction of the Civic Centre, the Mitchell Line Road Bypass, the Ryan Avenue Bypass, the Gowrie Street shopping centre site, the flood levee improvements, Rose Point Park and the Singleton Senior Citizens Centre, just to name a few. Neil McNamara not only served in local government but also held several positions, including Singleton and District Cooperative Society Store chairman, Singleton Central Co-operative Dairy director, Shortland County Council chairman and councillor and Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils chairman. In 1984 for his outstanding community contribution Neil was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for his services to the Singleton community and was made a Freeman of the Singleton shire in 2000. He was also a Wambo Coal Singleton Hall of Fame inductee.

Most importantly, Neil was a dedicated husband, father and grandfather. He and his wife, Joan, were married in September 1952 and together had six children and many grandchildren. Sadly, Joan passed away on

20 July 2020. With the passing of Neil McNamara, our Singleton community has lost one of its greatest civic figures in recent memory. I knew Neil personally for around 20 years and he had always been a committed and talented community advocate and leader. Neil will be sorely missed; however, his civic example and the memory of his service to council leaves a rich legacy for Singleton's councillors present and future to admire and to emulate. I offer my heartfelt condolences to the McNamara family. Vale Neil McNamara.

### MANLY FUN RUN AND WALK

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:22:11):** I am proud to again support this year's Manly Fun Run and Walk, which went virtual between 2 and 6 September. It supports some amazing charities that work across Manly and the northern beaches. The fun run, now in its eleventh year, is a project run by the Rotary Club of Manly and has so far raised over \$1.5 million for charity, particularly in the areas of youth, community and international service support. Many members in this place are close to their local Rotary groups and may be Rotarians themselves. They know the year-round effort that Rotary puts into their local community, and Manly and the northern beaches is certainly no different. The Manly Fun Run and Walk went virtual this year, like many events during these difficult times, with entrants encouraged to undertake the two, five or 10 kilometre route sometime between Wednesday 2 September and Sunday 6 September. It was great to join my brother Tom to run the race on Saturday and to see the event again embraced by the local community, albeit in a new digital format.

We all know how tough this period has been for our charities, particularly as they have been unable to host their traditional fundraising galas or events throughout the year. The easy option for the Rotary Club of Manly would have been to postpone the event until 2021; however, I congratulate the club on adapting to the changes and ensuring the event went ahead this year. As members in this place know, I am a strong believer in the power of physical exercise and its connection to mental health. Whilst we have to be physically distant, it is now more than ever that we should be out and about looking after ourselves. If we can do that to raise money for a charity, then all the better. Whether fundraising for the Rotary Club of Manly, which supports local charities and projects like Lighthouse for the Community, which helps victims of domestic violence, or other local charities such as Royal Far West, the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter or Lifeline Northern Beaches, there were plenty of options for those wanting to participate this year.

It is quite incredible to see the support that the Manly Fun Run and Walk and the Rotary Club of Manly have delivered for community organisations and charities over their long history, raising over \$1.5 million. That support includes providing Lifeline Northern Beaches with a new van to assist with making donation collections; supporting a COVID awareness campaign and a pilot sanitation project in Papua New Guinea; supporting the Manly-based Stand Tall self-development camps for at-risk teenagers; supporting Bushlink's pilot planting program for young adults with disabilities, aimed at developing and nurturing their employment skills; completing a major renovation with improved workroom, meeting and kitchen facilities for the Pioneer Clubhouse, which supports the vocational rehabilitation of adults with mental illness; supporting the purchase of medical diagnostic equipment to be used by Seaforth-based charity Australian Doctors International for its work in Papua New Guinea; and donating funds for equipment to assist in respite care for terminally ill children and their families at Bear Cottage.

They are just some of the dozens and dozens of projects that have been delivered for our community over the past 11 years—in fact, since the Manly Rotary club was first formed back in 1936. I recognise the major sponsors of this year's Manly Virtual Fun Run and Walk, including the wonderful Freshwater Community Bank branch of Bendigo Bank and Blackmores. Both have been key to the ongoing viability of the fun run, which maximises the money it can contribute to charity. In addition, I recognise the in-kind sponsorship from Hotel Steyne, Loom Creative, mobile.com, Happy Hour Design & Marketing, CostumeBox, Northern Beaches Council and Vipers Run Club. I again congratulate all volunteers as well as the hardworking board of the Rotary Club of Manly, including co-presidents Susie Morgan and Virginia Parker, co-secretaries Norman Thomson and Ken Hopley and treasurer Keith Thom. I make special acknowledgement of the Vipers Run Club for its partnership with Rotary in delivering the run. I look forward to again taking part in the Manly Fun Run and Walk next year.

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (18:26:17):** I thank the member for Manly for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. I join him in acknowledging the outstanding work the Rotary Club of Manly does for the community, and has done for many years. Having operated since 1936, the club does so much to support the community and to support great causes. The Manly Fun Run and Walk is an iconic run—and not just because it has a rockstar politician in the member for Manly participating. I assume that he beat his brother Tom.

**Mr James Griffin:** I did, yes.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** It is also iconic because it does such great work to raise money for great causes. I, too, acknowledge the Freshwater Community Bank and Blackmores for the work they do supporting this great

initiative. The Royal Far West is a great organisation that supports many families who are doing it tough—particularly those in rural and regional New South Wales who need to get to Sydney to look after their kids in their time of need. I also acknowledge the charity work that is being done to support victims of domestic violence, not just in Manly but also throughout the State. I again thank Manly Rotary and say to the member for Manly: Keep up the great work.

### ASSYRIAN UNIVERSAL ALLIANCE

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (18:27:23):** The electorate of Prospect is one of the most culturally and religiously diverse in New South Wales, with half of its residents born overseas. We are an electorate of migrants—migrants from the Middle East, Europe, Africa and Asia. Prospect is home to the largest Assyrian community in the State and the country. Assyrians are the indigenous inhabitants of Mesopotamia—today known as northern Iraq. Until 1915 the Assyrian people had primarily been unmoved from the region. However, following religious and ethnic conflicts and the Armenian, Assyrian and Greek genocides perpetrated by the Ottoman Turks and their allies, Assyrians have sought refuge around the world. We are fortunate that many have chosen Australia as their home. One of many active Assyrian community organisations in my electorate, with which I have had the privilege of working closely, is the Assyrian Universal Alliance [AUA]. The alliance is led by Mr David David, President of the Assyrian Australian National Federation, and Mr Hermiz Shahan, Secretary-General of the AUA's Australian chapter.

The AUA is an international grassroots organisation representing the Assyrian community. Since its establishment, Mr David and Mr Shahan have advocated successfully for justice and recognition of the Assyrian genocide. They have remained steadfast in the community's demands for the establishment of an Assyrian homeland in northern Iraq and have tirelessly advanced local issues of importance on behalf of the broader Australian Assyrian community. Over the years they have actively organised numerous cultural and community events, including the annual Assyrian New Year celebration and the Assyrian Martyrs Day commemoration—all of which I have been proud to attend. They have assisted with the integration of thousands of Assyrian families into the wider Australian community and have shown them the Australian way of life. Mr David and Mr Shahan work for the betterment of their community like few others. They have sacrificed their personal lives to represent Assyrian Australians and their "community first" doctrine is one that I and many others have admired.

Recently I met with Mr David and Mr Shahan and they revealed they have received numerous threats and have been subject to intimidation, raising concerns for their personal safety. Their attendance at a language conference in Jerusalem, Israel, in November 2019 has resulted in representatives of the Iranian Government verbally vilifying them and inciting violence against them through state-controlled media. They have become a target because of their participation in a trip that promoted interethnic relations, harmony, respect and tolerance between Assyrians and Jews. Furthermore, the Iranian Government appears threatened that the hard work of the Assyrian community and the work of the Assyrian Universal Alliance will lead to the establishment of an autonomous Christian Assyrian province in the region. The hostile remarks from the Iranian Government—specifically from Mr Yonathan Betkolia, MP, who is simply a puppet of the Iranian regime—have led to intimidating messages on social media from local and foreign trolls with ties to Iran.

The intimidating messages are threatening the lives of Mr David and Mr Shahan and the wellbeing of their families. These threats must be taken seriously. Since the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979, the Iranian Government has run a coordinated operation of intimidation and harassment against government dissidents. Iranian leaders are targeting opposition activists, journalists, women's rights activists and former government officials living in Western countries. Hence I have serious concern for the safety of Mr David and Mr Shahan and have written to the New South Wales police commissioner and Senator the Hon. Marise Payne, Minister for Foreign Affairs, requesting them to monitor the situation and the safety of Assyrian community leaders. The remarks of the Iranian Government are also intended to create division amongst the Assyrian and Jewish communities in Australia by inciting prejudice, hatred and discrimination.

I join Assyrian Universal Alliance leaders in condemning the Iranian Government's anti-Semitic sentiments. I condemn the Iranian Government's intolerance of interethnic dialogue and multiculturalism. I will not allow the Iranian Government's hostile policies to impact the good work of community organisations such as the AUA, which actively promotes Australian values of tolerance, respect and multiculturalism by meeting with its Jewish counterparts. I stand in solidarity with the Assyrian Australian community and its leaders. I pray for the safety and wellbeing of Mr David and Mr Shahan. I will continue to stand by them and the Assyrian community in condemning attacks from the Iranian Government while advocating for justice on issues of importance to the Assyrian community and preserving respect, tolerance and multiculturalism.



### CENTRO SOCIALE ITALIANO

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (18:32:35):** I update the House on the fortunes of a club in my electorate called Centro Sociale Italiano, or CSI. A social club for Italian community residents, CSI was founded in Schofields in 1979. Like so many migrant communities, the Italian community had to spread far and wide to find affordable land to build a centre for themselves—a gathering place for the Italians who were then in western Sydney. Like lots of migrant groups, these clubs are dotted across the region, representing each of the community groups that worked so hard over so many years to save up and invest in something that they could be proud of and that would serve the needs of the descendants of the original migrants. The CSI club was created in 1979 by a small group of Italian immigrant families with the sole purpose of establishing a facility that would become a meeting place for the Italian community in the north-west region of Sydney.

Centro Sociale Italiano, simply translated, means a social meeting place for Italians. The core values were and are centred on family, celebration of Italian culture, hard work and new friends, both Italian and non-Italian. Passionately proud of their heritage, patriotic and always flying their homeland flag, Italian immigrants left their country and families for a better life and were quick to embrace their new home in Australia. Hence they were eager to share their culture with the local community. Over the ensuing years, with hard work, sacrifice and determination, the founding members built the clubhouse, located at 81 South Street, Schofields. That was soon followed by the football stadium, which, up to recent years, was home to the CSI Scorpions Soccer Club.

The club is enjoying a new lease on life—a second wind, if you like. Now that development of the region is taking place young children who want to play soccer join new clubs that are unable to find sufficient soccer fields. CSI is providing a venue for those clubs to train and play that otherwise would not be available to them. Suddenly there is a hum and a buzz around the CSI soccer field again. CSI represents one of the inspiring traditions of migrant communities who came to Australia after World War II. They grouped together to preserve their culture and support their community. They put in the work for the next generation and shared their culture with other Australians.

I am pleased to have made contact with and involved myself in some CSI events over the years, particularly its St Anthony's Day Feast, which even today attracts people from all over to Sydney to celebrate their Italian heritage at the CSI. These days many of the attendees are getting on in years. I struggle with the Italian language but I try to join in. Nonetheless, one can sense the strength of community and the solidarity amongst these people who have experienced so much together and have made such a good life for themselves and their families in this new country. I congratulate the pioneers who founded the Centro Sociale Italiano and the wonderful people who run the club today and are continuing its traditions.

### HUNTER MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (18:36:11):** The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on business that is translating to job losses for the people of New South Wales. The July Australian Bureau of Statistics job figures show that unemployment in the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie region is at 6.3 per cent, which is a dramatic increase from 4.4 per cent in January and a full point higher than the State average of 5.3 per cent. Youth unemployment in the region looks dire, rising from 10.4 per cent in January to 13.9 per cent by July—well above the State average of 11.7 per cent. As the recession continues these numbers are set to get worse. The global pandemic has highlighted the vulnerabilities of the State of New South Wales, and no more so than when it comes to Australian manufacturing.

Shortages of personal protective equipment, sanitising products, groceries and consumer goods show just how we have the balance wrong when it comes to what we make here and what we buy from overseas. The Charlestown electorate, like every traditional manufacturing hub in this State, has seen a steady decline in manufacturing and the jobs it creates as the industry has increasingly been pushed offshore. We know the direct contribution that manufacturing makes to the economy is only a fraction of its indirect contribution. It really is a no-brainer: When we manufacture in New South Wales the economic flow-on is massive. But instead this Government manages the budget like a 50 per cent off sale at Fantastic Furniture, pursuing the cheapest options every time. As our ferries that do not fit under the bridges and our trains that do not fit through the tunnels and are too wide for platforms attest, cheapest is not always best.

What this Government needs to do right now is act. It needs to act to do what is the most obvious thing—that is, to bring jobs back to New South Wales; not just to Sydney but to the regions. I speak of regions like the lower Hunter, which for decades manufactured world-class trains, ferries, frigates and ships. But those contracts have all been pushed offshore and the jobs that come with them have gone offshore too. Recently the Premier explained away that her Liberal-Nationals Government offshores the manufacture of trains, ferries and trams because we do not manufacture in this State. The Premier might not have any manufacturing jobs in her electorate but in regional New South Wales where I am from manufacturing still employs around 6 per cent of the workforce.

It is time the Government recognised that, although it has taken a beating, manufacturing is still a significant employer in this State—particularly in the regions.

In my electorate of Charlestown there is a manufacturing company called R&R Murphy, which I have talked about in this Chamber before. It supplies the domestic and international mining transport and defence industries and is constantly innovating products to suit and to lead the market. In a totally different area of manufacturing, I have spoken also about JetProof, a company that manufactures and supplies clothing for adults and children with sensory issues. Recently JetProof expanded its production into re-usable three-layer face masks in order to fill the shortages that we have been experiencing during COVID-19.

We can and we do manufacture in this State and it is time that this Government woke up to it. It is time for the New South Wales Government to forget about running multimillion-dollar toy trains down the streets of Sydney and Newcastle. It is time to forget about demolishing and rebuilding stadiums, and moving museums. It is time to stop wasting taxpayers' money on the Premier's pet projects and the pet projects of whoever has the ear of the Premier. It is time the New South Wales Government developed a vision for the future—a vision that creates jobs, a vision that seizes the potential of the talent within the State of New South Wales.

But instead we have a government that is bankrupt when it comes to good ideas and runs into deficit when it comes to delivering essential services. Instead of mounting a recovery, I fear that this Government does not have what it takes to steer this State through the very troubled waters that lay ahead. I hope that members of the Government can open their eyes and see what the manufacturers and innovators in this State, particularly in regions such as the Hunter, have to offer. We have so much manufacturing talent available to us. That manufacturing talent should not be ignored.

#### ACTIVE CARE NETWORK

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (18:41:12):** It was my pleasure to attend the launch of Active Care Network on Friday 14 August in celebration of its great work and the amalgamation of two community organisations that have served the Mulgoa electorate and wider community of the western Sydney region for decades. Active Care Network was formed after combining Easy-Go Connect and Great Community Transport to provide a more enhanced means of connecting people with one another and to their communities through a variety of transportation services to improve their overall wellbeing and independence.

Active Care Network has a rich history in western Sydney and beyond that began in 1982, serving the community as Blacktown Community Transport Coordinating Committee. In the early days the focus of the organisation was to provide the aged and disabled of the Blacktown local government area who do not have access to a private vehicle and who cannot use buses and trains with a transport service within their financial means. The Blue Mountains and Penrith local government areas were also serviced, with the introduction of Mountains Community Transport and Nepean Community Transport in 1986 and 1987 respectively, boosting their clientele and resources significantly for almost 30 years.

I pay a special tribute to Helen Walker, OAM, who in 1986 founded Mountain Community Transport. From being the sole employee and driver and sharing a room with another community service in 1986, Helen witnessed monumental change in the community transport sector over the ensuing 30 years that she would be at the helm of this wonderful service. Helen was awarded a number of accolades in recognition of her faithful and dedicated service. In 2008 Helen was the winner of a University of Western Sydney Woman of the West International Woman of the Year award. She was also awarded the Centenary Medal and the 2017 Blue Mountains Citizen of the Year. In 2011 Great Community Transport was awarded Community Transport Organisation Limited Community Transport of the Year. In 2012 she was awarded the Western Sydney Community Forum ZEST award for Outstanding Volunteer Organisation.

Until her retirement on 23 September 2016, Helen saw many changes and Great Community Transport had reached the scale of 26 employees, over 100 volunteers, 25 vehicles and two offices. Sadly, Helen passed away suddenly on 14 September 2017. I will always remember Helen as a formidable and persistent woman who fought valiantly and effectively for the most vulnerable in our community. In 2004 Mountains Community Transport and Nepean Community Transport amalgamated to become Great Community Transport. With growing aspirations to deliver transport services beyond the community transport funding, Blacktown Community Transport looked towards commercial operations and a name change that would reflect its new ambitions. In March 2016 members of Blacktown Community Transport agreed to change the organisation's name to Easy-Go Connect, with this becoming official on 4 May 2016.

In 2018 the boards of Easy-Go Connect and Great Community Transport saw the strength of merging the two organisations, and on 1 July 2019 Easy-Go Connect and Great Community Transport merged and retained the name Great Community Transport. For the next year the two organisations worked hard on integrating, always

with the aim of renaming and rebranding the new organisation when the time was right. It was decided that the new name, Active Care Network, would go live internally on 1 July 2020. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 there were minor delays to the official launch but it eventually took place in August this year.

Moving forward, Active Care Network is focused on maintaining the highest levels of integrity, reliability, service, respect and innovation. While community transport is a foundational service, it now delivers beyond this function. Its services now include transport for the NDIS, Home Care Packages, clients, community organisations and groups and even travel education programs. Active Care Network has also commenced a gardening and maintenance team. As of August this year its services included lawn care, garden maintenance, landscaping, general home maintenance and handyman services. The extension of service significantly opens up the door for success and growth into the future, providing more jobs and resources for the local community, all while making a positive impact in the lives of vulnerable people.

I thank CEO Ben Jackson for his work and passion for providing better care to the community members who need it most by bringing together two well-known organisations, combining both their resources and clientele. People throughout the electorate of Mulgoa and its surrounding areas now have transport and home-care support right around the corner. His leadership has brought the organisation to where it is today. It is a pleasure to be involved in the launch. I thank the previous employees and volunteers for their service to community transport. Today's newly launched Active Care Network stands on the shoulders of the work that Helen Walker, OAM, commenced more than 30 years ago. It is fitting that my statement acknowledges her extraordinary community service and I thank the current staff and volunteers for their willingness to serve those in our community who need additional support.

### HUNTER MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (18:46:17):** Surrounded by a press pack and being questioned on the New South Wales Government's decision on overseas train procurement last month, our Premier made a bold declaration. She said, "Australia and New South Wales are not good at building trains. That is why we have to purchase them." A very bold declaration indeed but also a very incorrect one, as the questioning journalist pointed out, using the example of the Tangara trains—Newcastle made by Goninan & Co from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s—which are still in service today. The Premier responded, "What we have to do is look at what is best quality, best practice, best efficiency."

When you have an infrastructure program in excess of \$100 billion, you have to get good value for money. If the Premier is looking for value for money in train procurement, then she has become stuck in a game of hide-and-seek. Even though the D sets are yet to carry a passenger, we have become quite familiar with them. They will enter service on the intercity lines at a date yet to be revealed. That train contract was sent to South Korea because it was supposed to be better value but modifications were required on the Blue Mountains to Lithgow network because the trains simply did not fit. Eighteen stations needed their tracks or platforms modified for width or height, five needed changes to their signals, two needed their platforms lengthened as well as CCTV and lighting upgraded and one needed the platform canopy modified. The "value for money" must be hiding behind the couch because I cannot find it with this contract. The saga of the intercity trains has been running for a few years now. With those station and track fixes now complete, the Government was probably hoping that all the criticism would die down. That was wishful thinking.

The next volume in the story of offshore procurement fails has commenced with the first delivery of ferries from a \$1.3 billion order arriving at the Port of Newcastle with asbestos in the gaskets. Just like the trains, those Indonesian-manufactured River Class ferries for Sydney required additional work before they could even be taken for a test spin. Value for money, Premier? It seems that value is in the eye of the beholder. To the Government, value is purely bang for your buck. It wants the cheapest price and it does not care who gets hurt in the process. Stuff the generation-old manufacturers who still need those contracts. Stuff the skilled workers who need to pay their bills. Stuff the aspiring apprentices who just need an opportunity. To the Opposition, value is much bigger than the budget sheet. Spending a little more up-front will pay dividends in the long run. We know about the multiplier effect. More people in work means more local spending and more growth of local economies. It also means giving someone a job and the chance to learn new skills, providing an avenue for social interaction which gives them a sense of worth.

The economic benefit of local procurement is enormous. The social benefit is even greater. That is why the Opposition is introducing the NSW Jobs First Bill 2020. We want contracts to support New South Wales jobs and industries. We want apprentices to be given a go. We want a proportion of jobs to go to Indigenous, disadvantaged and long-term unemployed community members. We want to change the law to make it happen. This is not a new idea. It already happens in Western Australia and Victoria. Since 2015 the Victorian Labor Party has delivered more than 180 trains and trams manufactured by a local workforce. The Western Australian Labor Government will soon commence manufacturing railcars in Perth.

For the Premier to say that Australia is not good at building trains is not just wrong, it is an insult to generations of people who sweated over workshop benches to manufacture goods, such as the Tangaras which have lasted for decades. It is a slap in the face to a skilled workforce who wants to teach the next generation. It is a kick in the guts to young people looking for a start. Newcastle has a proud manufacturing history and it deserves a proud manufacturing future. Following fail after fail, it is clear that there is no value for money in offshore manufacturing. I suggest that the Premier closes her eyes, counts to 20 and looks somewhere else. I am happy to give her some hints as to exactly where.

### MUNGINDI COMMUNITY

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (18:51:29):** I am continually astounded by the level of strength and community spirit shown by the people of the Northern Tablelands in the face of consistent hardship. The most recent example is the unwavering resilience of the community of Mungindi, a town of fewer than 800 people in the far west of the Northern Tablelands on the New South Wales-Queensland border. It straddles the border, with a hospital on one side and an ambulance station on the other and two police stations, one in Queensland and one in New South Wales within a couple of hundred metres of each other on either side of the river.

On the evening of Tuesday 1 September a fire, believed to have started in Red's Quality Meats in the heart of the Mungindi CBD, ripped through the main street, spreading to the adjoining PJ's Country Wares and ultimately to the SPAR supermarket. It destroyed all three businesses and severely damaged a fourth vacant property. Despite the best efforts of the local RFS volunteer crew, Fire and Rescue NSW who came out from Moree and even the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, they could not save those buildings. But through their efforts, combined with water pumping from local farmers and cotton growers, thankfully the fire did not go any further down the main street. At one point people thought that the whole street would go up in flames.

The fire came at the end of an incredibly difficult four-year period for the Mungindi community. It is a rural community largely based around the agricultural sector. The droughts had a significant impact on the grain harvest, which most local businesses rely on, and the Queensland Government's COVID-19 border restrictions have stopped the flow of tourists to the Moree Plains shire from Queensland and vice versa. That has had a huge negative impact on the business community. With the destruction of the SPAR supermarket, the Mungindi community had no place to get their groceries. The nearest local supermarket was more than 120 kilometres away in Moree. The immediate need for the community was to provide essential items to residents, particularly the elderly, the Aboriginal community and the vulnerable.

Through the support of the Deputy Premier and the New South Wales Government, I was delighted to announce on 2 September, alongside the amazing and passionate mayor of Moree Plains shire, Katrina Humphries, a \$100,000 emergency grant from the Government to cover all the costs of establishing a temporary supermarket in the community, to be run by the Mungindi Progress Association. At that community meeting in the RSL club the day after the devastating fire, it was decided that the RSL building should be used as the pop-up supermarket. Volunteers from the community, the progress association and others spent all of last week cleaning out the club and installing fridges, freezers and shelving ahead of the delivery of the first lot of groceries by SPAR Australia to the community. They all rallied and spent the whole weekend unpacking the trucks.

I am pleased to inform the House that the supermarket officially opened yesterday. Staff from the former Mungindi SPAR supermarket were offered employment at the temporary store. It is welcome news to the community and a sign that the community is beginning to rebuild. I congratulate the RSL sub-branch's Kath McMillan and all the members of the sub-branch, who have been so accommodating in allowing the community to essentially move into their club to establish this temporary supermarket. It was a huge logistical effort to pull this together. I thank the Mungindi Progress Association president Anna Harrison, members Peter Prosser, Rebecca Longworth, Brooke Luhrs and Stacy Garsed and all the community members who rolled up their sleeves to make this happen. It was astounding. It just shows that the worst in nature brings out the best in humanity, and it really has.

Mungindi Progress Association has also set up an online GoFundMe campaign, which has now raised more than \$117,000. That money will go to supporting local business owners re-establish their businesses in the community. In addition to Mayor Katrina Humphries and general manager Lester Rodgers at Moree Plains Shire Council, I acknowledge Renee McMillan, who has been an amazing local emergency management officer. She has provided the glue to bring together all the components of the community effort. I also thank Public Works Advisory and Darren Keegan. Without them, we would not have been able to make the offer to clean up all of the debris from all of those burnt-out buildings free of charge to ensure that the owners did not reach into their own pockets. The Mungindi community is resilient. It will rebuild. I cannot wait to see the new buildings go up in the main street.

### ADVANCE DIVERSITY SERVICES

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:56:43):** I recognise the great work of a fantastic community organisation called Advance Diversity Services. When I think of an organisation that really does it all, Advance Diversity Services comes to mind. From assisting migrants to providing aged care services and supporting those with a disability, this organisation has truly been at the forefront of providing help to those from all walks of life. Advance Diversity Services provides services to culturally and linguistically diverse communities and recognises the difficulties that may be faced by those in our multicultural society who may have issues obtaining appropriate support services. Since its creation in 1981, Advance Diversity Services has provided direct individual support as well as assistance in community development, local initiatives and assistance to those who identify as LGBTIQA. This organisation is truly active, forward thinking and innovative.

I outline some of Advance Diversity Services recent achievements. Recently it announced a partnership with Auburn Diversity Services to workshop and innovate support to Nepalese communities in migrant and refugee settlement. These services will promote social participation, personal wellbeing and community connectedness. I am lucky to have a very active Nepalese community in the electorate of Oatley and it is great to hear of the benefit this partnership will bring to those who may have difficulty settling in Australia. At the end of 2019 Transport for NSW awarded Advance Diversity Services a \$50,000 grant—I note the Parliamentary Secretary for Transport and Roads is in the Chamber—for its Learn to Drive Program, which assists recently arrived refugees and migrants in the St George area. While many members in the Chamber today are fortunate enough to have been accustomed to Australian roads and driving from a young age, we can all appreciate the difficulty new migrants would encounter in familiarising themselves with our road rules as well as the costs of training and access to cars. Being able to drive is essential to opening avenues of mobility and economic and social participation. Unfortunately, it is an overlooked element of settlement. It is great to see Advance Diversity Services proactively creating opportunities like these in its community.

This organisation is always actively seeking the views of the community in order to better cater for the support it can provide. In 2019 it produced a report that investigated the needs of newly arrived young people in the St George area. It revealed that key concerns included community connectedness and peer pressure as well as the need for lower-cost health services that allow for unaccompanied and confidential visits. These findings have been instrumental in Advance Diversity Services providing more accessible, appropriate services to vulnerable young people who are integrating in our local community. This wonderful organisation continues to host its annual Migrant Information Day, which is attended by over 500 residents and 50 stallholders, including Surf Life Saving NSW and TAFE, as well as multicultural HIV and hepatitis services. The theme of last year's information day was "Seeing, knowing and supporting". It provides a comforting message to migrants and refugees to realise that they are not invisible and have a support system to turn to.

In 2018-19 Advance Diversity Services received over 40,000 inquiries for assistance. More than 200 people regularly meet at the centre and the organisation is run by a very active team of 28 volunteers. This is an organisation that has benefitted from partnerships with other services that can provide specialised support, such as Marrickville Legal Centre, Southern Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service and the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW. It is always great to see organisations coming together to provide the best services for our local community. I recognise the services of chairperson Ruth Fyfe as well as chief executive officer Antoinette Chow and thank them for their leadership and governance. Both women have done an exceptional job of continuing to guide this organisation from strength to strength. I congratulate Advance Diversity Services on its successful efforts so far this year. I look forward to continuing to support the work of the organisation in many years to come.

### SYDNEY OLYMPIC GAMES AND FAIRFIELD ELECTORATE

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (19:01:38):** It is hard to believe that the Sydney 2000 Olympics were held 20 years ago. As we celebrate the anniversary of what then president of the International Olympic Committee Juan Antonio Samaranch coined "the best Olympic games ever", let us cast our minds back to the Fairfield electorate's contribution to the games. The Games of the XXVIIth Olympiad were held from 15 September to 1 October, with Fairfield doing some very heavy lifting in hosting events and providing hundreds if not thousands of volunteers. The motto of the Games of the New Millennium was "Share the spirit—dare to dream", and Fairfield did exactly that. The Fairfield area was the focus of many lead-up events, including training and practice sessions, putting us on the international stage.

The lead-up to the opening of the games culminated in the iconic torch relay passing through the streets of Fairfield. Residents caught a glimpse of the torch and a lucky few had the chance to carry it through the streets. Of course, this brought with it much media attention and gave residents the opportunity to be well and truly a part of Olympic history. I was fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to be the master of ceremonies for several multicultural events hosted by Fairfield City Council at that time. I remember the colour and excitement from

local groups as they joined in the celebrations. Local sport and social clubs also played their part in celebrations by rolling out the welcome mat for team athletes and officials.

Before the games, many athletes and teams had the opportunity to test the venues that were built in Fairfield. In the months leading up to the Olympics it was very common to see entourages of athletes darting across the city to practice sessions. One of these practice events was held at Marconi Stadium. I was the official ground announcer at Marconi at that time and was given the opportunity to announce the practice game between the under-23s Brazilian football team against the Marconi Stallions first grade squad. I recall the excitement and the buzz in the air as Marconi Stadium was packed to the rafters, with the stadium being closed an hour before kick-off due to it reaching its maximum capacity. Locals turned up in force to see the likes of Ronaldinho grace the hallowed turf of Marconi Stadium. Fairfield was given the opportunity to shine, with Olympic events taking place at the Sydney International Equestrian Centre at Horsley Park, Western Sydney Parklands, Fairfield City Farm at Abbotsbury and the Sydney International Shooting Centre at Cecil Park. As a lasting legacy, Fairfield has international sports and recreation infrastructure that can be enjoyed by the community.

The Dairy at Abbotsbury is a lasting reminder of the games with its walking and cycling tracks that wind around the equestrian cross-country course, which still have visible thoroughfares and obstacles in place. The Dairy's paths take walkers around the back of the world-class Sydney International Equestrian Centre. Fairfield City Farm has a special place in the heart of the community. During the games it was the epicentre for the mountain bike events and the venue in which cycling legend Cadel Evans first rose to fame. The Dairy can rightfully lay claim to hosting the Australian Equestrian Team gold medallists Andrew Hoy, Phillip Dutton, Matt Ryan and Stuart Tinney in the team three-day event. Down the road at Cecil Park, Michael Diamond secured gold in the trap event at the Sydney International Shooting Centre. The Sydney 2000 Olympic Games was a magical time in the history of the State and the nation. We can all be proud of Fairfield's contribution to making it the best games ever.

#### MUDGEES CULTURAL PRECINCT

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (19:05:48):** I doubt anyone could say that 2020 has gone the way that we had hoped or probably thought it would. It is quite remarkable on 15 September 2020 to think of everything we have been through and to look back at some of the euphoria many of us experienced as the Sydney Olympic Games got underway at this time of the year in 2000. What a difference!

For me and other regional members of Parliament the COVID-19 pandemic has brought with it a really tough time and it has come on the back of years of prolonged drought. Many people in the regions have been brought to their knees because of the pandemic. We could add into that a terrible fire season and in some cases floods. For them the end of the year can hardly come quickly enough. But as we have seen time and time again regional communities find ways in which to persevere. The resilience shown by all communities that constitute the Dubbo electorate simply has been amazing to witness. Mudgee is one of those regions.

Last week it was great to announce another \$1.5 million to fund the creation of a cultural precinct in that town. The early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic hit Mudgee in a major way. Limited movement around the State had a massive impact on the region's tourism sector, which in recent years had grown exponentially. Mudgee is definitely one of the pre-eminent regional places to visit. As part of the additional \$1.5 million I announced alongside Mayor Des Kennedy and General Manager Brad Cam, of the Mid-Western Regional Council, that the council will be able to fully complete its new cultural precinct facility, which in turn will give visitors to the region an extra reason to stay longer and enjoy another experience.

The total \$8.1 million Mudgee Cultural Precinct project will link Lawson Park's *Sculpture Walk* to the Mid-Western Region's Arts and Cultural Centre and give a real sense of connectedness to art and culture in the CBD. The *Sculpture Walk* is a great local initiative. It helps to create a meaningful link and is another offering for visitors and local people. It builds on the reputation Mudgee already has for sculpture, thanks to *Sculptures in the Garden* that happens at Rosby winery. Unfortunately, things will be a bit different this year for that event. It will start on the weekend beginning 10 October, run for the following two weeks and closes on 25 October—all done within COVID requirements. Although it is slightly different, I encourage everyone to get tickets online, head to Mudgee and enjoy. I note that proceeds from this event will go towards the *Sculpture Walk* in Lawson Park.

It was great to see early works already underway last week on the gallery site. The construction tender has been awarded to Hutchinson Builders. They have played a very prominent role in Mudgee over the past 18 months, having recently completed the Mudgee Hospital redevelopment project. Hutchinson Builders has a really great reputation around town. It has been involved in plenty of other projects, has donated to other organisations and has used plenty of local subcontractors along the way, which is also really important. As part of the overall construction we will see a new artists' workshop centre that will include five workshop spaces, indoor and outdoor classrooms, amenities, a footpath and parking space. The classrooms will allow the council to host workshops and

events with visiting artists. It also will give a boost to the local economy and encourage more visitors to the region while simultaneously actively supporting arts and cultural development in the community.

I make no bones about it: The Mudgee Cultural Precinct will become the dedicated home of the arts in the Mudgee region. Along with the visiting artists and exhibitions it will also provide workspaces to assist with the ongoing development of local artists' talents. Members can believe me when I say there is certainly a stack of extremely talented locals who will benefit from the centre. I am also a great believer in the ability of a regional area to attract a variety of jobs and investment on the back of infrastructure like a cultural centre. Certainly there will be jobs available during the construction phase, which will start fairly soon. The new gallery space is expected to be completed around this time next year. The entire project is expected to be finalised by the end of 2021. Plenty of opportunities are created when something like a cultural precinct is built.

The funding I recently announced adds to the \$2.3 million committed in early 2019 and takes the State Government's commitment to \$3.8 million, which has been matched by the Mid-Western Regional Council. The project has been dubbed the "HEART" of Mudgee—the H and E of the acronym representing heritage and environment and ART representing the arts. The new cultural precinct means that the regions residents as well as the 655,000 annual visitors will have a cultural hub in which to express their creativity and it will be a place to enjoy. The entrance to Mudgee from the Dubbo side will be incredibly different. It will be fantastic. It will blend the old with the new as the old Cudgegong Chambers becomes part of a modern and vibrant arts and cultural hub.

I mentioned the early impacts of COVID but more recently things have changed. We have seen plenty of city siders flocking to regional areas. Given Mudgee's proximity to Sydney, visits by people who are keen on top-quality food and wine has resulted in visitor numbers having exploded. As we look to build on that in the future by encouraging tourists to stay longer and as we seek more investment to cater for the growing population, there can be no doubt that this type of precinct will underpin the region's future.

#### **JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE**

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (19:10:54):** I draw to the attention of the House the great work of the Jesuit Refugee Service at Westmead and the exemplary service it has been providing to our community. The Jesuit Refugee Service is an international Catholic organisation that was founded in 1980 by the Society of Jesus. It is known as Jesuit. Jesuit operates in 51 countries to help refugees, asylum seekers and displaced people in camps, detention centres and in war zones and cities. In Australia it serves and advocates for refugees and people seeking asylum as well as other people who face destitution and homelessness. The Jesuit Refugee Service provides emergency help, temporary shelter, a food bank, professional casework, community activities, employment support, school engagement, legal advice, advocacy and it runs a project to empower women who are seeking asylum.

Jesuit has formed strong partnerships with parishes, communities, schools, non-profit organisations, non-government organisations and grassroots groups to help refugees. The Jesuit Refugee Service has increased 224 per cent in demand for casework, emergency relief and food services since the COVID-19 pandemic started in March 2020. Many clients lost casual jobs and demand increased at its Women's Space in Parramatta for those experiencing domestic violence. During the COVID-19 pandemic the Jesuit Refugee Service at Westmead found other ways of providing the food bank service by pre-packing grocery bags and creating appointments to minimise social interaction at the Westmead centre. It is also testing delivery of food to those who may be destitute, have suppressed immune systems or who have no safety net. I congratulate Jesuit on delivering food to over 280 families across western Sydney, thereby sustaining more than 750 people every week. The deliveries are in the local government areas of Cumberland, Parramatta, Fairfield, Canterbury-Bankstown and Blacktown.

During the COVID-19 pandemic nearly all of its 90 volunteers had to take a step back due to age, health or caring responsibilities. However, Jesuit has managed to rebuild its volunteer base. Jesuit also has a team of volunteers who provide telephone-based casework, transfer emergency payments electronically and run online information sessions three days a week. I thank all the volunteers for their time and effort in helping the community. I also acknowledge Maeve Brown, the direct services manager, who has worked with refugees and migrants in Parramatta for the past 15 years and who is herself a migrant. I also acknowledge Ms Carolina Gottardo, who is the director for helping to support asylum seekers and vulnerable temporary migrants in the community during the pandemic. I congratulate the Jesuit Refugee Service at Westmead and all the other volunteers on their efforts in bringing much-needed relief and support to our community. There is no doubt that their efforts have had a positive impact on the lives of many. It is wonderful to see so many organisations working together during the COVID-19 pandemic to lend a hand to those in need so that, as a society, we will all come out of this stronger and more resilient.

### CHESTER HILL DEVELOPMENT

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (19:14:42):** I draw the attention of the House to a planning proposal application currently being considered by City of Canterbury Bankstown council. The planning proposal seeks extreme alterations to the Bankstown Local Environmental Plan 2015 and to the draft LEP 2020 currently under review by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. It seeks dramatic increases to the height and density controls at 1 Leicester Street, Chester Hill—or Chester Square, as it is more commonly known. It would triple the permissible building height from 20 metres to 62 metres and from six storeys to 18 storeys, and almost double the allowable floor space ratio from 2.5 to one to 4.53 to one. The ultimate aim of these amendments is to allow a development of the scale of a 633-unit, high-density, multi-towered building, with a number of the towers at 18 storeys.

A development of this scale would be a significant addition to the cityscape of centres such as Parramatta or Chatswood, but in a low-density residential suburb such as Chester Hill it is an incredible perversion of acceptable planning practices and common sense. The application was heard initially by the Canterbury Bankstown Local Planning Panel at its meeting on 3 August 2020. However, this was dramatically abandoned at the last minute after a member of the panel became aware of a previous pecuniary interest. Those minutes have now been removed from the council's website. A reconstituted panel ultimately heard the application on 17 August. The application contained an incredible recommendation from the council that it should proceed to gateway. This was contrary to the findings of the various peer reports that the Canterbury Bankstown council itself commissioned to assess the proposal and which highlighted numerous glaring shortcomings and serious issues.

These included that the scale, bulk and height are inconsistent with existing and desired key outcomes for the area of Chester Hill and that there is very little public benefit attached to this proposal. I joined a number of concerned residents in addressing the meeting to voice my concerns on behalf of the local community and to highlight the severe inconsistencies between the proposal and all existing current local planning controls. I thank all the residents who spoke on the evening and who wrote to the panel at very short notice. I note that we successfully convinced the panel to reject the outrageous recommendation that council proposed to the planning panel. Instead, the planning panel directed the developer to undertake further studies to show the benefits of the proposal and the impacts on traffic and parking on the broader town centre. It also directed the council to undertake proper master planning for the entire Chester Hill town centre.

I commend the dozens of residents who addressed or sent written submissions to the panel for achieving this result. Whilst I welcome the panel's directions to the developer to adequately assess its impact on the local area, it is very difficult to imagine what studies could possibly be undertaken to justify a proposal that council's own peer review has variously described as inconsistent, inappropriate, out of scale and unfeasible. Similarly, whilst I welcome the panel's recognition that the council, not the developer, should be taking the lead on planning for Chester Hill, I am still concerned that this should not be expedited in any way, shape or form. There are processes in place. Currently there is a draft LEP before the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment that is still to be finalised and there is also a local strategic planning statement that I do not agree with entirely. However, that was adopted and there is a process in place to ensure the proper planning is undertaken in this local government area.

I note an incident that took place during a meeting with residents on 28 August. A group of residents came together, including me, to discuss concerns about this particular planning proposal. I noted that there were two young women and a gentleman filming the meeting. I was told that they were filming on behalf of their employer, Chester Square Pharmacy, which is owned by a close relative of the developer. I am sure the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and all parliamentarians will agree it is not becoming of a major property developer to stalk and intimidate residents whilst they are holding a public meeting in a public place. Nevertheless, there has been an immediate and overwhelming reaction from the residents of Chester Hill, who have made it clear that they have had enough of developers calling the shots when it comes to planning with the community being sidelined. I will have more to say about this application, but I make it clear to my community that I join them in absolutely rejecting this planning proposal.

### FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE VEHICLES BEACH ACCESS

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (19:19:46):** I highlight the ongoing concern in my electorate about an issue that is likely to be affecting other coastal communities in New South Wales: The damage and misuse of our beaches by four-wheel drive vehicles. We are not talking about local fisher men and women; we are talking about interstate visitors creating driving ranges on our beaches. An alarming number of drivers of these sports vehicles travel to the wild and otherwise unspoiled beaches of South Ballina, such as Seven Mile Beach, and other beautiful beaches in the Northern Rivers. They are often from interstate and visit for the specific purpose of driving along



the expanses of sand at high speed, doing wheelies, bashing through dunes and even crossing some of the rock formations. I have no problem with the sport as long as it is practised somewhere else and not on our beaches.

Excessive numbers of four-wheel drive vehicles on our beaches pose a danger to the community and beachgoers. In 2015 I spoke in this place about the tragic death of community legend, and my dear friend, Jenny Caldwell. At 68 years of age she was competing in triathlons and ocean treks around the world but was killed by a four-wheel drive while walking along Stockton Beach north of Newcastle. I know that Jenny and her husband and family will not mind me raising this today because Jenny was responsible for restoring the entire dunal ecology along Suffolk Park. There is a plaque commemorating her efforts. This is an issue that, first and foremost, affects public safety. Not only do these vehicles threaten the safety of humans but also they damage the integrity of the dunes, grasses and littoral forests, as well as presenting a real and dangerous threat to the range of native birdlife that have their habitat in the dunes.

Most notable is the plight of the threatened pied oystercatcher population, which had slowly recovered but now has crashed from 66 recorded in late 2017 on South Ballina Beach to less than a handful at the end of last year. South Ballina Beach is a key management site for the endangered pied oystercatcher. The four-wheel drive vehicles often bring domestic dogs that are ruinous to the survival of beach-nesting shorebirds. I recognise the amazing work of Stephen Totterman, the Coastal Defenders Network and their research as well as the work of the Richmond River Area Pied Oystercatcher Protection Program and the Richmond River Area Shorebird Protection Program. I also recognise the efforts of local bird lover and resident of South Ballina Beach Megan Ward.

Local environmentalists tell us that with the closures due to COVID-19 there was a reprieve for vulnerable species and their food sources. Locals saw increases in the number of pied oystercatchers and mixed species flocks of birds—sightings that disappeared once vehicles started returning to the beach. The Njangbul culture is being impacted significantly, with Aboriginal communities and their allies very concerned about the destruction of culturally significant sites along the foreshore of South Ballina Beach. I have been very fortunate to be invited by Elders to see the impact that vehicles on the beach is having on Njangbul culture and heritage. This is not a trivial, occasional problem. Some afternoons as many as 120 vehicles will arrive at the beach in the space of three hours. Precisely such a figure has been diligently recorded by the local Coastal Defenders Network, which says it is a regular occurrence at weekends.

Illegal rubbish dumping, camping, fires, clearing of vegetation, dogs running wild, vandalism and theft are activities that accompany this supposed recreational activity. I am glad to be able to report some progress that my office made on the issue recently when Ballina shire councillors voted unanimously to close access to a key site at Patchs Beach. The problem is that different areas of the long, largely uninhabited foreshore are managed by different agencies and attempting to bring them together for the past four years has proven very difficult. I urge those diverse agencies to acknowledge the problem and agree that it will take a sustained and, above all, coordinated approach to prevent any further destruction. Today in this Chamber I am seeking to encourage those agencies to collaborate in a bold and decisive move to close South Ballina Beach for at least six months and allow ecologists to do a proper impact assessment and make a recommendation moving forward. We need to make sure that whatever access is given to vehicles, if any, is monitored and that the compliance is enforced to prevent further ecological damage. I can confirm that the Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council and Bundjalung Aboriginal Corporation are interested in taking on an operational role to manage compliance and regulation of four-wheel drive beach access and use on South Ballina beaches.

#### BERT LE-MERTON

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (19:24:50):** One of the many joyous events I have the privilege of sharing in is the special milestone birthdays that constituents have throughout the year. One such special milestone was when Bert Le-Merton celebrated his 100th birthday. In December 2018 I invited Bert to my electorate office to present him with a certificate and take photos to share the special occasion with our wider community. I was a little surprised but pleased to hear that he walked to my office from his home. The spritely and energetic appearance of a centenarian in my office is not a daily occurrence. He walked in dressed in a jacket and tie, and was proudly wearing his numerous war medals. After having a brief discussion, I was humbled by the outstanding story of a man who is a war hero, dedicated father and grandfather.

When I remarked on his energy and strength he shrugged off the praise by saying that he walked 3.5 kilometres each morning—he exercises more than I do. He still lives in his own home, mows his lawns, and manages the grocery shopping, cooking and cleaning himself. He added that the secret to a long and healthy life is to exercise one's brain and body. He said that many of his friends had retired and spent too much time watching television. He has gone to all of their funerals and has decided that his recipe for life—to exercise the brain and the body—was the best option.

Fast forward to the middle of 2020 and I was shocked and pleasantly surprised to see Bert featured in the mainstream media for his commitment as patron of the March On campaign initiated by Soldier On to raise money for the support of our modern day service personnel and their families. Bert was inspired by the achievement of British Captain Tom Moore, the World War II veteran who raised a Guinness World Record sum in the run-up to his 100th birthday after painstakingly completing 100 laps of his garden with the aid of a walking frame. Captain Tom Moore's goal was to raise £1,000, but instead he raised £32 million for the National Health Service during the COVID-19 pandemic. He was also knighted by the Queen in a unique socially distanced knighthood ceremony. After witnessing the younger—by two years—Captain Sir Tom Moore's fundraising efforts, Bert decided to walk 96 kilometres to raise funds for the March On campaign. Bert chose his walking goal of 96 kilometres in recognition of the length of the Kokoda Track—one of the four battlefields he fought on during World War II.

Bert was born on 18 November 1918 and in 1939, when he was 21, he was called up for full-time training in the military. While he was participating in the initial three-month training camp he enlisted in the Second Australian Imperial Force knowing that the war was going to be an important event in his life and the making of a safer and more secure Australia. After his initial training camp he returned to Sydney and was transferred to Ingleburn as a member of the 2/13th Battalion. During the course of World War II he fought at Tobruk, El Alamein, Borneo and Kokoda.

As a centenarian, Bert continues to serve our nation by fundraising for Soldier On. He set a fundraising target of \$10,000, but as word spread about this amazing veteran and his efforts for other younger veterans the donations began pouring in. I checked the website today and so far there have been 554 donors and Bert has raised a staggering \$69,393. That is an outstanding effort and one that I am proud to highlight in the House. After researching even more about Bert Le-Merton, I will finish my statement tonight by highlighting a couple of his quotes, which I believe are an inspiration to us all. He has said, "Take an interest in life." I think we can all apply that now, more than ever, to our neighbours, family and friends, given the challenges that we are facing under the current COVID-19 pandemic. He has also said, "We all have a responsibility to help our veterans. Whether blokes or sheilas, they all need care," and finally, "If I can do it, you can too ... so get up off your saddle and March On with me to support our veterans." I thank Bert.

#### **BLACKTOWN ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:29:55):** I will update the House on the frustration that the people of the Blacktown electorate, and more broadly across Blacktown city, are experiencing from the lack of essential services and infrastructure needed to sustain the massive population growth of our area. The fact is that the State and Federal governments declared Blacktown city to be one of the fastest population growth areas in Australia, with approximately 70,000 people having moved in since the 2011 election of the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government. Today the Treasurer and the Premier heralded the Government's \$3 billion jobs package, which would create up to 20,000 jobs.

The Government is all about announcements without accountability. They leaked nine projects worth over \$900 million to *The Daily Telegraph* to gain an exclusive and avoid scrutiny of where the \$3 billion worth of New South Wales taxpayer money ought to have been spent. While I congratulate the people of Shellharbour on being awarded \$320 million for a hospital, why have the people of north-west metropolitan Sydney—centring around Riverstone and Rouse Hill—had their announced hospital cancelled? The Liberal Government, propped up by The Nationals who make up the numbers for them to govern, announced at the 2015 and 2019 elections that they would build a hospital in Rouse Hill, only to cancel it the year after both elections. What has the Liberal member for Riverstone done to have that hospital cancelled twice? The Government heralds its road traffic black spot removal program.

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

**Mr STEPHEN BALI:** Roads and Maritime Services stated that the intersection of Bungarribee and Flushcombe roads in Blacktown is one of the worst accident spots in the State and requires a set of traffic lights. Allegedly, the Government's Black Spot Program was for projects costing less than \$10 million, and therefore the anticipated \$15 million Bungarribee and Flushcombe roads upgrade was too much of a black spot. Once again, the Government announced a program but failed to deliver where it was needed. The Government promised an upgrade to Blacktown Road at the 2015 and 2019 elections and it was listed in the current budget, yet the project has been delayed three times in the past 12 months with no actual start date scheduled. The bottleneck on Blacktown Road impacts three electorates, one of which is Seven Hills. Has the Liberal member for Seven Hills also offended someone in the Government or are we waiting for the fanfare of another media announcement?

The upgrade to Doonside station was announced by the previous Labor Government, with designs completed in 2011. The project was cancelled by the Liberals after they took office. At least I cannot blame the

Liberals for not following through on the upgrade since they never promised it. The need for the upgrade is clearly justified by Transport for NSW and the Auditor-General, but the Government would rather favour the construction of 17 other train stations that have a combined total usage less than that of Doonside. That is an example of infrastructure rorts by the Liberal-Nationals Government. The Government announced a new school in Riverstone, but demountables were required on day one due to a lack of planning.

I am saddened and disgusted that Blacktown city will receive none of the Government's \$3 billion jobs package announced today. It will create 20,000 jobs, none of which will be in Blacktown city. I remind the Government that one in every 21 people in New South Wales lives in the City of Blacktown. If Government members simply stopped making announcements, rolled up their sleeves and did some work they could announce the release of Riverstone West industrial precinct and Riverstone CBD at minimal cost to the Government and funded by the private sector. It would generate in excess of 40,000 jobs. Unfortunately, the Government is a complete disgrace in its treatment of electorates around the City of Blacktown, including the Liberal-held seats of Riverstone and Seven Hills. This Liberal Government can truly be summed up as the corridor of constipation with occasional movement that is trumpeted with much fanfare.

#### HARMONY DAY

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (19:35:03):** I acknowledge the success of this year's Harmony Day celebrations held right around the country. This year is the twenty-first anniversary of Harmony Day. For many of us that will seem like a relatively short amount of time. When we say a tradition is 21 years old, we usually consider it to be a fairly new tradition. However, in the context of Harmony Day and cultural acceptance in Australia, 21 years seem like a lifetime. Mr Speaker, you may remember what Harmony Day looked like 21 years ago—I certainly do—when it was introduced by the Howard Government and was met by a great amount of political controversy, both from people who objected to the day and people who thought one day was not enough. Some 21 years down the track, Harmony Day is celebrated by millions of people across the country and the Howard Government's decision is embraced by all corners of Australia.

We often hear that Australia is one of the most successful multicultural countries in the world. However, we may not hear regularly the incredible figures that prove this statement. As of 2016, 49 per cent of Australians were born overseas or have at least one parent who was. That is half the country. Australia is home to 300 different ancestries and has received over 7.5 million migrants since the end of the Second World War. Most pleasing of all, however, is that 85 per cent of Australians agree multiculturalism has been a positive experience overall for Australia. While this successful multiculturalism is something to be proud of, it is not something easily achieved. In that sense, Harmony Day is as much about celebrating the past as it is looking forward to the future.

Harmony Day has great personal meaning for me, not only in respect of my family's heritage but also in my role as the member for Oatley. My electorate, once considered a fairly Anglo-Saxon area, has developed into a microcosm of the success of multiculturalism in Australia. Whether it be European, Middle Eastern, Asian or any other ethnic community, I am confident that all local multicultural communities and their people now call the St George region home. On that note, it was great to spend Harmony Day addressing my local community at the Georges River Council's Harmony Day celebrations in Kogarah. It is also important to remember that while Australia has given those who have migrated here so much, they also have been active in giving back. One of the themes of Harmony Day is the successful integration of all migrants into our community. Something that is common amongst all migrants in our local area is their willingness to contribute.

They come to Australia, they settle and they are determined to play their part. Our local area is filled with multicultural success stories, multicultural businesses, communities and religious groups. An integrated, multicultural Australia is an integral part of our national identity. All people who migrate to Australia bring with them some of their own culture and religious traditions, as well as taking on many new traditions. Collectively, these traditions have enriched our communities in our nation. I am also proud to say that I am part of a government that is committed to advancing multiculturalism. We have announced and rolled out a range of grant programs, including the Celebrating Diversity program, which is very popular with many community groups in the St George area. This is a government that is fittingly led by someone who understands both the successes and tribulations of multiculturalism—Gladys Berejiklian. May the orange of Harmony Day continue to remind us that multiculturalism is one of our great strengths and may the next 21 years be just as productive as the last.

#### TRIBUTE TO EDWARD LAURENCE GRACE

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (19:38:59):** I inform the House of the passing on 22 August 2020 of Edward Laurence Grace, the former Federal member for Fowler and longstanding member of the Australian Labor Party. Edward Grace—better known to his mates as Ted—was born in Swansea, Wales, in 1931 and prior to his immigration to Australia served as a sailor in the British Merchant Navy and on board the royal yacht, *Britannia*. It may not come as a surprise to many members to learn that Ted was a staunch royalist through and through—

which made for some interesting chats around his staunch republican mates. As you can imagine, as the single monarchist within a group of republicans, it made for many colourful conversations. Ted was incredibly proud of and loyal to Queen and country, and spoke very highly of his time in the British Merchant Navy—especially his time on board *Britannia*. Ted was always a top bloke to turn to for a good chat and an interesting story.

I first met Ted at the end of 1973 as a member of the Labor Party, when new party rules meant that I had to transfer to the local Mount Pritchard branch—of which I am still a proud and active member today. I had the great honour and privilege of working alongside Ted in every single local, State and Federal election over the years. I fondly remember many great stories from our time as local Labor Party supporters, when we were spreading the good word throughout the community and helping out our local candidates. I remember one such time way back when Bonnyrigg was still considered a rural area with lots of farmland. Ted's son Dave and I used to do the pamphlet drops as Ted drove us from residence to residence. Dave and I would sit on the bonnet or wheel arch hanging onto the windscreen wipers or the car radio antenna, while Ted drove at breakneck speed, not bothering to miss the potholes. Mind you, this was in pitch darkness. The area was farmland and houses were much further apart than they are today. There was very little street lighting and sometimes we would meet angry dogs—which would transform Dave and I into Olympic sprinters.

It was a different era, well before widespread pamphlet distribution was the accepted norm and fundraising was just another part of campaigning and politics. All political paraphernalia was distributed by hand by branch members of an evening or on the weekend. It was all grit, blood, sweat and tears—but we had great times. Following Ted's immigration to Australia he started business for himself as a local air-conditioning consultant, as he was an electrician by trade, while also getting involved in local community activities and politics. He served as a representative in a number of roles over the years, starting as an alderman on Fairfield City Council from 1978 to 1985.

Over the years I knew Ted, for his annual holidays he would often travel up to Cairns with his family to this great little weekend getaway that his brother-in-law owned. During this time Ted and his family fell in love with the location and ultimately decided that it was where they wanted to end up whenever Ted retired. In 1981 Ted was elected chairman of Prospect County Council, the local electricity utility. He was a board member from 1978 to 1984. With his high profile as an alderman and chairman, when the new seat of Fowler was created in 1984 he decided the time was right to take a leap of faith and throw his hat in the ring to serve as a member of the Australian Parliament. When Ted stood for preselection he had the full support of the entire Mount Pritchard branch, which at that time had some 36 to 40 active and participating members.

Each and every member lined up to do their part to help Ted get elected, which is kind of funny when you think back on it with all the allegations of branch stacking that are thrown around today. People said there was no way a branch could have that many active members—and there were only 30 or 40. But our branch had a strong showing of local supporters and residents who firmly believed in the core Labor values. We were the definition of a powerful grassroots branch. Ted served our local community diligently for 14 years, from 1984 to 1998, when he did a lot for our area. He was always one of those blokes who remained down to earth and who would immediately relate to anybody he spoke to. Many locals will remember Ted as having worked tirelessly over the years.

Ted retired from politics in 1998, when he was succeeded by Julia Irwin, and he and his family moved to Cairns to relish his well-earned retirement. Ted was always a fantastic mate and a firm believer in the core Labor values and in doing what was right for his community. I was proud to say that I was a great mate with Ted Grace, a truly remarkable man who lived a wonderful and full life. On behalf of the Cabramatta electorate, I extend my heartfelt condolences to his wife, Connie, and his son, David. Ted was truly an outstanding gentleman who could not do enough for his friends or his community. He will be dearly missed. Vale Edward Laurence "Ted" Grace. Rest in peace.

#### WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY INNOVATION QUARTER

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (19:45:02):** Tertiary education and research opportunities in the Seven Hills electorate continue to flourish, particularly in the Seven Hills and Westmead areas. Recently I was delighted to announce part of a \$34 million infrastructure and services upgrade to Seven Hills High School in the electorate, which will train local and future community and health service workers as well as trades and transport and logistics workers. I also spoke in this House during the last sitting about the University of Sydney's long-term investment at Westmead, particularly in the health and innovation spaces, such as joint medical research with Westmead Hospital and the Children's Hospital at Westmead, and in training doctors, nurses, dentists and oral health specialists.

Today I acknowledge Western Sydney University's place at the Westmead Health, Education and Innovation Precinct in the electorate of Seven Hills. For my own primary education I went to Westmead Public

School. Westmead Public School was then a demonstration school for the teachers' college at Westmead, which turned into the current Western Sydney University campus. On 3 September Western Sydney University Vice-President Peter Pickering, CSIRO Executive Director Dave Williams and the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, Stuart Ayres, MP, eagerly announced the \$350 million development of a new innovation quarter. The university's innovation quarter will be a joint venture with Charter Hall and will house some of the world's leading research institutes and an additional facility for Australia's national science agency, the CSIRO.

The complex at Westmead will open in 2021 and includes the university's MARCS Institute for Brain, Behaviour and Development, the NICM Health Research Institute and the Translational Health Research Institute, with key researchers from the CSIRO's e-Health and Nutrition and Health programs. Western Sydney University and CSIRO's innovation quarter will be part of an incredible investment in the Westmead Health, Education and Innovation Precinct. It will forge the precinct as one of the largest of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere, featuring four major hospitals, four world-leading medical research institutes, two university campuses, multiple primary and secondary schools and the largest intensive pathology service in New South Wales.

The innovation quarter is perfectly placed to connect Greater Parramatta locals via the light rail to the university's Parramatta campus. Students, researchers and staff will also be able to take advantage of the heavy rail and the Sydney Metro West station at Westmead. The university's site at Westmead will be a hub for 2,500 students and 1,900 workers. I welcome the announcement of the innovation quarter, its model for government and industry engagement and how it will research positive outcomes that benefit western Sydney residents. Research and work from the site will benefit the near one million residents of the Western Sydney Local Health District across 120 suburbs in the local government areas of Blacktown, Cumberland, The Hills and Parramatta, all of which I represent as the member for Seven Hills.

The Western Sydney University Innovation Quarter will continue its key engagement with the district's hospitals at Auburn, Blacktown, Mount Druitt and Westmead and community health centres across Auburn, Blacktown, Castle Hill, Doonside, Merrylands, Mount Druitt and Parramatta. It is terrific to see the New South Wales Government continue to support key western Sydney infrastructure and education projects such as the innovation quarter at Westmead. This is a great complement to the recently constructed 14-storey Central Acute Services Building at Westmead Hospital, which will engage thoroughly with tertiary education for integrated health care and medical functions.

This new facility, along with a refurbishment of many wards and educational facilities at Westmead, is valued at over \$1 billion. Currently the New South Wales Government is in discussions with key stakeholders for the planning of the near \$700 million redevelopment of the Children's Hospital at Westmead. Both sites are in the electorate of Seven Hills. However, I also note the terrific investments for the redevelopment of Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospitals at over \$700 million. I regularly hear from constituents with positive comments on the new facilities at Blacktown, particularly the birthing suite and the new operating theatres. I congratulate Minister Ayres and the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, Dr Geoff Lee, MP, on their support of this local project and its benefits to the residents of the Seven Hills electorate, electorates across western Sydney and their electorates of Penrith and Parramatta.

#### **PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE KOALA PROTECTION**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (19:49:30):** The ugly collapse of the Liberal-Nationals Government last week over the issue of koalas and the grubby deals soon to be done by the Premier to smooth things over are all matters of great concern to my electorate of Port Stephens. The unedifying display of disloyalty and self-interest should concern every resident in the State. For many it was shocking and scandalous, especially at a time when so many families in my electorate and across the State are doing it so tough, but for members of this House it was not surprising. Because truthfully last week's behaviour by the Deputy Premier and The Nationals is nothing new. The game has been playing out time and again. The Liberals know it, we know it, members of the crossbench know it and certainly members of the press gallery know it. We know the Barilaro playbook. We have seen this charade many times before.

Last year the Deputy Premier announced he wanted to relinquish his title so he could speak out more freely. He said that to a National Party conference. Residents in Port Stephens, my constituents, want to know: Did he relinquish his title? Did he give up his \$350,000 salary and all the perks of office? No, he did not. He did not then and he did not last week. It was all a show from someone who is all huff and no puff. That is the story of John Barilaro. The excuse for the Deputy Premier's dummy spit last week was the issue of koala protection, for which this Government over nine years has an appalling track record.

My electorate of Port Stephens is home to an endangered population of koalas and yet the Liberal-Nationals Government recently approved and then fast-tracked a gravel mine expansion in Brandy Hill which will bulldoze

52 hectares of core koala habitat. The Liberal environment Minister and the Liberal planning Minister supported the project. In July this year it was given the big tick of approval. Then the Independent Planning Commission [IPC] approved the project but urged the Government to change the laws to better protect koalas. The decision of the IPC said:

By way of comment, the commission is of the view that in light of the "Black Summer" bushfires and the Parliamentary Review, it may be appropriate to re-evaluate the policy framework under which the impact on koalas is required to be assessed.

Here is the planning commission saying that koala protections in New South Wales are weak and inadequate and need to be strengthened. But instead this week the National Party almost ground the Government to a halt because it is hell-bent on weakening the laws even further. Thankfully I have some good news when it comes to the Brandy Hill Quarry expansion. On Monday last week the Federal environment Minister, Sussan Ley, announced that she would delay her decision on this project. Her decision to delay was a direct consequence of the incredible community campaign. I urge everyone to follow and support the community campaign by going to the Facebook page Save Port Stephens' Koalas.

We also have the University of Newcastle to thank because, following the State Government's shocking approval process, university researchers and scientists attended the site three separate times to independently assess the quality of the habitat. What they found was game changing. An expert opinion report authored by Dr Ryan Witt and Associate Professor John Clulow found that the mine expansion would sever an important east-west habitat corridor, interrupt vital breeding processes and destroy critical koala habitat. When the Federal Minister announced her decision to delay, she said it was partly because of this report and the new information revealed within it.

The question is: Why was this information not part of the State approval process? It is because our laws in New South Wales—the laws of those opposite—are so weak. This project was approved and fast-tracked by this Government and the planning commission did not have information that was accurate and up to date with data that took into account the devastating bushfires and the importance of protecting unburnt habitat, home to breeding koalas. Now The Nationals want to weaken the laws even further. My message to The Nationals is simple: In 30 years' time when koalas are extinct we will blame you. The message to the Liberal Party is just as simple: You are allowing this to happen. You are signing off on these laws. You are approving these habitat-destroying projects. When there are no more koalas left in the wild in Port Stephens we will blame you too.

Right now in the fight to stop the Brandy Hill Quarry expansion and save Port Stephens' koalas our last hope lies with the Federal Minister, Sussan Ley, a member of a government that has failed in its responsibility as the last line of defence for threatened species in the country and is now seeking to push its responsibilities onto this State. Thank goodness our koalas have local champions, scientists and supporters from around the world fighting for their survival because right now it is hard to see that anyone in the Berejiklian or Morrison Liberal-Nationals governments care. But they should know this: We will not give up this fight because we do care. My community cares. It cares about koalas and the environment and all the other species whose survival is threatened by this Liberal-Nationals Government's fundamental lack of care.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (19:54:32):** There is a lot that this Government is doing. For example, there will be a new koala sanctuary and research station in Tweed Heads. Increased funding is being provided to the Koala Hospital in Port Macquarie. In August last year the sod was turned at Port Stephens for another sanctuary and koala hospital. There is \$7 million for the largest koala habitation in Gunnedah.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** The member for Port Stephens will come to order. There were no interjections during her contribution.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** We are talking about the Koala SEPP. We agree with the SEPP but the science says that the changes to it are wrong. The researcher who did the science which formed the basis of the koala strategy and was adopted for the SEPP says that their work and the science are being misrepresented. That is why The Nationals are fighting for regional areas, regional communities and farmers to make amendments to the SEPP.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** I congratulate members for getting through that with such decorum. I note the member for Port Stephens opened the door for a response. I acknowledge that there were opportunities for points of order to be taken but we all got through it nicely, thank you.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **MARK NIELSEN, SR**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (19:56:16):** I acknowledge Mark Nielsen Sr who recently retired from the NSW Police Force after serving an incredible 41 years. Mark spent 40 years in the Highway Patrol, protecting

our drivers and leading the way in some of the most effective safety measures we have today. Mark was so influential in the introduction of random breath testing that he earned himself the nickname Mr RBT. Mark was only 19 when he joined the police force and was originally stationed at Bankstown but his long career took him far away from home and to the other side of the world to fulfil his role. Mark worked for 23 years in the dignitary protection group and had the opportunity to meet some of the world's most influential people, including Pope Benedict XVI at World Youth Day in 2008 and Her Majesty the Queen. There is no doubt that Mark will continue to remain active in his community and we look forward to seeing him around locally. I thank Mark for his dedication to protecting our community for so many years. I wish him a healthy and happy retirement and look forward to meeting him in person in this place to welcome him and his son, Mark Nielsen Jr, who is also changing the world in his own ways.

#### NICHOLE SANSOM

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:57:14):** I acknowledge Nichole Sansom for her outstanding service to the community. Nichole has informally supported and fostered approximately 30 children over the past 20 years. Nichole has a reputation in the local area for helping her neighbours and friends. She believes in helping vulnerable children by providing food, shelter, love and guidance. Nichole embodies the old saying, "It takes a village to raise a child." Nichole particularly enjoys teaching children. She helps with basic science to provide children with the tools to create an enjoyable learning environment. The love and satisfaction she receives from watching these children grow is priceless. Nichole is also an outstanding employee at the Super IGA Doonside, where once again she has a reputation for going beyond expectations for customers or helping employees going through rough times. I thank Nichole Sansom for her wonderful service to the Doonside community.

#### KEN CAMERON

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (19:58:13):** I congratulate Marlee local Ken Cameron on his significant and ongoing service to the community. Ken was recently named the Mid North Coast Adult Volunteer of the Year for 2020, thanks to his selfless dedication to multiple volunteer organisations. Ken has been a volunteer firefighter and has held many positions with the Marlee brigade for more than 40 years, during which time he was a key driver behind the planning and fundraising which made the Marlee Fire Station a reality. He has dedicated countless hours to the Marlee Hall and Progress Association, where he has been a life member since 1997 and president since 2006. His other community involvements include volunteer work for the Wingham High School P&C, the Marlee Landscape Group and the Marlee Tennis Club. I again congratulate Ken Cameron and his wife, Jennie, and hope he continues his great work throughout Marlee and the surrounding community for years to come.

#### MATES IN CONSTRUCTION

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (19:59:20):** World Suicide Prevention Day is commemorated on 10 September. On that solemn day I joined MATES in Construction and flew the flag to raise awareness of mental health and suicide prevention at work. MATES in Construction is an industry-based charity that was created to reduce the devastatingly high suicide rates within the construction, energy and mining industries. The program has reached over 200,000 workers across Australia, including 58,206 in the electorate of Prospect alone. MATES in Construction works with businesses, workers and industry stakeholders to provide the most holistic and thorough approach to reducing suicide rates and improving mental health within the industry. I congratulate and sincerely thank New South Wales chief executive officer Brad Parker and the entire team at MATES in Construction for all the great work they do throughout the community and throughout New South Wales.

#### KEITH OSTLER

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (20:00:15):** It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Tamworth resident Mr Keith Ostler on his recent retirement from NSW Trains after almost 48 years of service. Keith's career with NSW Trains commenced as a junior station assistant in Gilgandra in 1972, working his way to Orange and then to the head office in Sydney in 1978. After 13 years, he had had enough of the city. Looking for a tree change, he transferred to Tamworth as a travel consultant before being promoted to area customer service manager. During his time there, Tamworth was recognised as one of the top sellers of the Great Southern rail holiday packages in Australia, and Keith was instrumental in that. He also was persistent and determined in the reopening of the Moree rail station in July 2019 after it had been closed for 30 years. Keith said he was proud to be part of an organisation that provided an affordable mode of transport for regional communities to access the city. I am sure Keith could write a book about the changes he has seen over the years, from the introduction of air-conditioned carriages to station upgrades. I thank Keith for his dedication and service.

**TRIBUTE TO JOEL DARK**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (20:01:26):** On a number of occasions in this place I have spoken about my local rugby league club, Central Newcastle. Tonight I have very sad news to report to the Parliament. Last Friday 19-year-old Butcher Boy Joel Dark passed away in John Hunter Hospital following a head knock in a game against Wests at St Johns Oval on 6 September. It was Joel's first grade debut for Central Newcastle. He came from Old Bar and started the season with the Butcher Boys. He had footy in his blood—his cousin is Boyd Cordner. Joel's father proudly presented him with his first grade jersey in the sheds before the game on Father's Day. At what is no doubt an incredibly difficult time for Joel's family, Central Newcastle and Wests players and the rugby league community, I recognise the support the community has given and received, including several counselling sessions, the delivery of meals to and fundraising for Joel's family, hundreds of comments of condolence on social media, postponements and a minute's silence at local games as well as at last Saturday's Roosters versus Knights match. Rest in peace, Joel Dark—forever a Butcher Boy.

**MATISSE LETHERBARROW**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (20:02:36):** I acknowledge local Super Netball player Matisse Letherbarrow of Old Toongabbie. On 15 August Matisse debuted for the Western Sydney Giants in the Suncorp Super Netball match against the Queensland Firebirds. She came on as goal attack and sunk three from four goals. Matisse began her netball journey with the Baulkham Hills Shire Netball Association and has played in the Australian Netball League since she was 16 years old. In 2018 and 2019 she was selected to represent Australia in the under-17 squad. During that time Matisse captained the New South Wales under-17 State team at the 2019 National Netball Championship and will compete for her State again in 2020 as a member of the under-19 team. I wish Matisse all the best in representing the Seven Hills electorate as a Western Sydney Giant and in her incredible future in netball. She is an outstanding Toongabbie girl.

**TRIBUTE TO THE HON. JOHN FAHEY, AC**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (20:03:30):** It was upsetting to learn, on the morning of Saturday 12 September, of the passing of former Premier of New South Wales the Hon. John Fahey, AC. From the outpouring of tributes and well wishes from our community, it was plain to see the legacy that John has left on our State and our country. As well as being a former premier, John had a long and distinguished career as the member for Camden and member for Southern Highlands in the New South Wales Parliament and the member for Macarthur in the Australian Parliament. The legacy of his tenure is still felt today, from his reaction to having won for Australia the right to host the 2000 Olympic Games to the significant reforms and new infrastructure that still serve our State today. On behalf of the Macarthur and the Southern Highlands communities, I offer my thoughts and prayers to John's wife, Colleen, and his family.

**TYLER KING**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (20:04:27):** Last month the National Rugby League held its Indigenous round and when the Newcastle Knights took to the field they were proudly wearing a jersey designed by local Aboriginal artist Tyler King. Tyler involved three Knights players and four Indigenous detainees from the Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre in the project. A jersey that represents the landscape of Newcastle, the wider region and also includes the handprints of the three players was produced. A beautiful touch was also the incorporation of the totems of the players involved: a goanna for Connor Watson, a turtle for Gehamat Shibasaki and a saltwater crocodile for Edrick Lee. The final result looked stunning on the field and is an absolute credit to Tyler's creativity, skill and cultural pride.

**RAY PERRY**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:05:24):** I acknowledge Mr Ray Perry who has been nominated for the 2020 NSW/ACT Regional Achievement and Community Awards, which recognise outstanding contributions to community. Ray, who is 90 years old, has been an enthusiastic, active and keen member of the Bectric Hall recreation hall and reserve for 74 years. He continues to be involved with managing the upkeep, restoration and maintenance of the historic Bectric Hall and reserve grounds. Thank you, Ray, for your passion and decades of dedication. I thank also all the valued volunteers who have worked so hard to preserve the 116-year-old Bectric Hall, which is the last standing pise hall in Australia. May there be many more happy functions and events at this significant recreational reserve and hall.

**CABRAMATTA PUBLIC SCHOOL SCRABBLE CLUB**

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (20:06:25):** I commend and congratulate several astonishing young men from the Cabramatta Public School Scrabble Club: Jeff Lam, Alex Lam and Patrick Huynh. They have taken out first, second and third place respectively in the Chipping Norton Junior Scrabble Tournament. Jeff scored an



astonishing 701 during the tournament, setting an Australian record for 2020. This is a feat that many lifelong scrabble players have yet to achieve. The Cabramatta Public School Scrabble Club, coordinated by Ms Tisa Ng and coached by Mr Tony Hunt, who is also the Scrabble Australia National Youth Coordinator, has shown an extraordinarily high success rate since the club's inception in 2014. The talents of Jeff, Alex and Patrick have been recognised far and wide as rising stars of the Scrabble circuit both locally and abroad. On behalf of the Cabramatta electorate, I once again commend and congratulate Jeff, Alex and Patrick on their remarkable achievements and wish them all the very best in the upcoming tournament. I have no doubt they will do the community proud.

#### **PICNIC POINT HIGH SCHOOL**

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (20:07:27):** I congratulate the incoming school leadership team of Picnic Point High School on their exciting new roles as they begin the final 12 months of their high school education. The school captains are Riley Hayward and Hannah Bentley; vice captains Danielle Zidan and Benjamin Wedgwood; and prefects Hayley Linabury, Victoria Sakis, Raahat Shaik, Ellie Truong, Jack Wedgwood, Blake Macdonald, Jack Pike and Cameron Daly. It warms my heart to see as part of this leadership team several names I recognise. I had the great pleasure of choreographing Captain Hannah Bentley in *Oliver* for Bankstown Theatre Company in 2017. Vice Captain Benjamin Wedgwood burned the floor for many years at the same dance schools as my daughters Ruby and Lori. Last year I had the great pleasure of having Jack Pike as a work experience student. Jake Pike and Cameron Daly are the children of former Picnic Point High School students with whom I went through high school. I am sure their parents, Jodie, Ken and Rebecca, are very proud of them, as I am sure are the parents and family of the entire leadership team. I thoroughly enjoyed my time as a vice captain at Picnic Point High School. I wish them all every success in what I am sure will be an exceptional year of leadership at Picnic Point High School.

#### **TEA GARDENS PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (20:08:50):** The students and staff of Tea Gardens Public School recently achieved something neither this Parliament nor the Federal Parliament in Canberra have achieved: They held the opening of their school Parliament entirely online. In fact, I am calling it an Australian first in Tea Gardens. By going online it allowed guests to attend the Parliament and families to watch it later. Most importantly, it ensured an important tradition that the school was able to continue—students having a say in how their school runs. Congratulations to 2020 Prime Minister Sam Alchin, Deputy Prime Minister Rory Ingram and the 2020 Ministers and Deputy Ministers. I make special mention of the current principal, Mark Clemson, and former principal Daryl Martin, who began the school Parliament 31 years ago and has attended every year since. The entire school approached the challenge present by COVID-19 with creativity, confidence and resilience. I can confidently say that these kids, when presented with hurdles in life, will be well-equipped by their time at Tea Gardens Public School.

#### **MICHAEL MEDWAY**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (20:09:39):** I congratulate Mr Michael Medway on his election as chair of Golf NSW. Michael has been a friend for many years and it was wonderful to see him achieve this result. His election to chair continues his involvement in the golf sporting world. He has been a board member of Golf NSW since 2017, serving on several committees including finance, governance and the golf committee. He has also been involved with one of my local golf clubs, Brighton Lakes, for close to 20 years—since it was the New Brighton Golf Club. He is very passionate about golf, a sport he has been involved in from a very young age. For as long as I have known Michael he has shown his passion for the sport. If you got to see him on a weekend he was usually still in his golf clothes, having come straight from the golf course. I again congratulate Michael on this wonderful achievement and, additionally, congratulate Golf NSW on electing a chairperson who is so obviously passionate about golf and who I am sure is highly qualified to help lead it into the future.

#### **YERIN ELEANOR DUNCAN ABORIGINAL HEALTH CENTRE**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (20:10:41):** Yerin Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Centre has been active for 25 years, providing culturally responsive services to meet the health, spiritual, social and emotional needs of the Central Coast Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Around 13,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live on the Central Coast. The region has the fastest-growing Indigenous community in Australia. Recently Yerin released its own fortnightly podcast, co-hosted by Luke Grant and Brett Field, which educates listeners on the centre's services. Grant sees the podcast being a place where people can share their stories, starting with the team leaders at Yerin. The name "Yerin" refers to the place where freshwater and saltwater meet, creating brackish water in the mouth of a river. This is a powerful metaphor for two things coming together to create something new. The patient and healthcare services that Yerin provides are the two waters coming together to create a healthier, happier, more balanced person, family and community.

### CENTRAL COAST SURF LIFE SAVING CLUBS

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:11:42):** All members know the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, but that did not stop Surf Life Saving NSW from holding its annual Awards of Excellence. On Saturday 29 August volunteers from just about every surf club in New South Wales—including all 15 clubs on the Central Coast—virtually attended Surf Life Saving's night of nights. I am delighted to inform the House that the Central Coast was named the 2020 Branch of the Year. This is a fantastic achievement, given the Central Coast has to contend with so many high-performing regions across the State. I acknowledge and thank the CEO of Surf Life Saving Central Coast, Jon Harkness, for all his work and the results he has achieved since starting in the role earlier this year. Jon is very lucky to have what I consider to be the 15 best clubs in New South Wales. I look forward to working with Jon to ensure that our Central Coast clubs get the government funding and support they need to continue doing a fantastic job.

### NSW POLICE FORCE CLASS 342

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (20:12:44):** I commend and congratulate NSW Police Force graduates of Class 342, who were sworn in at a police attestation ceremony on 14 August 2020. While NSW Police Force attestation ceremonies are usually attended by friends, family and loved ones, mounted police and a marching band, class 342's parade was a little different. Class 342 will be remembered as the first class to undergo attestation during the COVID-19 pandemic, which enforced a range of social distancing protocols to ensure the safety of all those in attendance. Although guests were not permitted to attend class 342's attestation, this very special ceremony was live streamed online, which allowed thousands of friends, families, loved ones and the community to watch and show their support throughout the entire ceremony. After 32 weeks of adapting to and overcoming many trials and tribulations, we are all immensely proud of class 342's achievements as the newest graduates of the NSW Police Force. On behalf of Cabramatta electorate, I extend congratulations and commendations to each and every graduate from class 342. I wish them all the very best for the future.

### TONY ADAMS AND JOAN MCLEAN

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (20:14:15):** The date 15 August 2020 marks 75 years since the end of World War II and commemorates Victory in the Pacific Day. Tony Adams and Joan McLean are veterans who live in my electorate of Davidson and they have been acknowledged for their efforts during the war. Inspired by the stories of Gallipoli, Tony Adams from Killara joined the army at age 18 and was soon transferred to the Royal Australian Air Force within six months. Tony fought as part of the Royal Air Force's Bomber Command where he completed 36 missions over Germany and other parts of Europe. He flew over France before and after D-Day and dropped supplies to the French Resistance. He has never forgotten his experiences during the war. Joan McLean, who is a 52-year resident of St Ives, joined the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force at age 18 and trained as a cipher assistant, operating the top-secret Typex machine. Prior to the formation of the WAAAF, only male officers did that work. Joan fondly remembers what were difficult and frightening times. I am pleased they have been recognised and thank them both, along with all veterans across Australia, for their sacrifice in defending the freedoms we enjoy today.

### SHARLOTTE FISHER

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (20:15:23):** I acknowledge the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Health and Sport of the Wyoming Public School, Sharlotte Fisher, for her kind of thoughts during the current health pandemic. Sharlotte is a year six student at the Wyoming Public School who has brightened up the Central Coast community by creating artwork that not only puts a smile on our faces but also shows the true compassion and sensitivity of our younger folk during the pandemic. Sharlotte not only provided me with a beautiful artwork but also sent some cheer to a local nursing home, knowing the isolation they are experiencing, and through her kind words brought them hope and happiness during this time. Sharlotte has shown herself to be a real community leader. I am sure the school is proud of their Deputy Prime Minister. No doubt her parents are very proud of the person she has become. Helping people in times of need is a true example of leadership. On behalf of The Entrance electorate, I thank Sharlotte Fisher.

### GUNDAGAI PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:16:26):** Congratulations to the Gundagai Public School, which has raised an amazing \$18,747 for the Heart Foundation through the Jump Rope for Heart skipping program that raises money in schools to fight heart disease. With only 157 students enrolled at the school, this was an outstanding achievement. Well done to the boys and girls who skipped for more than 322 hours! I particularly acknowledge kindergarten student, Abi Pigram, who skipped for a total of approximately 17 hours and raised a remarkable \$8,007. Abi's family has a history of genetic heart condition and her relatives rallied to support her

skipping effort. Well done Gundagai Public School for helping to promote a positive attitude to healthy lifestyle choices and a wonderfully inspiring achievement from within my electorate of small communities.

#### **RACHEL WILLIS**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:17:23):** It is with great sadness that the Central Coast farewells Rachel Willis from her role as the CEO of Coast Shelter. Congratulations to Rachel on her fabulous contribution to our community with the Coast Shelter providing over 75,000 overnight beds during 2018-19, which was Rachel's first full year as CEO. With more than 8,000 people remaining at risk of homelessness on the Central Coast, Rachel leaves fully aware that Coast Shelter will need to continue to expand, grow and innovate. In the 12 months reported, prior to COVID there was an increase of 11 per cent in the demand for crisis accommodation and 62 per cent of those were people seeking support after family breakdown or violence. Rachel brought a wealth of experience of family and community service into the organisation and made significant changes and huge adaptations to support people during COVID. Coast Shelter has a diverse and talented workforce. It supports many volunteers, a number of whom arrived on the doorstep while living rough and who are now well established, sleeping safe, now housed, and contributing to our community. Thanks again to Rachel for her valuable contribution.

#### **METELLA ROAD PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (20:18:32):** I acknowledge the 2020 student leadership team and Parents & Citizens committee of the Metella Road Public School at Toongabbie. The school educates over 720 local students from southern Seven Hills areas and parts of Toongabbie. The 2020 Metella Road Public School student leaders are Lacey Wearing, Addney Wardhana, Lani Anderson, Sarah, Burridge, Rhitika Patel, Thomas Pinder, Aaran Srimurugathas, Kiah Standley, Bellany Suharno and Ryan Thomas. I thank the Parents & Citizens committee for its work in 2019 and 2020, and for its support of the school and the wider community during this pandemic. I acknowledge president Ash Kumar, vice-presidents Sobhana Shyju and Rujenthan Thirugnanam, Belinda Bryan and treasurer Michael Cohen. I thank the school's executive leadership team, the teachers and the support staff for their enthusiasm and dedication in teaching the Seven Hills electorate's students at the Metella Road Public School.

#### **KANGY ANGY RESIDENTS ACTION GROUP**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (20:19:39):** I acknowledge the continued efforts of the Kangy Angy Residents Action Group in my electorate. The group was formed in response to the construction of an intercity maintenance railway facility near their homes. The residents continue to voice their dismay over how they have been treated. I have been provided with a statement from Susan Zgraja, endorsed by the group, which contradicts statements made by Transport for NSW and John Holland about the protection of the region's famous natural environment. Ms Zgraja says:

In the beginning we were told that the flooding issue would be resolved with two retention chambers. In the end, the chambers were unable to cope with fairly minor inundation according to locals and the site was severely flooded. In the beginning we were told that we could discuss any issues arising from the development. In the end we were informed of work being done, no discussion necessary.

The group's overall position is summed up quite nicely as follows:

The tragedy is that all of this construction could have been avoided if Transport had chosen a site close by, suitably zoned, on offer with less civil engineering imperatives and with little environmental impact. Another case of arrogance, the value of the dollar overriding the value of the environment and morality. What a terrible price to pay.

On behalf of the community, I thank the group for its efforts.

#### **EDMONDSON PARK CAR PARK**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (20:20:46):** I recognise the commencement of the construction of new spaces at Edmondson Park car park. I am pleased to say that the entry gate to the southern car park has now been closed and construction is officially underway. The site will deliver 1,000 new spaces and another 1,000 will be delivered on the other site, giving a total of 2,000 new spaces. Now that construction is underway, temporary parking has been made available on the northern side of the car park and will be open until construction of the new spaces is completed. I was honoured to attend the smoking ceremony and acknowledgement of country at the site on 31 August 2020. It was an appropriate way to start the process. I am pleased that construction has started because part of my promise was to deliver these new spaces. I thank the Premier and the Minister for Transport and Roads for helping to deliver this outcome. I look forward to seeing the construction of the next 1,000 spaces starting soon.

### CENTRAL COAST COVID-19 TESTING FACILITIES

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:21:56):** I recognise everyone who has been involved in the numerous COVID testing clinics across the Central Coast. I recognise those at Gosford and Wyong hospitals, the EV Church at Erina, the Woy Woy Public Hospital clinic and all those at private testing facilities across the Central Coast who have supported residents in getting tested and getting their results back as soon as possible. I thank our GPs, who have made huge adjustments and who are providing support over and above the call of duty to care for their patients. I thank all of those involved in pathology and the complex administration and distribution of results and information to community members. I encourage all Central Coast residents to get tested as soon as possible if they display any symptoms of COVID. I continue to fight to reopen pop-up clinics in areas across the Central Coast if numbers change, including reopening a pop-up clinic on the peninsula.

### SHELLHARBOUR ANGLICAN COLLEGE

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (20:22:52):** I congratulate seven local secondary students from Shellharbour Anglican College who have completed their gold Duke of Edinburgh's Awards. Well done to Jessica Livingstone, Katya Romankin, Jessica Holland, Andrea Barnes, Leandrey Jans Van Rensberg, Rebecca Jane and Aditi Basnet. Due to COVID restrictions, they will be presented with their awards by the Governor of New South Wales, Margaret Beazley, AC, QC, at a later date. The Gold Award requires a high level of commitment and dedication from participants over a 12- to 18-month period and consists of five sections. Students must regularly undertake a skill, undertake community volunteering and physical recreation, as well as go on team-based adventure journeys. An extra section is required for the Gold Award whereby participants must spend four nights away from home on a shared project. For the residential project, students travelled to the regional town of Gilgandra to serve and connect with the community in tasks as varied as painting, gardening, general maintenance and preparing facilities for the Gilgandra Show, amongst other things. I congratulate all involved.

### CENTRAL COAST SURF LIFE SAVING CLUBS

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:23:52):** We may all have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, but it did not stop Surf Life Saving NSW from holding its annual Awards of Excellence on Sunday 29 August. Volunteers from just about every surf club in New South Wales, including all 15 clubs on the Central Coast, virtually attended the Surf Life Saving's night of nights. I am pleased to inform the House that Central Coast clubs and members cleaned up on the night. Six awards went to local Surf Life Saving clubs. I particularly acknowledge the amazing Paul Lemmon from Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club, who is a very deserving recipient of the 2020 Masters Athlete of the Year award. I know that it is an award that Paul shares with hundreds if not thousands of club members in Terrigal. The Central Coast has one of the highest rates of Surf Life Saving volunteering in Australia. I thank everyone who patrols our beaches and keeps our people—both locals and visitors—safe during the busy summer months.

### SYDNEY 2000 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:24:55):** Tonight I send a massive thankyou to every single person who was involved in the winning of the bid and the organisation of the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This city worked hard to beat Victoria in order to host the games. When the victor was announced by Juan Antonio Samaranch as Sydney, it was something we all enjoyed. The work behind the scenes by members of Parliament and everyone involved in the organising committee was absolutely fantastic. For me the joy of the Olympic and Paralympic committees working side by side, parallel for the first time ever in history, set a precedent where Paralympic athletes were recognised for their ability, not their disability. I send a special shout-out to Helen Brownlee, who coordinated the education campaign. Helen set a standard to put education programs into schools parallel to the Olympics and Paralympics which the world has taken on. She has changed the lives of kids and athletes and cities forever.

### ST RAPHAEL'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL 150TH ANNIVERSARY

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:25:56):** St Raphael's Catholic School, Cowra, has celebrated a major milestone this year as it reached its 150th anniversary. While 2020 has heralded new hurdles for the school to overcome, it has had the wonderful opportunity to mark 150 years of education for children across the Cowra region. This is a wonderful achievement. I congratulate principal Michael Gallagher and the current school community on continuing the school's 150 year legacy. The school has celebrated reaching this milestone and reflected on the history and future of the school with the anniversary theme "It started with a dream". In reflecting, it has taken a look at all of the changes over the past 150 years as the school has grown and adapted to changing needs in the Cowra community. Congratulations once again.

### NOWRA SHOW SOCIETY

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (20:26:50):** I would like to acknowledge Nowra Show Society which recently held its annual general meeting. I acknowledge its executive, management committee, members, sponsors and patrons. I congratulate the members of the executive: president Mark Stewart, senior vice president Martin Holmes, junior vice president James Thomson and treasurer Jessica Apperley. I also acknowledge that the secretary, Sue Hammond-Warne, and Wendy Woodward, who previously served as the first female president of Nowra Show Society, and former secretary Robyn Nelson were elected as delegates for region 5. A motion was passed that all members of the past management committee be re-elected. I extend my best wishes to Nowra Show Society as it begins planning what will be a difficult show in 2021 but I know it will make it great. It has been a great show society and has a wonderful history in the region. I look forward to attending every year with my Rotary friends who collect at the gate—although that may be difficult this year. It has been a challenging period with drought, bushfires and now COVID-19. However, we are a tough breed in the Shoalhaven and I look forward to supporting Nowra Show Society long into the future.

### AZAHLIA STEVENSON

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—**I would like to make special mention of 17-year-old Azahlia Stevenson, who has had the opportunity to participate in the Western Sydney Women Aviation Mentoring program. Azahlia is currently in year 11 at Caroline Chisholm College in Glenmore Park and has big dreams to one day become an aeronautical engineer. Her passion for building and innovation pushed her towards participating in the Western Sydney Women Aviation Mentoring program as the first step towards her dream career. The program began in February and provided Azahlia with the opportunity to form connections in the industry, whilst learning more about her passion. Program participants were allocated a partner to further enhance their experience and Azahlia was partnered with Keren Rambow, the Regional General Manager, Sales, South Asia Pacific for General Electric. The time that Azahlia spent with Ms Rambow encouraged her in applying for the Australian Defence Force Academy and understanding the importance of hard work, diligence, persistence and having the grit to achieve her goals. Well done Azahlia! I look forward to hearing of where your incredible determination takes you next.

### MELVA AND GEORGE THOMPSON AND CORAKI ART PRIZE

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—**I would like to thank Melva and George Thompson for their volunteer work with running the Coraki Art Prize, a major event in this local community's social calendar. Melva and George moved to Coraki and got stuck in straight away, their love for the arts always apparent. Melva served as the president and George as treasurer on the organising committee before their well-deserved retirement from these posts. They are stepping back from their leadership roles and can be proud of helping grow this wonderful art competition into an important cultural event for the Coraki district. Talented artists from all over the Northern Rivers region each year enter an amazing range of diverse works. I have attended many of these exhibitions and supported their fundraising efforts. The Thompsons are very confident that the Coraki Art Prize will continue to go from strength to strength under the leadership of Tania Alderman and her husband Al. Tania is an artist who has regularly exhibited in the show. While this year's show has had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions, the hope is that it will be back bigger and better in 2021.

### TRIBUTE TO BUNDJALUNG ELDER THE LATE REVEREND DOROTHY HARRIS-GORDON

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—**I was saddened to learn of the passing of Bundjalung Elder Reverend Dorothy Harris-Gordon (nee Roberts), who was the first Aboriginal woman ordained in the Uniting Church in Australia Synod of NSW and the ACT. Aunty Dorrie, as she was known to all, grew up on Cubawee Reserve near Lismore in the 1940s and 1950s, speaking the language of her ancestors, a practice she maintained all her life. She supported her late husband, the Reverend Charles Harris's prison ministry and diversionary programs in Queensland before his passing in 1993. Aunty Dorrie was ordained as a minister in 1999, serving in Grafton and then the Marmung Uniting Fellowship in Coraki as a prison and hospital chaplain. I remember her as a good soul, compassionate and caring, and it was good to know that she was always there, available to whoever needed her. It was not easy to be a leader, in her time; she had the odds stacked against her, but her dreaming led her to the works she undertook, especially with the rehabilitation of prisoners. She gave them hope when they thought there was none. She made many people's lives easier.

### 2020 MINISTER'S AWARDS FOR WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—**I congratulate Mayor of Forbes, Cr. Phyllis Miller OAM, who is winner of the 2020 Minister's Awards for Women in the Elected Representative Regional/Rural category. Cr. Miller has served three terms in Local Government at Forbes, first elected in 1995. Cr. Miller is a loyal

champion and tenacious advocate of Forbes; fiercely fighting for the betterment of her community, whom she represents. I wish to recognise Cr. Barbara Newton of Parkes Shire Council, who was also nominated in this category. Congratulations to Catherine Davis and Courtney Smolenski of Orange City Council for their nominations in the Alternative Pathways Regional/Rural category of the 2020 Minister's Awards for Women in Local Government. I congratulate the nominee for the 2020 Minister's Awards for Women in Local Government Young Achievers Regional/Rural category, Sarah Williams of Forbes Shire Council, one of only four statewide nominees. I recognise the many women working hard for their communities in Local Government from each the Cabonne Shire, Forbes Shire, Parkes Shire and Orange City Councils. I encourage our country women to become involved in local government, contributing their voice and their valuable input into the future direction of their communities.

#### **DICK PAYTEN PARK**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I am pleased to inform the House of plans to rename a local reserve within my electorate of Bankstown as "Dick Payten Park" in honour of a greatly respected and admired member of our community, the late Mr Dick Payten OAM. Mr Payten was a member of the 7th Australian Division A.I.F. which fought in the Middle East and in New Guinea during World War II. Upon his return he heavily involved himself in the local veteran community, including as President of the 7th Australian Division A.I.F. Association, and as a long-standing member of Bankstown Legacy. The park to be renamed is situated at the intersection of Miller Road and the Hume Highway at Bass Hill. This sits along the Remembrance Driveway, which serves as a living memorial to our nation's brave servicemen and women. I acknowledge and commend Remembrance Driveway Council President Air Commodore Ian Scott AM for putting forward this request, and Councillor Alex Kuskoff for his advocacy together with the Canterbury Bankstown Council. I also thank and commend Mr Payten's family, including his daughter Ms Sue Swinfield and granddaughter Ms Kylie Gravitis, for their efforts in preserving his legacy.

#### **MS KATE HOANG**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I recently had the pleasure of nominating lawyer and inspirational woman Ms Kate Hoang for the 2020 Rotary Inspirational Women's Awards, in recognition of her strong commitment, dedication and tireless efforts in supporting our local community. Since November 2017, Ms Hoang has been Vice President of the Vietnamese Community in Australia (VCA) NSW Chapter and dedicated much of her time voluntarily towards supporting not only the Vietnamese community, but to assisting the vulnerable, including refugees and asylum seekers. Ms Hoang established the Vietnamese Community in Australia Youth (VCAY) group, which aims to engage Vietnamese youth and encourage their understanding of and participation in Vietnamese community events. Ms Hoang has been responsible for spearheading a number of wonderful community initiatives, including organising the annual VCA Lunar New Year Festival attended by more than 20,000 people each year, and the annual World Refugee Day Vigil held each June at the Boat People Monument in Bankstown. In addition, Ms Hoang promotes various other human rights causes and events, and provides valuable legal assistance and support to Vietnamese asylum seekers. I commend Ms Hoang's tremendous contribution to our community and am proud to have made this well-deserved nomination.

#### **DARWICH SIDO**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Darwich Sido began his apprenticeship as a tailor at the age of 12 and went on to operate his father's clothing alterations business and eventually employ more than 20 people. Darwich was happy and successful until the savagery of war destroyed his business and his home. In 2012 Darwich fled Syria with his wife and three children after the civil war engulfed their home city of Afrin. Darwich and his family finally settled in Newcastle. He initially struggled to find work but eventually landed a job with Rundle Tailoring. In early 2019, with support from the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Development and Relief Agency (DARA) Refugee Hub, Newcastle City Council, and Thrive Refugee Enterprises, a not-for-profit organisation that provides business support to refugees, Darwich opened Sido Tailor at Jesmond Central Village. His business was an instant success and now Darwich has decided to give back to the local community by making masks to help during the COVID-19 pandemic. Darwich and his business have been making and selling masks to the community at cost price to assist in the prevention of COVID-19. Thank you Darwich for helping to keep our community safe.

#### **TODD BLACKWELL**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Newcastle has its fair share of fanatical football fans but there is no bigger fan than Todd Blackwell. Todd is arguably the Jets most ardent fan, a long-term member whose life is largely built around the club. He suffered a serious workplace accident and was forced to medically retire in 2004. Since then Todd has followed the Jets around Australia and missed just two home games since 2009. You will find Todd at most Jets training sessions, every home game or running his supporter page "A Nobody from Newy".

Todd has a long history with football. His children both got into the game when the World Cup qualifiers were on in 2005. His whole family remain passionate supporters of the Jets and attend all home games. A keen photographer, Todd has built a cult following on social media through his love of football, the Jets and his sheer positivity. He is also a passionate supporter of community football. You will also see him at local NPL matches or other community football games taking photos for clubs and for his facebook page. Thank you Todd for all you do to support football in our community.

#### **EMMA NEWELL**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**—I congratulate Taree Local real estate agent, Emma Newell who has been acknowledged as one of LJ Hookers highest performing agents in business support across Australia and New Zealand. Emma who has worked at the Taree LJ Hookers office for 9 years will now be acknowledged as a "Life achiever" within the real estate giant's network. LJ Hooker's network chief, Graeme Hyde has acknowledged the 9 years of great results and professionalism Emma has shown, including her exceptional administrative and marketing skills which she maintains today. Emma has commented that she loves what she does and working with her colleagues who are so caring and genuine and who share her passion for hard work.

#### **CALLUM WESLEY**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**—I congratulate former Taree High School student Callum Wesley who has been awarded a Charles Sturt University Bushfire Scholarship. Callum was born in Taree graduating from Taree High School in 2017. He started his Bachelor of Accounting at Charles Sturt University School of accountancy and Finance in 2018. Callum said that at the time of the devastating bushfires in 2019 he was living at a property in Tinonee on the banks of the mighty Manning River. Recognising that the Hillville fires, which were one of the biggest fires in the State at time were a mere 12 kms away he decided to leave the area, however with the roads opening and shutting in the area, he was forced to sleep in his car with his 2 pet dogs. The Charles Sturt Bushfire Scholarships were established to alleviate some of the financial pressure and provide vital support to students who had been affected by the bushfires. Callum has utilised the scholarship funds to purchase equipment so he could fit out his own office and study space. I again congratulate Callum on his scholarship and wish him well with his future studies.

#### **GANESHOTSAVA**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)**—I recognise the Annual Ganeshotsava celebrated and organised by Friends of India Australia (FOIA). This event has for many years been held at Liverpool and I've been delighted to regularly attend this celebration. This year because of the pandemic it was celebrated online and FOIA organised E-Ganeshotsava. The event is a celebration of the Hindu deity, Lord Ganesha. It is a great display of Hindu and Indian cultural identity. It is also a great display of Liverpool's multiculturalism. I should also acknowledge all those at FOIA who arranged the event, including Shoba Deshikan and Ramu Muniappa and these members of the Executive Team Viji Sampath, Jyothi Jayasimha, Rajani Nayak, Vinodh Shinde, Venkatesh Raghavendhra, Suresh Veerachar and Jaisimh Satyanarayan.

#### **JOHN COOTES OAM**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—I honour the contributions of John Cootes to our local community and congratulate him on being awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia, as part of the 2020 Australia Day honours. Mr Cootes is a former Rugby League player who played for the Western Suburbs Rosellas in the Newcastle Rugby League competition between 1967 and 1973. Mr Cootes also played five games for New South Wales and seven tests for Australia. After retirement John has been involved as a regular event sponsor for the Hunter Branch of the Men of League foundation, and worked as a sports presenter for Channel 10 in the 1980s. In 1982 Mr Cootes founded John Cootes Furniture Warehouse and operated it until 2014. John remains a member and event sponsor of Speers Point Sailing club. Mr Cootes has a long history of involvement in the St Vincent de Paul Society, including as a member and contributor of the Maitland Newcastle Diocesan Council and as a member of the Swansea conference. I thank Mr Cootes for his service to our community.

#### **ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR SEAMUS FAGAN OAM**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—I honour the contributions of Associate Professor Seamus Fagan to the field of education and congratulate him on being awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia, as part of the 2020 Queens Birthday Honours. Associate Professor Seamus Fagan has served in multiple roles at the University of Newcastle including as the Director of the English Language and Foundation Studies Centre. Associate Professor Fagan has also served as a board member for University English Centres Australia, National Association of Enabling Educators of Australia, the National ELT Accreditation Scheme, and Central Queensland University Language Centre. Along with his numerous roles within the education sector, Associate Professor Fagan has been

recognised with a Lifetime Achievement Award from English Australia, along with life membership to both the National ELT Accreditation Scheme and National Association of Enabling Educators of Australia. I thank Associate Professor Seamus Fagan for his dedication to the education sector.

#### **BANK OF QUEENSLAND**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—Small business is the life blood of a community. There is no doubt about it. Small business support our community by providing vital services and by employing locals. It's not easy to run and maintain a small business so when you reach milestones, it's important to celebrate them. That's exactly what Campbelltown's Bank of Queensland did recently. On the 29th of August this year, Campbelltown's Bank of Queensland celebrated its 15th anniversary. It is a tremendous achievement and one that I know was celebrated by many within our tight-knit community. Those at the BoQ have assisted countless locals by helping them secure a loan for a house or car. You can be assured that's some Campbelltown residents don't forget or take for granted. Maintaining and operating a successful business has never been harder, particularly given the current climate we find ourselves in. Businesses are shutting up shop and record rates while others and cutting down on costs and staff in an effort to ensure their survival. That is why 15 years operating in the Campbelltown community is such an incredible achievement for the Bank of Queensland. Congratulations to everyone at Campbelltown's Bank of Queensland.

#### **PAUL ZIELINSKI**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—In normal circumstances, our teachers, and school staff in Campbelltown do a tremendously admirable job helping shape and guide our local students. But they have really gone above and beyond this year due to COVID-19. While the efforts of all teachers and staff are greatly appreciated, there is one principal in particular that I want to recognise—that is Leumeah High School's Paul Zielinski. Paul's passion and dedication to his job and his school is obvious for all to see. Paul spends every day focusing on the welfare of others, however, recently the tables turned. The much-loved principal not too long ago celebrated his 60th birthday. It wasn't a milestone that went unnoticed either with staff and students making sure they celebrated the occasion. The fact that so many people were eager to celebrate with Paul shows just how big of an influence he has had on the students and staff at Leumeah High School. There is no doubt that our community is extremely lucky to have some like Paul leading one of our local schools. Once again, happy birthday mate. Here's to many, many more.

#### **STEPHANIE SCHULTZ—UNICYCLIST**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I applaud the fundraising efforts of a young woman from Alstonville, Stephanie Schultz, who is unicycling 120 kilometres over 30 days in September for the Starlight Children's Foundation Tour de Kids Challenge. Controlling and riding a one-wheeled cycle over such a distance is a tough task and Stephanie will have experienced considerable discomfort in reaching her twin goals of fundraising and helping to bring a smile to children's faces. The Starlight Foundation does a superb job complementing traditional medicine by helping young people who are undergoing treatment to flourish, build resilience and shape their individuality. Stephanie's ambition to help make bearable the foreign and potentially scary environment of a hospital is entirely laudable. The 30-day Tour de Kids Challenge has raised \$7.6 million raised since 2001, with more than 196,000 sick children helped in that time. I congratulate the university student on her compassion and imaginative approach to the Tour de Kids cycling challenge.

#### **SAMANTHA WORTELHOCK**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise the fantastic work carried out by Mullumbimby artist Samantha Wortelhoff, who has decorated the walls of countless schools and public buildings from the Tweed to Tenterfield with huge and colourful murals that celebrate the environment and history of the local area, with particular attention paid to the culture of the original custodians of the land. Under the name of her company, BreakAway Art, Samantha has single-handedly designed and painted these evocative murals in more than 150 schools nationally as well as working with NGOs such as the Royal Flying Doctor Service and job service providers NORTEC and EnviTe to enliven public spaces in communities from Cape York to Western Australia. Samantha has recently completed what may be her last large work on a school wall, at Alstonville Community Preschool, where she has featured the local flora of the surrounding rainforest and species of native animals chosen by the children at the school. As always, the work serves an educational purpose, igniting the imaginations of students and opening their eyes to the wonders of their culture and environment, providing a daily reminder of country, and their place in the natural order.

#### **WESTERN SYDNEY COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Recently I had the pleasure of meeting with the dedicated team at the Western Sydney Community Legal Centre. The WSLC provides an invaluable support to the most



vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our Western Sydney community. The Legal Centre effectively responds to the challenges posed by the increasing prevalence of domestic and family violence, and by the changing tenancy legislation introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Legal Centre further offers legal services to assist the Western Sydney community in such matters as Fair Trading, elder abuse, care and protection orders, employment law and home building. I wish to particularly highlight the services the Legal Centre provides through the Aboriginal Legal Access Program, and to the increasing number of women from a subcontinental background who have sought the assistance of the Legal Centre. I would like to extend my thanks to the Chief Executive Officer of the WSCLC, Louise Coady, and the staff and volunteers who have dedicated their time to supporting vulnerable members of our community. I thank them and look forward to supporting their important work.

#### **ZEN TEA LOUNGE**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—The Zen Tea Lounge in Smithfield is one of the most beautiful cafes in Sydney and an impressive social enterprise. The Tea Lounge works with women who have suffered domestic violence to build their skills and ensure that they are able to obtain employment and independence. Since its inception, the Tea Lounge has assisted 18,000 domestic violence survivors, mostly from multicultural backgrounds, to gain financial freedom and stable long term employment. The work of the entire team is transformative, improving the lives of women from across Western Sydney. With the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, the Tea Lounge has had to adapt, with a greater focus on takeaway meals as well as their new range of readymade meals. It is just as important for our social enterprises to pivot in our changing world as it is for commercial businesses. Thank you to Amy Nguyen, Co-Founder and Director of the Zen Tea Lounge, and team for speaking about their experiences and plans for the future. The Zen Tea Lounge are an inspiration for all of us to do more to assist those who are suffering and a reminder that there is always the opportunity to have a better life.

#### **THE TOONGABBIE DEMONS**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—The Toongabbie & Districts Junior Soccer Club was established in 1953 in the Granville & Districts Soccer Football Association. As the oldest football club within Cumberland LGA, the Toongabbie Demons pride themselves on their heritage, as well as their future potential to bring together the community in the Toongabbie and surrounding areas. The Club is committed to developing the Socceroos and Matildas of the future with talent pathways for boy young men and young women. The Club has an ongoing partnership with the Western Sydney Wanderers A- and W-League teams. The Club has a multicultural base with approximately three-quarters of its players hailing from non-English speaking backgrounds. The Club is led by: President, Richard Watkins; Vice President, Brain Herc; Treasurer, Mary Hanna; SSF Co-Ordinator, Rocky Mascarenhas; and Secretary and Registrar, Jono Frendo. The Club plays its home games at Girraween Park in Toongabbie. I wish them every success in their truncated 2020 season.

#### **FOCUS ON NEW FATHERS PROGRAM**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—A free pilot program to assist first time dads through the challenges of parenthood is being rolled out in the Western Sydney Local Health District and will benefit Seven Hills Electorate fathers. The University of Newcastle and New South Wales Health program will also be trialled in state health districts across Northern New South Wales, North Sydney and Murrumbidgee. I note the program will be led by eminent public sector professional Associate Professor Elisabeth Murphy. She is a senior clinical advisor of child and family health with New South Wales Health. Lyn Tunchon will assist the program's progress in Western Sydney as the Local Health District's integrated and community healthy child and family program lead. The program will run over the next year and men living in the areas of Blacktown, Cumberland, The Hills and Parramatta can sign up if they are over 18, their partner is at least 16 weeks pregnant or their baby is younger than 24 weeks.

#### **GIRL'S NIGHT IN**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—I congratulate Susie Bell, a paramedic from my electorate, who is also a tireless advocate and fundraiser for Women's Community Shelters. I recently joined Susie and many other women for the Girls' Night In, a charity night and silent auction to raise much needed funds to help support women escaping domestic and family violence. Women's Community Shelters aims to address the chronic shortage in crisis accommodation for homeless women. Our shelters not only offer a safe place to sleep. The organisation helps women access services they desperately need, including counselling, medical help, legal assistance, education, employment and housing. The Girls' Night In event raised thousands of dollars, with all donations going to women's shelters in NSW to help women in crisis. It is heartwarming to see our community come together in support of such an important cause, as we continue to tackle the curse of family and domestic violence within society. Thank you and congratulations to Susie for a successful event and for the work she continues to do and thank you as well to Women's Community Shelters NSW for the essential work they do each and every day.

### HISTORY WEEK RANDWICK LIBRARY

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—Congratulations to Randwick Library on a successful and fascinating 2020 History Week. Running from the 5th to 13th of September, this year's theme is History: What is it good for?, a topic which led to many enlightening discoveries and brilliant conversations. As part of History Week I was invited to deliver a talk about the deep connection my family has to the Eastern Suburbs. I was joined over Zoom by a group of wonderful locals and it was a privilege to share with them the story of my family of six generations in Sydney's East. I shared my take on growing up in the Eastern Suburbs and the values and lessons I learned from local people and our fantastic local institutions – our surf life-saving clubs, our sporting clubs our community groups and our religious congregations, just to name a few. I also reflected on the changes and evolutions that I have seen emerge in the East and made note of how essential our local education, health and transport services are to local people. Congratulations again to Randwick City Libraries and to the Council for another fantastic history week and thank you for the privilege of presenting.

### SHARE HURSTVILLE

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—I recently had the pleasure of visiting the wonderful team at SHARE in Hurstville. SHARE are a fantastic organisation who provide exercise classes for people over 50, people with disabilities and people with anxiety, depression and mental health issues. They have a focus on preventive health, and help keep people healthy and socially connected in their community. Like so many others, SHARE has had to find a new way to operate in these uncertain times and were quickly able to develop virtual ways of delivering their programs and helping their participants. We know how important exercise is, not just for our physical health, but our mental health too so it was great to see SHARE continue their important work, especially for our older community members. Along with continuing their normal practice as well as possible, SHARE also delivered food hampers to those in need over the last few months and worked with community leaders to provide other forms of assistance. Thank you to Barbara Ward, Adrian Prakash and the rest of the team at SHARE for all your hard work and service to our community and for hosting my visit.

### HAMPERS OF HOPE

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—It is my privilege to recognise Hampers of Hope which commenced in 2014 after friends of Griffith Meals on Wheels donated excess fruit from a local packing shed. Hampers of Hope's official launch was February 2019 with a new programme and now today employs a full-time project co-ordinator. As community awareness of their programme grew, so have donations of fresh fruit, vegetables and shelf products. They collect from over 10 supermarkets, farmers and business houses within the Griffith area to produce around 750 individual meals per week. The recipients include the unemployed, victims of domestic violence, refugees, asylum seekers, women and youth refuge, Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul, Barnabas House and church groups, by way of referral through service providers such as Wellways, LCN and Red Cross. They also donate to many school breakfast programmes. My heartfelt thanks go to the dedicated organisers, donors and volunteers who support disadvantaged members of our community.

### CLOSURE OF HURSTVILLE CITY PROBUS

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—I regrettably inform the House of the closure of Hurstville City Probus. In February this year, Hurstville Probus voted to close the group after 40 years of service to our local community and communities far and wide. Probus is all about fun, friendship and fellowship in retirement. They keep retirees active and engaged in the local community and help others in the process. Throughout its lifetime, Hurstville City Probus certainly fulfilled this vision. Although the closure of the group certainly brings sadness Speaker, I would like to reassure the local community that the Probus movement is still well and truly alive in St George. Hurstville City Probus was just one of 15 local groups, including Oatley, Penshurst, Grandviews and Georges River-Riverwood. I encourage all former members of Hurstville City Probus to join one of these other groups and stay involved in the movement. I would like to thank the whole team at Hurstville City Probus throughout its 40 years, particularly Mr James Nicol. Hurstville City Probus, we are sad to see you go.

### ST GEORGE NETBALL ASSOCIATION

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—The New South Wales Government is dedicated to supporting local community sporting groups such as the St George Netball Association, who has recently received a \$15,500 grant through the Community Building Partnership Program to help build new Storage Facilities. The St George Netball Association organises the local Netball Tournament each year with 11 clubs competing across a variety of age groups and skill divisions. The tournament provides girls with the opportunity from the age of 9 upwards to stay fit and active in a competitive environment with friends. I want to thank the current President, Mr Peter Crawford, and the other executive members, and countless volunteers who work hard to ensure the smooth running of the tournament each season and I wish them luck for the upcoming year.

### **HORNSBY CONNECT**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)**—This current COVID-19 crisis has seen many people doing it tough, and for some, this is the first time they have had to ask for help in their lives. Hornsby Connect is an amazing organisation which provides low cost or free groceries for people doing it tough in our local area. They do this using donations from local businesses and the amazing hard work and dedication of many volunteers. They only closed briefly and have been able to continue to provide for those struggling in Hornsby when they needed it most. I would like to congratulate President Stuart Armstrong, Senior Vice President Doug Reid, Vice President Spencer Staden, Treasurer Sue Armstrong, Secretary Ross Catterall, along with the committee which includes Bill Bradley, Anthea Donaldson, Brian Engert, Jo Grant, David Kerr, Leisa Liddelow, Rosemary Sautelle. Over 900 people are assisted by Hornsby Connect and I would like to thank the amazing volunteers who have been able to keep the organisation going throughout this crisis.

### **YEAR 12 2020—FAIRFIELD HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—On behalf of the Fairfield Electorate I would like to acknowledge the efforts of year 12 from Fairfield High School during the 2020 academic year. The year began with high expectations and much optimism for a memorable end to 13 years of compulsory school education. The COVID-19 pandemic unfortunately caused unnecessary stress to year 12 due to the continuous interruptions to teaching and learning of the HSC curriculum. The final year of schooling brings with it much cause to celebrate through special events, assemblies, sport carnivals, extracurricular activities and inter school competitions, this was either cancelled or modified due to the COVID-19 restrictions. As the 2020 Higher School Certificate examinations approach I would like to express since gratitude to Principal Mr Charles Borg, teachers, support staff, parents and students for supporting each other during this difficult year. I, along with the Fairfield Electorate, hope for a fitting farewell for year 12 in term 4 2020. They rightfully deserve it.

### **AJAY AND ARYA MAITRA**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)**—Today I would like to recognise the outstanding efforts of Hornsby Heights Public School students, Ajay and Arya Maitra. Moved by our devastating fire season, Ajay and Arya decided, with the help of their parents, to make and sell churros to help raise funds for our local RFS. Due to high demand the pair sold out within an hour, later re-opening and selling out within an hour again! With the sale of hundreds of churros, along with the generosity of their mother's business Ventures Insurance Advisors and Insurance Advisernet Foundation in matching the funds raised, Ajay and Arya raised a staggering \$2,500 for the Hornsby Heights RFS. Senior Deputy Captain Gavin Adams and Gemma Matula of the Hornsby Heights RFS were grateful for the donation and support. The money raised will be used to purchase a thermal imaging camera, allowing firefighters to see areas of heat through smoke, darkness, and heat-permeable barriers. The Maitra family are a great example of how anyone can have a positive impact on our community with some hard work and a positive attitude. Thank you for supporting our amazing and hardworking RFS volunteers.

### **GRANVILLE BOYS HIGH SCHOOL**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—Last month my electorate woke up to the devastating news of the blast in Lebanon which shook Beirut and its people. My electorate is home to so many Lebanese Australians, many of whom have migrated from there and many more with relatives currently living there. It was truly a sad time for many families living in the Granville electorate irrespective of background. However in spite of actually still going through a global pandemic Granville Boys High school rose to the occasion to show their community spirit and compassion by fundraising a whopping \$2,326 to support Lebanon and its people. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, many children have been left with feelings of uncertainty and financial insecurity, and many others have witnessed their parents lose their livelihood, businesses, or jobs. For this reason to go to this effort irrespective of the background noise deserves a huge round of applause and I would like to thank every student involved as well as every teacher involved in supporting their fundraising activities. Encouraging initiatives like this gives children in my electorate a sense of achievement, involvement in the affairs of the world, identity, hope and during an otherwise stressful period.

### **WANDA SLSC—SUTHERLAND 2 SURF**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)**—I congratulate Wanda Surf Life Saving Club on overcoming the COVID19 challenge and running a successful virtual Tradies Sutherland 2 Surf in early August. The annual Sutherland 2 Surf has been running for just under 50 years. The virtual event allowed the community to engage in fitness and to raise money for the surf club in a COVID-safe way. The virtual Sutherland 2 Surf offered 2km, 5km and 11km courses, catering to a variety of fitness levels. Participants could chose to run outside, inside or both for as little or as long as they liked. Similar to previous years, competitors could still participate in teams, which is a great way to enjoy the

event with friends and family. This adaptation to a virtual Sutherland 2 Surf allowed friends, family and for the first time even four legged friends to all compete together as one community, in a time where coming together has been very difficult.

#### STATE SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIP 2020

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt)**—I wish to commend the Rooty Hill RSL Youth Swimming Club on their outstanding performance at the NSW State RSL Swimming Championships held in March of this year. The Rooty Hill RSL Youth Swimming Club had 12 swimmers compete this year at the State championships, all of whom came away with a medal. In total, they scored three bronze medals, 11 silver medals, and 15 gold medals. It is wonderful, and really encouraging, to see the time, work and effort required to accomplish a feat such as this has paid off and been reflected in the remarkable achievement we have seen this year. I would like to congratulate all of the competitors on their exceptional performance and wish them luck with all of their future swimming endeavours.

#### NSW MINISTER'S AND SECRETARY'S AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—Schools across the Hunter did very well in this year's NSW Minister's and Secretary's Awards for Excellence and I would like to offer my congratulations to recipients in the Charlestown electorate. Joshua Levin, a year 12 student at Whitebridge High, won the Minister's Award for Excellence in Student Achievement, and told the Newcastle Herald he was shocked but stoked to be recognised in the awards. Congratulations, Joshua, and I wish you all the best for the HSC.

Hunter Sports High principal Rachel Byrne received the Secretary's Award for Excellent Service, a fantastic acknowledgment of the extraordinary work Rachel has done at Hunter Sports High and very well deserved. Charlestown South Public received the Secretary's School Achievement Awards. The staff and community have flourished under the leadership of principal Colin Johnson. These awards, which thank teachers, leaders, support staff and parents for making a difference to the lives of students, are especially important in 2020. In this very challenging year, school staff, students and communities have had to adapt to unprecedented circumstances. I congratulate all recipients across the Hunter and the State.

#### ST MARY'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—My congratulations to the staff and students of St Mary's Catholic College at Gateshead who have been involved in the Landcare program, working to beautify the school and improve the local environment. St Mary's has been a Landcare school for fifteen years. The school became involved in Lake Macquarie Landcare when teacher Maryanne Murray decided to start regenerating a watercourse that ran by the school. It was regarded as a drain then—it is now known as Kennedy Creek. Teacher Katrina Piper leads the initiative, which includes a student environmental group. They run Landcare days where the group works to improve the urban bushland area, removing weeds and caring for native plants. According to *The Newcastle Herald*, which profiled the group as a "Hunter Hero", the Landcare group has also led to other environmental initiatives at the school, including a Return and Earn program, compost bins, paper recycling, the introduction of stingless bees to the school playground, a frog garden, an Aboriginal bush tucker garden, installation of water tanks, water testing, a sustainable cafe which stocks reusable cups and containers and various types of recycling.

#### ARIBA OMAR AND KAREN MURRAY

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I wish to take this opportunity to commend two people from my electorate who were nominated as volunteers of the year for our region. For more than half her life, Wagga Wagga's Ariba Omar has happily given her time to others. The ten-year-old has volunteered for Daffodil Day, Relay for Life, Red Nose Day, Pink Ribbon Day and the MS Readathon. She has even donated her hair to the Variety-Hair with Heart charity. Ariba was named as the 2020 Riverina Young Volunteer of the Year. Like Ariba, Wagga Wagga's Karen Murray has given up a great deal of her own time to help others. Karen is a volunteer at Ronald McDonald House at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital. But this year she established a bushfire donation and collection centre to help displaced fire victims, their families and pets from Tumbarumba, Batlow and Adelong and surrounding areas. The centre was set up at Kildare Catholic College and became a real hub of activity and support. Karen was named the 2020 Riverina Adult Volunteer of the year. I thank all the volunteers who support the community organisations that are the life blood of our rural communities.

#### JACK MCGRATH

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—I congratulate Jack McGrath of the Group 6 Referees who was the winner at the twenty-second annual Wests Sports Council Awards for the Senior Sportsperson of the Year Category. I note that Jack, who was a runner-up Rookie of the Year in Group 6 in 2014, has had a number of notable achievements such as having been chosen to represent in the CRL Development Squad and having had

various grand final centre appointments. I commend Jack for an outstanding performance year and wish him success in his refereeing endeavours.

#### **RORY SOUTHWELL**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—I congratulate Rory Southwell of Macarthur BMX who was the winner at the twenty-second annual Wests Sports Council Awards for the Elite Sports Person of the Year. This award comes after an outstanding year of achievements for Rory, who had to overcome major injury to compete on the world stage and take home a suite of great wins and notable awards. Rory is a fierce competitor on the BMX track and boasts a long list of outstanding achievements, including three state title victories in New South Wales. Adding to these achievements, he also won third place in both the Australian Nationals and New South Wales Series, and took home second and third spot placements in several other New South Wales open events. The annual Wests Sports Council Awards provides a platform to recognise individuals and celebrate their achievements in grassroots sport and community spirit. I wish Rory many more successes in his future BMX career and again congratulate him on achieving this outstanding award recognition.

#### **LILLI PILLI FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)**—I congratulate Lilli Pilli Football Club for joining the “play in purple” campaign raising funds and awareness for the Avner Pancreatic Cancer Foundation. In conjunction with the Sutherland Shire Football Association and Football NSW, over 110 Lilli Pilli teams and over 1,100 players took part. This effort smashed previous records for the “play in purple” campaign. Each participating player purchased a \$15 pair of purple socks, with proceeds going to the Avner Pancreatic Cancer Foundation to raise much needed awareness of this dreadful disease. I had the opportunity to join the flood of purple at Jenola Fields, where players, parents and even referees joined in on the fun through creative ideas such as purple hairspray, zinc, ribbons and compression shorts. The success of Lilli Pilli's campaign is largely due to the tireless efforts of Club President Greg Storey. Through his successful campaign, Greg has supported a much-needed platform to talk about pancreatic cancer. Although those conversations are often awkward, they are invaluable.

#### **ST CATHERINE'S NETBALL CLUB**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the small but mighty St Catherine's Netball Club. St Catherine's Netball Club provides students from St Catherine Laboure Catholic Primary the opportunity to learn and play netball with their friends outside of school. The club nurtures students from kindergarten and year 1 at a “learn to play” level, right through to their high school years in the spirit of the school motto, ‘Unity, Friendship and Learning’. Whilst St Catherine's is a smaller netball club than others in the Shire, its teams perform outstandingly and consistently qualify for semi and grand finals. With nine teams active in the 2020 season, St Catherine's are a tight-knit community. Older players are encouraged to mentor those younger than them and parents comprise the club's team of coaches, managers and committee members. I acknowledge the hardworking Committee members, namely Vice President Ann Carstens, Secretary Leigh Apte, Treasurer Kerrie Stellios, Shayne Young, Rachel Dorman, Lara Vale, Maria Colussi, Laurette Rynne, Margaret Irwin, Rebecca McDowell and Vicki Castro. I commend all involved at St Catherine's Netball Club for promoting the great sport of netball and extend my best wishes for the remainder of the season.

#### **THARAWAL PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the wonderful ways that the Tharawal Public School community have responded the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Tharawalians have always had a sense of fun while focusing on student learning. This was demonstrated when only children of essential workers were learning from the school and staff organised themed days such as Wacky Wednesday and Pyjama Day to help students through the difficult time. I commend Principal Gerry O'Brien and her staff for modifying students' typical learning experience so that they could continue to learn through such a difficult term. Despite disruptions, the student leadership team at Tharawal continued to embody the school motto of learning together with respect and responsibility, from standing at their driveways in full school uniform for the ANZAC Day Dawn Service to making videos for the younger students on Google Classrooms and walking them to their classroom, rain or shine, when they returned to school. I recognise Dylan Chapman, Sophie Maddock, Harry Ambler, Tiana Gentile, Hayden Fuller and Ruby Sweet for their dedication to their school and peers. I thank the Tharawal Public School community for ensuring students continue to learn and grow during an unprecedented school year.

#### **WILLIAM TIPPLE SMITH**

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)**—Prove me wrong, for then I am right. On Thursday September 2 2020, the history that most Australian schoolchildren learnt about events leading to the NSW gold rush in 1851 was corrected, and I was honoured to join Smith's descendants for

the ceremony, including Bill Hamburger of Sussex Inlet who convinced me of this historical error and may now end their decades-long fight to correct the record. An anonymous grave, previously known only as number 4929, section four, Rookwood Cemetery, was marked for the first time. It now reads: "William Tipple Smith, 1803-1852, Mineralogist, discoverer of Australia's first payable gold and co-founder of Australia's iron and steel industry." When I first heard about Smith I thought it couldn't be true. As a former history teacher, I've taught about Hargraves in schools, but convinced by Bill Hamburger, a South Coast Electorate resident and descendant of Smith I realised it had been an outrage by a former government and worked to right the wrongs of the past. I thank the descendants of William Tipple Smith, who've not only defended their ancestor, but corrected history for the benefit of all. May this correction bring finally bring them peace.

#### **ROTARY CELEBRATES DAL AND MAURINE OSBORN**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—Looking back on his 59 years with East Maitland Rotary, charter member Dal Osborn recently reflected that joining the organisation was one of the greatest things that had ever happened to him. On behalf of a grateful community, I congratulate Dal and Maurine for their service. Dal was recently named a Life Member of East Maitland Rotary, in recognition of his contribution to Rotary and its many projects throughout the years. Maurine's service to the club was also acknowledged, with a Fellowship of the Rotary Paul Harris Foundation. Dal and Maurine have seen many changes to Rotary during their time with the organisation. As East Maitland Club President Glenda Briggs reflected during their presentation, Dal joined in a time when Rotary was a men's-only organisation. Now, however, half of their club's members are women. Dal and Maurine's presentations were made during a celebration at fellow East Maitland Rotary club member Norm Burton's East Maitland business, Maitland and Port Stephens Toyota. Norm and his late wife Maureen were also honoured for their contributions to Rotary during the event. Thank you, Dal and Maurine, for your service to our community.

#### **NORM BURTON LIFE MEMBERSHIP**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—Congratulations to Norm Burton on more than half-century of continued service to the Rotary Club of East Maitland and for being honoured with life membership of the club. Norm has been involved with Rotary for an incredible 53 years. That's 53 years donating his time, contributing his skills and working on projects geared to make the community of Maitland, and indeed our society at large, a better place. Norm's life membership was bestowed on him during a presentation by club president Glenda Briggs that was also attended by Past President Brian Coffey and fellow award recipients Dal and Maurine Osborn. COVID constraints meant the celebration was a small affair conducted at Norm's East Maitland business, Maitland and Port Stephens Toyota. During the event Norm's late wife Maureen was honoured posthumously for her own enormous contributions to Rotary, with fellowship to the Paul Harris Foundation. Maureen, who passed away in 2018, was Norm's partner in family, business and life, and the couple's association with Rotary was no exception. On behalf of everyone in Maitland, I formally acknowledge the enormous contributions both Norm and Maureen have made to our community throughout the years. Thank you for your service.

#### **TONY MCGRANE SCHOLARSHIP**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—On Monday night, the biennial Tony McGrane CSU Scholarship Dinner was due to be held in Dubbo, due to the COVID restrictions currently in place it couldn't be held. Despite this, the committee still announced that Dubbo's Ethan Gordon and Caitlin Carlow from Gilgandra had received this year's scholarships. Caitlin is studying a Bachelor of Early Childhood – Primary, while Ethan is studying a Bachelor of Social Work. The scholarship, named after the former Member for Dubbo Tony McGrane, is supported by community representatives, staff from Charles Sturt University, private benefactors and a quartet of councils from within the region, those being Dubbo Regional Council, Parkes Shire Council, Narromine Shire Council and Gilgandra Shire Council. The scholarships are offered to students attending Charles Sturt University from the Orana region, and provide valuable assistance aimed at educating people and keeping them in their home region. Since the first dinner was held at Dubbo RSL Club in 2010, a total of 15 scholarships have been awarded. The committee has already identified September 13, 2021, as the new date for the postponed dinner. I wish both Caitlin and Ethan all the best with their studies and future endeavours.

#### **WEAR IT PURPLE DAY- 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—This year, Wear it Purple celebrates 10 years of fighting for inclusion in our schools, especially for young people who identify as LGBTIQ+. Wear it Purple was initiated by Kat Hudson, a Marrickville local, who was spurred to action following a series of LGBTIQ+ suicides. Ten years later and the need to create safe spaces for young people who identify as LGBTIQ+ more important than ever. LGBTIQ+ young people are five times more likely to attempt suicide. Young people who identify as transgender or gender diverse are twelve times more likely to contemplate suicide. The last few years have been especially tough for young LGBTIQ+ people, with debates around their identity and rights played out on the national stage

through the marriage equality debate and more recently by debates that seek to erase their experiences. Wear it Purple is an important reminder to LGBTIQ+ young people that they are valued and loved and that just like every other young person in NSW, they have the right to feel safe and to thrive at school. I will keep up the fight to ensure you feel safe and protected at school 365 days a year.

#### **INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—August 31 was International Overdose Awareness Day. The Day seeks to educate the community on how to identify and respond to an overdose and to reduce the stigma associated with overdoses. The central message is that every overdose from drug use is preventable. In 2017, there were 1,612 unintentional drug-induced deaths, with the largest age group being those aged 40-49. We know that harm minimisation, education and compassion are critical to reducing deaths from overdose. I acknowledge the important work of the Uniting Medically Supervised Injecting Centre, the NSW Users and AIDS Association, the Alcohol and Drug Foundation, as well as health workers across the Inner West, including those who operate Needle Exchange Programs at Marrickville Community health Centre and Newtown Neighbourhood Centre. I also acknowledge the many parents and families who have lost loved ones to overdoses. I have had the privilege of meeting many families impacted by drug use and to hear their stories. I have been inspired by their passionate advocacy to ensure the conversation around drug use and overdose is focused on evidence and compassion. I thank them and I thank all those organisations across the community who marked International Overdose Day.

#### **MR AND MRS MOULDS 60TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I would like to congratulate and wish Mr Robert Barry and Mrs Patricia Moulds a fantastic and loving 60th Wedding Anniversary. Mr and Mrs Moulds married on September 10 1960 in a country church in Mittagong, NSW. The couple moved to wonderful Umina Beach in 1963 where they purchased a large house and had their second child. Mr and Mrs Moulds both worked for insurance company GIO before buying the local milk run in the 1980s. They delivered milk across the Woy Woy Peninsula and to Phegans Bay for a decade before selling their business. Retired, the couple have five grandchildren and love the Central Coast lifestyle and would not want to live anywhere else! Congratulations Mr and Mrs Moulds and I wish you both many more years of marriage to come!

#### **'SYDNEY'S FLOWERS TO THE WORLD' MEETS PREMIER**

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)**—Yesterday I joined Premier Gladys Berejiklian to visit local Heathcote business 'Sydney's Flowers to the World,' to meet owner Sydney along with her mother Tracey and grandmother Dianne. It was fantastic to visit Sydney as she has always admired the Premier and wanted to meet her! Sydney was only 15 when she began volunteering her time after school and on weekends at the florist. At 17 just prior to Sydney graduating from high school, the previous owner offered to sell her the business. It's remarkable that Sydney is now only 22 and in November will be celebrating 5 years of owning the business. Like many businesses Sydney has felt the impacts of COVID-19 however she has done a fantastic job with adapting to the changes. During this time she has grown her online presence and has seen a spike in online orders. During the visit Sydney and her family were extremely grateful to meet the Premier and presented her with a beautiful flower arrangement. Sydney is a very talented florist and I would encourage you to visit her store in person or online if you are in need of flowers for any occasion.

#### **ORANGE GROVE PUBLIC SCHOOL P&C**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)**—Today I would like to draw the attention of the house to the students, teachers and P&C at Orange Grove 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 \$19,500 for the installation of a 32kW solar system at the school last year on top of a \$24,505 grant in 2014 to enhance the school's entrance. I would particularly like to acknowledge Ethan Burns who spearheaded their school solar project on behalf of the P&C. Orange Grove PS is 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. I know I speak for everyone in the community when I thank the Orange Grove school community for championing sustainability and protecting our environment for generations to come.

#### **CAMPAIGN AGAINST MORAL PERSECUTION**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—I wish to put on the record the 50th anniversary of the pioneering organisation, the Campaign Against Moral Persecution or CAMP. It is important to remember the brave individuals who 'came out' publicly, exposing themselves to vilification and abuse, losing jobs, homes and families when they publicly admitted their sexuality and spoke up for justice. John Ware and Christabel Poll were identified as homosexual and founding members of CAMP in national newspaper articles on 10 and 19 September 1970. CAMP branches were set up across the country and other courageous people followed, speaking out publicly

against injustice and homophobia, and often suffering financially and socially as a result. CAMP became the seeding ground for numerous projects and self-help, like the volunteer homosexual telephone help line Phone-A-Friend established in 1973, the CAMP Centre non-profit coffee shop in Glebe and a base for anti-discrimination and law reform campaigns, including where the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras idea emerged. I thank those early CAMP members and those who have followed them for this vital work that helped achieve the social changes we enjoy today.

#### **KINGS CROSS ROTARY**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—Kings Cross Rotary 18186 is one of many Rotary Clubs across the country and a great example of community spirit and care. This network of business, professional and community leaders work to strive to make the world a better place, with humanitarian, community, health and education projects in Australia and overseas. We should all be inspired by their achievements and contribution. I met recently with club members to hear about the many local charities they've been working with and supporting, as well as plans for community support events to help reinvigorate the Kings Cross Precinct following the serious social and economic impacts of COVID. The Kings Cross Rotary Club is a great example of the supportive inner city community that brings people together and supports those in need. I thank them for their care and the effort they take to benefit the wider community and particularly those in poverty or facing disease and disadvantage.

#### **HILLS OFF-ROAD R/C CLUB**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the Hills Off-Road R/C Club based at the Fred Caterson Reserve in my electorate of Castle Hill. The R/C Club use 1/10th Electric Cars and race around the purpose built track at the reserve, with official races on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of every month. The Club provides great social opportunities for men and women of all ages, as well as being an opportunity to hone their skills. It was recently my pleasure to announce \$10,753 worth of funding for the club, such that they can construct fencing around the track, for the increased safety of all participants. This was a part of the \$300,000 provided to my electorate in the 2019 round of the Community Building Partnership Grants. My thanks and congratulations go out to all involved in the club, especially the Club President Peter Couper.

#### **GLENHAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOL P&C**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the work of the Glenhaven Public School P&C Association within my electorate of Castle Hill. P&C Associations are critical within the whole of NSW as they advocate for the betterment of school infrastructure and the school community. In recent years the Glenhaven P&C have been responsible for various mufti days and mother and fathers' day stalls, as well as a large scale annual project. The last few of these have been the refurbishment of the Library, the installation of concrete steps next to the oval and upgrades to the school bus bay. It was recently my pleasure to assist them in their most recent project, the refurbishment of sections of the grounds within the school to create more playground and open space which will enable more space to play and be active. They received \$28,300 from the NSW Government for this purpose, as part of the \$300,000 provided to my electorate in the 2019 round of the Community Building Partnership Grants. I would like to thank all involved with the P&C, notably Kim Old, Scott Micallef, Melanie Shummen, Hayden Smith and Heather Hendroff.

#### **PATRICK FOGG**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation)**—I congratulate inspirational young Tamworth apprentice Patrick Fogg a deserving recipient of the Bert Evans Scholarship. I first met Patty at Tamworth High School in 2018 while he was undertaking his Certificate III in Painting and Decorating as a school based trainee. Patty's is a story of persistence and overcoming challenges to accomplish his dreams. Patty is a young Aboriginal apprentice who has autism. His mum and dad feared that as time went by, Patrick would slowly feel the barriers that often surround those with a disability and their main concern was independence and long term employment for their son. Faced with the concerns for their son's future Patty's dad said 'Let's start our own business and employ Pat!' Patty's father made the life changing decision to change his career and become a licenced painter and eventually employ Patty. Patty loves his job and shows great pride and enthusiasm in his work. Working with his dad and clients Patty experiences acceptance and inclusion and his confidence grows. The scholarship will go a long way in helping Patty complete his apprenticeship. He is a shining example of the value of alternative learning pathways to completing your education and qualifications.

#### **CLARENCE VALLEY COUNCIL**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)**—I rise to offer my congratulations to Clarence Valley Council who have been recognised for a number of initiatives that they have instigated. Council was recognised at the recently held NSW Local Government Professionals Awards with a Highly Commended for their communication throughout the horrific 2019 bushfires. This award recognised Council's teamwork and



communications in assisting the communities that were devastated by the fires through the initial stages of the recovery process. Council also received a Highly Commended Award for the Jacaranda Park Redevelopment Project which was one of their larger capital works programs. This Park now incorporates accessible and inclusive play elements so everyone can come together and play, regardless of their ability. Council was also recognised at the Local Government Awards for its communications strategy during the bushfires winning the Excellence in Communications category for Councils with populations between 30,000 and 70,000. It is extremely pleasing to see Clarence Valley Council being recognised for the excellent work it is providing to the people of the Clarence Valley, and I thank General Manager Ashley Lindsay and his staff for all the hard work that they have done during some very hard times.

#### **POLICE ACTION AT MITTAGONG RSL**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—I would like to thank police officers involved in an arrest of an armed robber who presented himself as an unwanted guest at Mittagong RSL. I would like to acknowledge the three police officers involved in the arrest, Senior Constable Alf Torrisi, Senior Constables Joel Keir and Ramon Gilarte. Senior Constable Alf Torrisi was off duty when he spotted the offender in a supermarket and followed him whilst calling for back up. The police arrived and chased the offender for a short distance before getting into a wrestle with him in the middle of the road in the dark. I would also like to thank the officers who attended the club on the day of the incident, as the professionalism and care they showed the staff and customers after the incident certainly helped to bring calm and confidence to a poor situation. The community should be justifiably proud of our Police Force they are always our first line of defence.

#### **GEORGE DUMMER**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—It is with great sadness I heard of the passing of George Dummer. George passed away at age of 16 leaving his family, friends and our entire community heartbroken. George was described as a cheeky child when he was at Oxley College, with charm that would melt your heart and a smile that would light up the room. He had a strong passion for rugby and was loved by all. George was a Rugby player who enjoyed the game so very much. My thoughts are with his parents, Jane and Murray, his brother Charlie and his sister Sophia at this terrible time. Rest in peace George Dummer.

#### **HOLGATE PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I congratulate Holgate Public School, in my electorate of Terrigal, for successfully purchasing and installing shade sails to cover the children's playground, the outdoor stage area. In 2019, I was so pleased to provide \$41,378 for the school from the NSW Government's Community Building Partnership program. Obviously, this project benefits the students, teachers and the wider school community. The shade sails will also be well-used by the school's P&C Association all year round for community events. I can inform the House that the shade sails have now been successfully installed. My office has been sent some photos, and they look fantastic. I am looking forward to visiting Holgate Public School soon and congratulating the school on a project that was very worthy of receiving \$41,378 from the NSW Government.

#### **COPACABANA COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I acknowledge the work undertaken by Steve Boucher as the President of the Copacabana Community Association. Steve has served the local community of Copacabana in this position over the past three years – and last month made the decision to step down. Before that, Steve was also the Secretary of Copacabana Community Association. It has been a pleasure to work with Steve to deliver more funding to local projects in Copacabana. I also want to welcome Sue Steedman to the role of President of Copacabana Community Association. I have met Sue a number of times before and look forward to working with her – for hopefully many years into the future. We are very fortunate to have so many committed people who work without pay and often without any thanks to make our local area a better place to live and work. Steve has done a fantastic job over the past three years and I'm sure Sue will continue this strong record as well.

#### **ANSTO'S PARTNERSHIP WITH NATIONAL ROBOTICS AND AUTOMATION GROUP**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)**—I speak about the announcement of ANTO's partnership with the National Robotics and Automation Group. The National Robotics and Automation Group has partnered with ANSTO to develop robotic and automated systems for the use in nuclear and other complex industry environments. This partnership will attribute to the ANSTO's growing innovation activities in the local area. The partnership will combine industry knowledge in producing nuclear science and technology expertise. It will allow for significant research to be done that will help develop new solutions and systems in industry sectors such as the global nuclear industry. Once again I am very excited that this new partnership is taking place at ANSTO and will allow for more expansion for industrial robotics and automotive technologies, as well as contribute to more innovation in the local area. Thank you.

### **ORGANIC PROCESSING FACILITY AT STOTTS CREEK**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)**—I wish to congratulate Tweed Shire Council on the commencement of works on the new \$7 million organic processing facility at Stotts Creek. The facility, to be constructed and operated by NSW organics recycling business Soilco Pty Ltd at the Stotts Creek Resource Recovery Centre, represents a significant investment in waste reduction and management and will be the largest organic processing plant on the Northern Rivers. Capable of dealing with nearly 21,000 tonnes of food and garden organics (FOGO) annually, the facility will complement Council's green kerbside collection program. The facility, due to be operational by September 2021, will function as an enclosed composting facility which will also be environmentally sustainable with features such as a 99KW solar power system expected to offset 22 per cent of the facility's power consumption. Rainwater will be captured for processing operations and all wastewater generated in the processing of organics will be reused in the composting process. The project is supported by the NSW Environmental Trust as part of the NSW EPA's Waste Less, Recycle More initiative, funded from the waste levy.

### **FRESH FODDER**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise Max and Fiona Schofield of Fresh Fodder in Orange. This local family-owned food production business is a success story. The origin of their flagship product Taramosalata, aka "The Gangster Dip", goes back to a secret recipe which was uniquely gifted to Max's father, Jim Schofield, in the 1970s. Jim, at risk of his own peril, bravely intervened in a vicious assault he stumbled upon in a quiet Sydney laneway, sparing the victim further injury from two very shady assailants. The grateful victim, a man of Greek decent, showed his appreciation by later returning to share his recipe for Taramosalata, assuring Jim it would one day bring him good fortune. It was certainly the proverbial good deed that was uniquely rewarded, and now being reaped 40 years later! Since opening in 2008, producing the treasured Greek dip, the Schofields have grown their fledgling business and now employ 15 full-time equivalent employees, producing upwards of 15 tonnes of product per week, and growing. Their products, which have grown in variety, are now on shelves in Harris Farm, Costco, Aldi, IGA and 400+ Woolworth's stores across Australia. Bravo, Max and Fiona, you're a true Aussie success story.

### **WESTFIELDS SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—On behalf of the Fairfield Electorate I would like to acknowledge the efforts of year 12 from Westfields Sports High School during the 2020 academic year. The year begun with high expectations and much optimism for a memorable end to 13 years of compulsory school education. The COVID 19 pandemic unfortunately caused unnecessary stress to Year 12 due to the continuous interruptions to teaching and learning of the HSC curriculum. The final year of schooling brings with it much cause to celebrate through special events, assemblies, sport carnivals, extracurricular activities and inter school competitions, this was either cancelled or modified due to the COVID-19 restrictions. As the 2020 Higher School Certificate examinations approach I would like to express sincere gratitude to Principal Mr Andrew Rogers, teachers, support staff, parents and students for supporting each other during this difficult year. I, along with the Fairfield Electorate, hope for a fitting farewell for Year 12 in Term 4 2020. They rightfully deserve it.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:28 until  
Wednesday 16 September 2020 at 09:30.**