



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 17 September 2020

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 17 September 2020

The Speaker (The Hon. Jonathan Richard O'Dea) took the chair at 09:30.

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

[Notices of motions given]

Bills

SPORTING VENUES AUTHORITIES AMENDMENT (VENUES NSW) BILL 2020

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Dr Geoff Lee, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (09:47:33): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The New South Wales Government is pleased to introduce the Sporting Venues Authorities Amendment (Venues NSW) Bill 2020. The bill will bring together some of New South Wales' major sporting and entertainment venues—Sydney Cricket Ground, Sydney Football Stadium, Stadium Australia, Western Sydney Stadium, Wollongong Showground, Wollongong Entertainment Centre, Newcastle International Sports Centre, and Newcastle Entertainment Centre and Showground. This is a significant reform and has been recommended by many reviews. I am proud to be the Minister who establishes the new sport and entertainment entity for New South Wales.

Sport and major events are very important for New South Wales, as they feed our economy and boost our morale. New South Wales has a great passion for live sport and major events. We live for the thrills, the suspense, the glory and sometimes we have to live with the agonising defeats. We all love having all these major events in our own backyard. Sport is an integral part of our society in New South Wales and it is very fitting that this week we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Sydney 2000 Olympics. They remain the best games ever. Cast your mind back 20 years ago and we can all remember the moment that Cathy Freeman lit the cauldron. It was a great showcase for our city and our country. We also took huge pride in the achievements of our elite athletes and the army of volunteers who made it all work.

The legacy of the Olympic Games carries on today. The New South Wales Government continues to own and operate sporting and entertainment venues across the State, ensuring world-class facilities are available for athletes and the community to utilise and enjoy. We think back to the defining moments like a key Bradman century on a hot summer's day in January, a buzzing night at the grand final or a crushing victory over the Queenslanders at State of Origin. Similarly, major events like a concert are so much better when you are there in person watching your favourite stars. Our venues have hosted Cold Chisel and Elton John this year. In past years we have welcomed famous acts, including Adele, Taylor Swift, Eminem and Guns N' Roses. But our venues are not just about high-end sport or rock concerts. They have hosted major important community events like the firefighters benefit in February 2020, which attracted more than 75,000 fans. Over 10 hours they saw 23 acts and helped raise almost \$11 million for bushfire relief.

Even during COVID-19 our venues make their contribution. For example, the caterers at Stadium Australia delivered 30,000 meals in 17 days to quarantined Australians. Our venues and the events they attract are a major source of jobs and dollars for our economy here in Sydney as well as in our regions. An estimated 3.5 million people visited our major venues in 2018-19. These venues are a crucial part of our society, but what is the vision for them? We want them to operate for the first time as an integrated network. Attracting world-class sporting events, concerts and entertainment to New South Wales is a competition in itself. At the moment we are all competing against overseas venues and other Australian States. For the first time, we will be able to bid with one voice to attract and retain more major events. Importantly, we want our venues to work for the community and the customers. A single management team will deliver a more consistent and high-quality experience for visitors and users. This will be increasingly important as we move on from COVID-19 and hold major events where the public can expect a safe and secure visit.

The New South Wales Government has made a significant investment in world-class facilities and venues. We have directed over \$1.1 billion into our sport and entertainment venues. Highlights of this investment include the redevelopment of the 42,500-seat Sydney Football Stadium, which is on track for completion in 2022, and the new 30,000-seat Western Sydney Stadium at Parramatta, which opened in April last year. The new entity will ensure we get maximum returns with a strong, coordinated and streamlined approach to attracting events. This will put New South Wales in the best position to attract and win major events, which will provide economic benefits across the State. The new entity will work to make New South Wales the number one destination in Australia for sport and live entertainment content. The new entity will also focus on affordability and access to sport venues in New South Wales to ensure that communities in the State make the most of their Government's substantial investment in these venues.

In addition to the important work ahead of them in attracting blockbuster events and driving economic activity across the State, we want Venues NSW to facilitate the development of genuine precincts with a mix of retail, restaurants, and businesses and, where appropriate, hotels and residential development. This will encourage the venues and their surrounds to be used seven days a week; not just on game days. In turn, this will create a vibrant place for people to visit, live and work. Venues NSW will be able to develop land, including for educational, retail, business, commercial accommodation and residential uses, subject to the normal provisions of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. Commercial and residential accommodation will be limited to prescribed parcels. Hotel accommodation supports the attraction of major events as spectators, sports players and entertainment acts are able to stay close to the relevant venue. Residential accommodation contributes to the precinct around venues and delivers a broader community character.

Finally, we want top-class governance to manage these assets and plan for the future. A single board and management team in collaboration with other key agencies, such as Destination NSW, are a key feature of this reform. For the first time, these venues will be managed and developed under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act so that any developments occur only when the community has had its say. I mentioned that the bill will create a new entity called Venues NSW by merging the existing Venues NSW and the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust. There is a lot of history in those agencies, particularly the trust. The Sydney Cricket Ground was established in the 1850s by soldiers stationed at Victoria Barracks. We remember our veterans every year at the National Rugby League's ANZAC Day Cup, which is played at the SCG. We had the first cricket match under lights at the SCG in the 1930s, when a young Don Bradman took to the crease. The Sydney Football Stadium next door has a history dating back to 1899. Over the years, not just football but also speed racing, athletics and boxing matches have been held there. I acknowledge that history and its enduring legacy.

I turn now to the details of the bill. As I stated, the bill will merge the present Venues NSW and the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust into a new entity. The bill repeals the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Act 1978 and amends the Sporting Venues Authorities Act 2008 in order to establish the new entity. Similarly, the Government proposes to amend the Sporting Venues Authorities Regulation 2019 and repeal the Sydney Cricket Ground and Sydney Football Stadium By-law 2014. New section 3A sets out the objects of the new Venues NSW.

Key elements of this new section include that the venues in question, both sport and entertainment, are to be managed on a commercial basis; a major objective is to attract major events into the State; and a precinct- and customer-focused approach is to be taken on Venues NSW land. That means the venue itself is only part of the picture. We want a complete and integrated vision that includes how people get there, a full suite of services when they do, and the area to be considered as its own mini economy, with businesses, educational and other opportunities. I expect Venues NSW to work with the owners and operators of neighbouring lands. While there is a commercial aspect to the objects of the bill, this new section makes it clear that community service obligations are to be met as directed and required. That means the carrying out of activities on a non-commercial basis.

Part 3 of the bill establishes Venues NSW and sets out how it is directed and managed and what its key functions are. New section 14 sets out that the Minister exercises control and direction over Venues NSW. New section 15 establishes a board of Venues NSW. All members will be appointed by the Minister and the board will have between nine and 11 members. That range is consistent with commercial best practice. I have already announced that, assuming the bill becomes law, Mr Tony Shepherd, AO, will chair the board and Mr Rod McGeoch, AO, will be the deputy chair. A third member of the board will be a senior New South Wales public servant, which will permit a close link to other key government programs and budgetary processes. The remaining board members will be determined in due course. Reporting to the board will be a full-time CEO. That person, as described in new section 16, will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of Venues NSW.

I described the objects of the Act earlier. New section 19 sets out a series of functions for Venues NSW and how it is to deliver those objects. It is a significant list but I will identify certain features. First, Venues NSW has a broad remit. It exists to build, manage and improve its facilities and lands. Those facilities, in turn, have a wide range of purposes, which include sports, entertainment and recreation. This variety and versatility will

support the added value we can offer when bidding for major events of all kinds. But this commercial aspect is balanced. The functions also make clear that Venues NSW land is to be open to a broad range of uses, including general community access. The functions recognise that it will not just be individual visitors who will use and enjoy these lands and facilities, but clubs and other associations. The new Venues NSW is to perform any community service obligations allocated to it by the Minister. Those examples go to the point I made before. These areas should not be just about bricks and mortar, surrounded by concrete carparks that become ghost towns outside of the big game days. They should be open as much as possible and used as much as possible. The areas around the actual stadia are an integral part of the overall picture.

New section 19 (1) (d) makes clear that Venues NSW is in the business of sports training and education, and can partner with others to do so. Sport, whether it is elite or amateur, is an essential component of our community. We need to ensure that we are offering a complete set of sport services at our venues. We need to build those support skills such as sport psychology, physiotherapy and leadership. We have a great example of this in the form of a partnership between the University of Technology Sydney [UTS] and the trust. The UTS postgraduate students work closely with the teams at the Sydney Cricket Ground and make use of the New South Wales Government's investment in the Rugby Australia UTS building on Moore Park Road. In effect, what we have is a mini Australian Institute of Sport. This means that the next generation of world-leading sports scientists at UTS are directly helping our sport superstars to reach new heights.

New section 19 (h) empowers Venues NSW to engage in or facilitate a very broad range of commercial activities. That is essential to create the vibrant precincts I spoke about earlier. Those commercial uses are intended to be broad and not limited to sport or entertainment. We want our venues embedded in precincts that offer the broadest range of commercial services—cafes, restaurants, retail, banking and professional services. That adds convenience and amenity to people visiting for matches or big shows; it also keeps the venue precincts alive outside key times. How can a cafe survive just by selling refreshments on game day? It needs to sell seven days a week, and it will be able to do so by being part of a broad-based commercial precinct. That is good for small business and for our economy.

New section 19 (1) (i) contemplates Venues NSW collaborating with agencies such as Destination NSW to attract the big acts and events. New section 19 (1) (j) allows the Minister to authorise Venues NSW to undertake, provide or facilitate residential, tourist and visitor accommodation in nominated parcels of land. That may strike some people as an odd thing for a sports and events agency to be able to do but the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust has that in its Act now—in fact, it has had it since 2006. Schedule 4A to the bill contains the descriptions of the lands that Venues NSW will own.

On commencement of the legislation, the bulk of the trust's lands will be held as scheduled lands under part 1 of schedule 4A to the bill. The lands the trust presently holds in its schedules 2A and 2B lands will be transferred into part 2 and part 3 respectively. These are the lands where the trust can currently build hotels or residences. Venues NSW lands will be moved into part 4. New section 19 (1) (j) can be used to designate additional lands to be able to be used for hotel or residential development. Let me be clear: A sports Minister cannot just send in the bulldozers after designating land under new section 19 (1) (j). Why? Because in all its developments going forward Venues NSW will be subject to the operation of the Environmental Protection and Assessment Act.

The Government recognises the need to achieve a balance between a broad commercial development capability and the broader interest. The bill will remove an anomaly. Section 16A of the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust Act allows a sports Minister, having consulted the planning Minister, to bypass the normal operation of the Environmental Protection and Assessment Act. We will be replacing that with an amendment to the State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) [ISEPP], which will be developed following the commencement of the Act and will set out the usual tiered structure. That will enable low-level development to be authorised with minimal process—for instance, renovations to a set of turnstiles or putting in some vehicle bollards. But large-scale development, such as a hotel, will need the full zoning and public consultation process.

Section 16A will be preserved for up to 12 months. The bill recreates it at new section 30AD of division 28, which replicates its effect. That is in case any minor works are required while the new ISEPP is produced. We need to make sure that we have a rapid approval process for urgent minor works. So the balance is drawn, any new development will be subject to the Environmental Protection and Assessment Act. That policy is made clear in new section 30AI, which sets out that tourist or visitor accommodation or residential accommodation may occur only in controlled or designated lands. The mechanism to place lands in either of these categories is new section 19 (1) (j) and new section 30AJ.

Finally, new section 19 (1) (k) requires that all reasonable attempts are made to ensure any new development accords with best-practice environmental and planning standards. Moving to other new sections, division 2A deals with Crown land management. The trust currently operates as a Crown land manager for its lands, and this division continues that land status and role. Much of the existing Venues NSW land is freehold.

The bill will preserve this current mix. However, an issue for Venues NSW will clearly be to consider the optimum land tenure regime. Part 3A of the Act provides for advisory committees to be set up by Venues NSW to provide advice to Venues NSW or the Minister, or to enable Venues NSW to exercise its functions. However, I wish to note that new section 21D (1) will itself establish two membership advisory committees, the first of which relates to current SCG members and the other to the current Stadium Australia Club membership program. Clearly, the members of both these programs are interested to know what this merger means for them. I emphasise that the merger will not change their existing membership status or rights.

The two membership advisory committees are established as vehicles for ongoing consultation between the two memberships and the new Venues NSW and its board. In the case of Stadium Australia Club, since this is a formally established company it will continue with its existing company governance structures completely unchanged. The relevant statutory advisory committee is simply a formal channel for that company to liaise with Venues NSW and its board. In the case of SCG members, as they are not in a company, they will be able to elect two members to be on the SCG membership advisory committee. This is further detailed procedurally in schedule 3 to the bill. New section 21D (4) allows either or both of these membership advisory committees to be dissolved at a future time. This recognises that over time the new Venues NSW may evolve a new membership concept that will render the need for separate membership advisory committees obsolete. That will be a matter for the agency.

I turn now to the schedules to the bill. Schedule 1 to the bill provides for a set of constitutional and procedural rules that will govern Venues NSW. Most of these are standard provisions found in many Acts; however, I will note some of them. Part 2 (2) sets out that the board members hold office for a maximum term appointment of three years. Successive appointments may be made, but the maximum consecutive period of service will be nine years. Remuneration for board members—with the exception of a public service member, who is not remunerated—is set pursuant to clause 4. This has the effect that the remuneration is calculated by reference to the Government's general policy for boards and committees classification and remuneration.

Schedule 2 to the bill sets out the various provisions relating to the chief executive of Venues NSW. Clause 1 provides that a CEO is appointed for a maximum term of five years and may be reappointed to a maximum consecutive period of 10 years. The bill establishes a new schedule 5, part 6 to the Act. Division 2 also sets out some arrangements relating to the dissolution of the trust and the old Venues NSW. Both entities are dissolved, and the new Venues NSW is automatically stood up upon the commencement of the Act. At this time, the board members of the former trust and Venues NSW cease to hold office pursuant to division 3. However, new section 25 subsections (4) and (5) provide that a member of either the trust or old Venues NSW board who is not appointed to the board of the new Venues NSW may be appointed, if they wish, to the relevant membership advisory committee for what would have been the balance of the term of their original appointment. This gives them the opportunity to give their expertise and historical knowledge, if they wish.

Division 4 of the bill provides that all assets, rights and liabilities of the former trust and Venues NSW will be transferred into the new Venues NSW. This means that a supply contract a company has with one of these entities is preserved without the need for novation. Division 5 of the bill preserves the existing licences that the old Venues NSW and the trust hold—for instance, liquor and security licences. This ensures normal business operations will roll straight over into the new Venues NSW on day one.

I turn now to the important issue of the staff of the two existing agencies, Venues NSW and the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust. This is a big change for them and I want them to understand the arrangements to apply should this bill be enacted. Firstly, as I said, part 6, division 2 will on commencement dissolve the trust and the old Venues NSW and immediately create the new Venues NSW. The new Venues NSW will not be an employment entity under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013, or GSE Act. The Government intends that it operates on a commercial basis; that is provided by clause 17 (2) of the bill. Part 6, division 6 further provides that, on commencement, all staff of both agencies will move automatically into the new Venues NSW. Clause 36 provides for how the existing rights of the staff transferred in—either from the trust or the current Venues NSW—will be protected on day one. It provides that their superannuation arrangements are preserved; leave balances and entitlements are preserved; continuity of service is maintained, including recognition of prior service; and that conditions of employment in their industrial instruments at the time of transfer are carried forward, including remuneration.

On day one a new staff member will have the same superannuation, leave and employment conditions as they had before. It will then be for the new chief executive, who will be appointed on day one, to determine the optimum staffing structure and the process of negotiating any new contracts of employment. My officials have already met with union representatives and outlined this transition process and we will keep the union representatives and staff informed as matters progress, including following commencement. There will be no

process of job assessment or matching until the Act commences and the staffing structure is settled. I stress that normal Government policies regarding change management will be followed.

The bill has been developed in close consultation with the interim advisory board, which includes longstanding members of the current trust and Venues NSW boards. They include Mr Tony Shepherd, AO; Mr Ian Hammond; Mr Rod McGeoch, AO; Ms Christine McLoughlin; Mr Alan Jones, AO; and Mr John Quayle. I acknowledge the outstanding work of the interim advisory board and thank them for their input. I also thank the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust and Venues NSW for their collaborative approach in delivering this new entity. I further thank the Office of Sport, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, NSW Treasury and my staff who have been involved throughout this process. As an effective working party, we have delivered this reform to an ambitious but necessary timetable in the interests of the people of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

GOVERNMENT SECTOR EMPLOYMENT AMENDMENT (TELEWORKING) BILL 2020

Second Reading Debate

Mr ROY BUTLER: I postpone general business (for bills) No. 2, Government Sector Employment Amendment (Teleworking) Bill 2020.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh): I set down the bill as an order of the day for a future day.

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

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 18 June 2020.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (10:16:56): The Government does not support the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Amendment (Service Providers) Bill 2020. If enacted, this bill would amend the definition of "public sector agency" in the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998, or PPIP Act, to extend its application to prescribed non-government entities which either provide services for or on behalf of a public sector agency or receive funding from a public sector agency in connection with providing services. The member for Liverpool mentioned several reports touching on whether State privacy legislation should capture contracted service providers. These include the 2004 statutory review of the PPIP Act by the then New South Wales Attorney General's department, the 2008 Australian Law Reform Commission report entitled *For Your Information: Australian Privacy Law and Practice*, and the then NSW Privacy Commissioner's 2015 annual report on the operation of the PPIP Act.

While the Government supports appropriate protection for the personal information of the people in New South Wales, there are a number of significant concerns with the mechanism this bill proposes. Firstly, the regulation-making power proposed for prescribed organisations would only allow for the prescription of the entire entity, rather than of particular services provided by non-government entities on behalf of public sector agencies. In other words, the bill affords no scope to tailor its provisions to the particular functions performed or information held by private entities under Government contract, as is the case under Commonwealth and Victorian legislation. This would mean that any prescribed service provider would be required to comply with the PPIP Act not just in relation to functions performed under Government contract or funding but across the entirety of its functions and business operations. While many non-government and private organisations do provide services to and support the operations of public sector agencies, in many other cases the services delivered under Government contract or funding represent only a small proportion of an entity's operations.

Requiring compliance for entire private entities in the same way as is currently required of the New South Wales Government and its agencies may in itself be inconsistent with the object of the Act. Amending the PPIP Act to regulate significantly the private sphere also comes with significant practical and resulting concerns which have not been accounted for. In particular, it seems there has been little consultation with key stakeholders in the development of this bill. If enacted, the bill would require prescribed organisations to operate in accordance with the PPIP Act in the same way as is currently required of New South Wales public sector agencies, local councils and universities. Among other things prescribed organisations would be required to resolve any privacy complaints in accordance with the PPIP Act by informing the New South Wales Privacy Commissioner, conducting internal reviews and issuing written reasons. This would also enable any complaints about the way prescribed organisations handle personal information to be made to the New South Wales Privacy Commissioner.

It would also enable administrative review of any internal review decisions by the New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Because key stakeholders have not been consulted the potential operational effects of this bill on the New South Wales Information and Privacy Commission, NCAT and the service providers themselves remain unknown. It is also unknown whether any additional funding would be required to support the IPC or NCAT's functions were this bill to be enacted. Another issue arising from this lack of consultation is that the proposed amendments may increase overlap between New South Wales and Commonwealth privacy laws and create confusion for both service providers and consumers. Many non-government organisations and corporate service providers already fall under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1998 because they meet the threshold of an annual turnover of \$3 million. It is unclear how the two legislative frameworks would interact if this bill were enacted. For example, this bill would appear to require prescribed entities to comply with the specific requirements of both New South Wales and Commonwealth privacy laws. This would create a significant burden on service providers to establish two separate procedures for handling personal information and reporting to two separate government departments.

If enacted, the bill would also allow aggrieved individuals to make complaints and/or seek redress under mechanisms established under both New South Wales and Commonwealth laws. This would create an opportunity for forum shopping and could create uncertainty about whether New South Wales or Commonwealth agencies have jurisdiction to address privacy complaints and reviews. The amendment provides that that the PPIP Act would apply only to service providers who are prescribed by legislation. However, the process by which a service provider may be prescribed under the proposed legislation is unclear and may lack transparency in practice. It is unclear whether the intention of the bill is to capture all organisations that receive Government funding or only a particular subset captured by certain criteria. The member for Liverpool has provided no details about how this mechanism would function in practice. It is worth noting that no private entities have been prescribed under the already existing mechanism in section 3 (1) (g) (i) and (ii) since the PPIP Act's introduction.

It is important that service providers be required to take steps to protect the personal information they hold on behalf of the New South Wales Government. One possible mechanism would be to mandate the inclusion of contractual terms that require compliance with the PPIP Act when public service agencies engage service providers. This is something that has already been done in New South Wales. For example, we may find those clauses in any contracts under the whole-of-government banking agreement or the human services agreement. In 2014-15 the IPC conducted a survey of non-government organisations in which 12 of the 26 surveyed indicated that they had a service agreement with Government that required them to comply with New South Wales privacy legislation. However, the insertion of a provision mandating the inclusion of such contractual terms would standardise protections across New South Wales. Similar legislative requirements for contractual clauses already are in operation in the relevant Commonwealth and Victorian legislation.

In recognition of these views, and as I have previously stated, the Government is considering other options for amending the PPIP Act in order to improve protections for individuals' personal information collected and held by Government contracted service providers. I look forward to working with the Minister for Customer Service on those reforms. In conclusion, as I have outlined, the Government is committed to securing a strong and robust privacy framework and supports the stated objective of the bill. However, privacy reforms should be done through a coordinated approach and in consultation with key stakeholders. In particular, any changes to the New South Wales privacy framework must be informed by proper analysis and consultation, and in close consultation with the New South Wales Privacy Commissioner. Because key stakeholders do not seem to have been consulted in the development of this bill and because, on the face of it, the bill's provisions would be impractical to implement, the Government does not support this bill.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (10:25:30): I support the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Amendment (Service Providers) Bill 2020. The bill has been introduced by the shadow Attorney General and member for Liverpool. I congratulate the shadow Attorney General on bringing forward this bill because in the twenty-first century few things are more important and less well understood by the general public than the protection of private data. When the Privacy and Personal Information Protection [PPIP] Act was introduced at the end of the last century, the internet was still in its infancy. Google was founded in September that year and Facebook would not be conceived of until 2004. It is not surprising that in the 22 years since proclamation of the Act numerous attempts have been made to expand and amend it. I am dismayed that the Government has opposed Labor's previous attempts to amend and reform privacy law. This bill will expand the PPIP Act to clearly cover State contracted service providers and contractors. This bill will bring the PPIP Act into line with the Federal Privacy Act and with the Health Records and Information Privacy Act, which regulates some contractors.

The discrepancy between the various different pieces of legislation makes no sense and creates an uneven regulatory framework for an area of policy that has only become more important in recent years and will become even more important still. The bill also will help to implement a recommendation of the 2015 report of the Privacy Commissioner that followed a survey of non-government organisations and showed the necessity of strengthening the privacy framework. The then Privacy Commissioner, Dr Elizabeth Coombs, wrote:

I am concerned about the lack of formal privacy protection for clients of some State Owned Corporations (SOCs) and recommend that all NSW SOC's be subject to privacy regulation. This can be achieved by ensuring coverage ... by the PPIP Act ...

I recommend amendments to the PPIP Act to ensure no diminution in the protection of privacy and personal information in the outsourcing of government services to private sector and not for profit service providers ...

This repeated the concerns expressed in a statutory review of the PPIP Act undertaken in 2004 and re-emphasised in a 2017 special report. Dr Coombs then said:

Misuses of personal information and data breaches are not random events; they result from poor organisational governance and practice, and the conduct of employees and contractors ... data breach notifications and complaints to my Office are increasing.

In concluding her report, Dr Coombs said:

For Governments ... wishing to participate in the global information economy, the confidence of citizens that their privacy and information will be protected, is essential if accurate and complete information is to be provided.

The type of reform that the bill proposes would, Dr Coombs wrote:

... establish mechanisms that deliver real benefits to those individuals within NSW who experience incursions into their informational privacy rights.

In an age of smart phones and social media, where our every activity is often documented by choice and just as often traced without our consent, it has never been more important to safeguard data. The necessity of tightening data protection regimes was thrown into sharp focus recently. In April a catastrophic data breach at Service NSW saw cyber criminals steal 3.8 million documents, potentially exposing the birth certificates, credit card details, medical records and financial information of up to 186,000 people. This leaves the Government with a potential liability of \$7.44 billion because compensation of up to \$40,000 is payable from public sector agencies to people who suffer loss or damage as a result of a privacy breach. In the aftermath of this breach, a number of residents of the Charlestown electorate reached out to me concerned that their data had been exposed and was now in the hands of cyber criminals.

One elderly man, who had been a victim of identity theft, told me in detail how damaging the experience had been for him and for his family. Years after his data was exposed he was still trying to extricate himself from the mess. Those exposed by the Service NSW breach may have to wait until Christmas to find out about that breach. As one constituent told me via social media, "It's as though the horse has already bolted." Another said, "In the meantime those individuals who have had their data stolen are potentially having their life savings stolen and their credit history destroyed." It is possible that the information harvested by these criminals could fall into the hands of hostile state actors, rogue non-state actors, criminal syndicates and even terrorists.

These concerns might have seemed alarmist once, but when the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act was introduced smart phones seemed like science fiction. In 2020 we conduct a lot of our business via Zoom and most of our banking by smartphone app. We shop online, we live through social media, we access Government services through online portals, and the digital frontier has become an important theatre in the fight against extremism of all stripes. As more and more services move online, as more and more services once delivered by Government are being delivered by private contractors and as more and more people come to rely on the integrity of Government computer networks to safeguard their information and privacy, we need to make sure their information is kept safe.

Breaches such as the Service NSW catastrophe undermine confidence in our Government services. One constituent said on social media, "Excellent, [the breach is a] good reason not to have our info because it clearly cannot be guaranteed to be protected." Efforts to contain the COVID-19 pandemic have made it clear that trust in Government is important in a crisis. How can we expect people to trust Government if we cannot even protect their data? The Government should support this bill. The Government should support that the protections for personal data provided by the PPIP Act should apply equally to that data that is held by organisations the Government pays to provide services. My constituents in Charlestown expect that their personal information, if given to the Government, or someone acting on behalf of the Government, is safe and well regulated. We in this Parliament need to do whatever we can to ensure that safety. The potential liabilities to the State and the potential damage data breaches can do to individual lives require this. I support this sensible and well-crafted bill.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (10:33:23): I will start my contribution with some common ground. I believe that the member for Liverpool and the member for Charlestown agree with this side of the House

that the protection of privacy is important. This bill demonstrates that there are some important differences between the Opposition and the Government. This side of the House does not believe in unnecessary regulation. It does not believe in the unnecessary overlap of Commonwealth and State regulation. The question needs to be asked: What is the problem that this very short bill—no doubt a hugely onerous task for the member for Liverpool—is seeking to fix?

Ten years before the New South Wales privacy legislation was enacted the Commonwealth enacted the Privacy Act 1988. The Privacy Act 1988, section 6C, defines the organisations to which it will apply. It applies to body corporates, partnerships and other incorporated associations. Then there are listed some exclusions under the Act. Those exclusions include State Government bodies or small-business operators. The operation of the State legislation that this bill seeks to amend was enacted in 1998 to regulate privacy concerns with regard to those State bodies. What this bill seeks to do is to make the State legislation apply to private bodies, individuals and corporations rather than the State corporations that it currently applies to.

That is significant. That is the element of unnecessary overregulation. If the bill is passed into legislation by the Parliament it will mean that the private organisations currently governed by the Federal legislation will have an additional regulatory burden and regime under the State legislation. It is to that matter that the Attorney General has already referred in terms of the unnecessary burden on service providers that will occur due to this legislation, if approved. The only explanation as to why this bill is necessary can be found in the second reading speech of the shadow Attorney General where he said some private organisations may not be covered under the Commonwealth legislation.

The Commonwealth legislation excludes small businesses. A small business, for relevant purposes, includes a business with an annual turnover of \$3 million or less. It really would be incumbent upon the member for Liverpool to identify who are the private service providers to the State Government that may have personal private information and who are small businesses and therefore not currently governed by the Federal legislation. If you read the second reading speech from go to whoa there is no practical identification of any relevant gap between the Commonwealth and the State legislation as it is worded to justify this bill coming before the House and taking up the time of the business of this House.

The Government is committed to protecting the privacy rights of its citizens and the integrity of personal information, but it is important to have consistent legislative regimes that do not overlap when applied to private enterprise. That is the sort of regulatory cost that is a disincentive to private enterprise. We are currently in the first recession this country has experienced for 30 years and I think it is very important that bills brought before this House by members will not add unnecessarily to the cost of business. It must be justifiable. Additional cost to business in the current economic environment means fewer jobs.

In the immediate years from now we are going to need to be very focused on measures that will enable people to have a job. We often hear from the Opposition that they care about the little person. Well, the little person needs to have a job. They need money to keep and feed their families. Any legislation that comes before the House needs a very clear and analytical lens that identifies whether it is putting a necessary or unnecessary burden on business. The member for Liverpool has not demonstrated that this legislation is required in a practical sense. That means in a real sense it will have an unnecessary burden upon business, meaning there will be fewer jobs at a time when jobs are needed more than ever.

The member for Heffron is laughing at me and saying, "You're kidding." I look forward to him reading out the names of the Government service providers with a turnover of under \$3 million, or not, which require this legislation to pass the House because they are currently not captured by the Commonwealth legislation. If he is unable to name one of them, he will, by omission, concede that there is no practical utility to this legislation and that it is unnecessary. We all agree that the protection of privacy is important. We all know that Commonwealth legislation currently applies to all private sector providers of Government services that have a turnover of greater than \$3 million or more. Therefore, it is important for the member to identify those providers with important private information that are currently not governed by the Commonwealth legislation. Having thrown down that challenge to the member for Heffron, I look forward to being overwhelmed with the names of companies that he and the member for Liverpool can identify. We will wait.

That is not the only problem with this legislation, but it is an important problem because of the principle that we should not have duplication of regulation between Federal and State legislation. We should not be encumbering our small businesses and our private sector at this important time. Ninety per cent of the people who are struggling and who are vulnerable in their employment in this State are from the private sector. It is an enormously important provider of jobs in our State. We should be looking after private providers of jobs because they are ultimately the ones that facilitate food being put on the table and a roof being put over people's heads. The member for Heffron has lived through a recession in his adult life, as I have. He knows the terrible impact it has on people. We should not be taking away jobs in the fashion that the bill would do.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (10:43:47): It is a sad day when the Attorney General, who is the most senior law officer in the State, and the Cabinet Secretary do not support recommendations put forward by the NSW Law Reform Commission and are not prepared to step up and protect people's privacy in this State. It is sad that they just want to play political games. The Cabinet Secretary threw down the gauntlet for the member for Heffron to name one or two private providers. When the member for Heffron does that I look forward to the Cabinet Secretary crossing the floor and voting for the legislation.

The New South Wales Government has not adequately reformed the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 in response to changes in technology and Government administration. Over the past 20 years the Government has put a proliferation of services out for tender or contract by various for-profit and non-profit providers. Those organisations do not have the same obligations as State Government agencies regarding privacy and other provisions. I thank the shadow Attorney General for his continued focus on ensuring that the Act and other privacy and Government information related legislation is updated and keeps pace with changes in technology, service delivery and community expectations. Privacy is not only an extremely important aspect of community safety but also a community demand that we must ensure is met at a family, small businesses and government level.

The Privacy and Personal Information Protection Amendment (Service Providers) Bill 2020 will rectify some of the issues with the current provisions of the Act. By amending paragraph (g) (i) of the definition of a "public sector agency" to include those that "provides services for or on behalf of a body referred to in paragraphs (a) to (f) of this definition, or that receives funding from any such body in connection with providing services". The bill will clarify that all such organisations are subject to the provisions. This is a crucial amendment to the Act.

The New South Wales Government has continued to increase the use of outside contractors. We must ensure that the community has the right to the same expectation of privacy and protection of their personal information regardless of the service provider. It is unacceptable that members of our community have a lower standard of privacy simply because the Government has outsourced service provisions. It is crucial that when members of our community interact with Government they are provided with the confidence that their information will be treated confidentially and securely, regardless of the provider organisation. We must not allow the quality of our Government service provisions to decline due to the outsourcing of delivery. All organisations working with the New South Wales Government must meet the same stringent privacy protection provisions as Government agencies.

Concerns regarding this gap in the law have been raised during several reviews of the Act since its introduction. In May 2010 the NSW Law Reform Commission made recommendations that the Act be amended to ensure that organisations contracted by New South Wales Government agencies follow the same privacy protection principles as those agencies. In 2017 the Privacy Commissioner produced a report that noted that there is significant complexity and uncertainty under the current legislation regarding the obligations of contractors and contracting agencies. That uncertainty increases when subcontractors are used. However, it is clear that the same recourse for breaches that is available against Government agencies is not available against non-government organisations.

Interestingly, the Commonwealth legislation already contains similar provisions binding contracted service providers to follow Commonwealth privacy rules. The reform to the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act would help to bring New South Wales legislation into line with the better practices of the Commonwealth Act and also increase and make greater provisions for privacy in New South Wales. The reform will provide a significant boost to protections that are provided under the Act and ensure that they apply to organisations contracted by the Government. The bill continues the effort to modernise the State's privacy protections by the New South Wales Labor Opposition. We must always work to ensure that all New South Wales legislation is appropriate for contemporary issues, processes, technologies and community demands. I commend the bill to the House. I call on the Attorney General and the Berejiklian Government to support this important and much-needed reform.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (10:49:20): I oppose the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Amendment (Service Providers) Bill 2020 in concert with the Attorney General and the Cabinet Secretary, the member for Ku-ring-gai, who put forward cogent reasons for why it should not be agreed to. The Government is committed to ensuring that effective mechanisms are in place to protect citizens' personal information. We have heard in this debate two very good reasons why that information should be protected. A previous speaker mentioned that for some time we have been rapidly moving forward into areas such as online banking, online service provision and online shopping. Huge amounts of personal data are captured on computer systems and databases, so the need for privacy and the protection of personal information is as necessary today as it ever has been in the history of this great State.

The Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998, or PPIP Act, sets out 12 principles of privacy protection. Without going through all of them, they encompass the areas of data collection, storage, access, accuracy and the use and disclosure of data, as well as the principles that underpin all of those categories. In that context, I note that the Attorney General has announced his intention to bring forward a bill proposing broad privacy reforms in New South Wales. Part of that process will involve the consideration of mandatory contractual terms of compliance with the PPIP Act when public service agencies engage service providers. This would be an effective step towards standardising information protection measures across the whole of the New South Wales Government. As the Attorney General noted, these clauses already exist in any contracts under the whole-of-government banking agreement or the human services agreement.

Another important component of the reform would be the establishment of a mandatory notification of data breaches scheme in New South Wales. Last year the Department of Communities and Justice [DCJ] released a discussion paper seeking public community views on how Government agencies should respond to data breaches. That consultation process also sought feedback on whether mandatory reporting schemes for data breaches should be adopted under the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act. The feedback showed that there was overwhelming public support for a mandatory notification of data breaches scheme to be introduced in New South Wales. That, of course, is a view shared by the Government. However, the consultation identified different views as to what the scheme should look like.

The Department of Communities and Justice and the Department of Customer Service are closely working with the Privacy Commissioner to develop the most appropriate model for New South Wales. In particular, the DCJ is considering how to best design a scheme that promotes better information management without imposing unnecessary administrative burdens. The member for Ku-ring-gai described in depth the strong need for opportunities to be provided that enable jobs and job growth across this great State, particularly at this time in our history when we are facing such challenges. The DCJ is considering whether the Commonwealth Notifiable Data Breaches scheme, introduced in 2018, is appropriate for New South Wales. It is also considering how a scheme like would operate if it was introduced in New South Wales. Any changes made to support such a scheme should reduce any unauthorised disclosure of personal information by public sector agencies and influence the conduct of effective public service agencies so that they can better manage the risk of unauthorised disclosures of personal information.

Another component of the reform is the expansion of the PPIP Act to cover State-owned corporations [SOCs] in New South Wales. The seven of them that are currently operating span industries ranging from energy and water provision to port services. They are Essential Energy, the Forestry Corporation of NSW, Hunter Water, Port Authority New South Wales, Sydney Water, Landcom and WaterNSW. At present State-owned corporations are not covered by the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act but Essential Energy is prescribed under the Commonwealth privacy regime. Numerous recommendations have been made to bring State-owned corporations under the oversight of the PPIP Act. They include a 2004 review of the Act conducted by the then department of the Attorney General, a 2008 report by the Australian Law Reform Commission entitled *For Your Information: Australian Privacy Law and Practice* and a 2010 NSW Law Reform Commission report entitled *Protecting Privacy in New South Wales*. The former Privacy Commissioner also supported these recommendations when she noted:

This regulatory gap in SOC's responsibility for the personal information they collect, use and hold results in inconsistent privacy protections for consumers. This needs to be addressed as the community has heightened concerns around the collection, storage, use, and disclosure of their personal information and expects Government to provide protections for their personal information and privacy as shown by recent research.

Earlier this year the Government undertook to continue consultations with the Department of Communities and Justice, the Department of Customer Service and the seven State-owned corporations, as well as with the Privacy Commissioner, to identify the most appropriate approach to bringing State-owned corporations under privacy legislation, either through the PPIP Act or the Commonwealth regime. In closing, I look forward to the Attorney General presenting the results from the Department of Communities and Justice and the Department of Customer Service consultation process so that these impacts can be properly understood and accounted for. As I indicated at the commencement of my speech, I oppose the bill. I look forward to another Thursday when the shadow Attorney General brings a privacy bill before the House.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (10:56:55): I listened to the contributions to debate on the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Amendment (Service Providers) Bill 2020 from the two very eminent silks the member for Cronulla and the member for Ku-ring-gai. I wonder what it is that the Liberal Party does to talented and educated people to cause them to provide some of the most inaccurate and dismissive contributions about a fundamental human right. The member for Liverpool has been bringing privacy issues and private members' bills regarding the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 to this House for six years. He has not done so because privacy is a popular issue that would create a wave of support from the community that the Labor Party

could ride into Government. He has done so because he understands that privacy is a fundamental human right. So important does humanity regard the right to privacy that it is enshrined in the Constitution of 130 nations. It is not just some technical issue; it is fundamental to all of us. For the member for Ku-ring-gai to dismiss privacy as a regulatory burden is hardly an appropriate response from a man of his knowledge, standing and integrity. I am extremely disappointed by his contribution, because he can enhance these issues certainly far better than I can.

I draw the House's attention to the principal Act, which was enacted in 1998. In his second reading speech—and in other amendments to this legislation or group of Acts relating to privacy—the member for Liverpool said that the Act came before the iPhone. The iPhone was first available on the world market in 2007, so this Act was enacted nine years before the first iPhone. In fact, the most modern mobile telecommunications device in 1998 was a Nokia phone, which, despite being the size of a brick, was the first mobile phone in the world that did not have an external whip aerial. There was certainly no internet access from a mobile phone. That is the nature of the privacy laws and the data protection enacted by this Parliament and they require urgent updating. The Privacy Commissioner has said so repeatedly in statutory reports provided to this House. The Government is always "gunna" do something.

The Attorney General comes to this place and seeks to pick apart the bill introduced by the member for Liverpool. The Attorney General, with all the resources of the Crown and the State of New South Wales and all the advice that is available to him, wants to pick apart a bill introduced by the member for Liverpool who, in opposition, has resources in the form of electorate officers in the Liverpool electorate office. If the Attorney General formed a view that there were some errors or problems in this bill, with all his resources, he could have proposed amendments. I am sure that if the Attorney General had spoken to the member for Liverpool and suggested alternative clauses, or in fact produced his own bill in response, the member would have been grateful to get some movement from the Attorney General, who is an eminent silk and who has promised to do something in this area. But there is no movement. This is not the first time I have been involved in a debate where the Attorney General has criticised a bill and produced no alternative.

As far as the member for Ku-ring-gai is concerned, he certainly has the ability to draft a clause of a bill. He certainly is able to do so without the resources of the State. But he chose to come to this place and say, "Oh no, you are imposing a regulatory burden on business," and then said the member for Heffron should somehow identify which businesses would not be impacted by the bill. The reality is that when you protect human rights you obviously impose burdens on society in order to protect us all. The argument is a nonsense. Apart from the fact that technology has moved on, the significant issue brought to the House's attention by the member for Liverpool is that the inadequate privacy laws—and they are inadequate at this point, and we know that because the Privacy Commissioner said so—do not bind statutory corporations. They do not bind those organisations, corporations or businesses that deal with the New South Wales Government.

More and more of what the Government does is being outsourced to the private sector. As the member for Liverpool indicated in his second reading speech, even if a contractual provision to maintain privacy in the outsourcing of a service is incorporated, the person whose privacy is breached has no right to enforce the privacy provisions because they are not a party to the contract. As far as non-government organisations that perform services subject to Government funding are concerned, inquiries and surveys conducted by the Privacy Commissioner revealed that those organisations did not even know what the legislation was. There is a fundamental human rights issue in respect of the current state of the law. It is abundantly clear and nothing is happening.

There is no point in the Attorney General coming to this place and complaining about the bill introduced by the member for Liverpool when the Attorney General has all the resources of the Government and the Crown available to him and he can propose his own amendments to at least start protecting the privacy of those citizens in the interim. One of the things I have found contemptible since I have been a member of this House is that if proposals come from the Opposition—even matters that are non-contentious, non-political and important—the Government votes them down. If legislation is introduced into this House by the Opposition—for example, the member for Liverpool genuinely wants to address a significant human rights failure—the instant response from those opposite is to vote it down. Do not talk to the member about it, do not propose an amendment and do not use Government resources to draft a Government bill. Just vote it down.

That is the state of politics in this State. That is the way in which public policy and legislation emanate from the Parliament of New South Wales, Australia's oldest Westminster Parliament. Is there any wonder the people of this State view members of Parliament with contempt? They are probably deserving of it. I commend the member for Liverpool for his six-year mission to try to obtain some improvement in the right to privacy of individuals. I say to members of this House: It might not be worth a vote in the community but I think it is fundamental for members of this House to always be moving as best they can to protect a fundamental human right.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (11:06:42): I welcome the opportunity to make a contribution to debate on the Privacy and Personal Information Amendment (Service Providers) Bill 2020. It is obviously an incredibly complex space. We think of the pervasiveness, for example, of social media platforms and the complexity that they have presented to how people retain their data; how comfortable people are in sharing their data; the unknown nature of how that data and information are shared, given a number of these platforms are not domiciled in Australia; and the saying that has arisen with the arrival of social media: "If it is free then it is more than likely you are actually the product". A lot of people are unwittingly giving up more information and data than they are perhaps aware of. We should acknowledge from the outset in the context of the bill that Australia has a Federal Privacy Act, which is one of the leading pieces of legislation in the world, with 13 privacy principles that apply to Government agencies and private entities. The Commonwealth and international context in which a lot of the private entities regulate and use our data presents some complexities for this bill.

The Privacy and Personal Information Protection [PPIP] Act 1998 sets out the legal obligations that public sector agencies must abide by when they collect, store, use or disclose personal information. At present, the PPIP Act does not regulate private entities. This bill seeks to amend the PPIP Act to extend its provisions to certain private entities—that is, persons or bodies prescribed by the regulations that, for example, provide services for or on behalf of a public sector agency or receive funding from a public sector agency in connection with providing services. The Government opposes the bill for a number of reasons, which I will now go through. The proposed amendments do not tailor the legislation's provisions only to the functions that a service provider performs under Government contract or funding. It would require prescribed service providers to comply with the PPIP Act across the entirety of their functions and therefore may be inconsistent with the purpose of the Act itself.

Given that many of the services that would fall under these criteria are likely to be already subject to the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988, the new amendments would increase overlap and duplication between Commonwealth and New South Wales privacy laws and therefore create confusion for both service providers and consumers. One would imagine that ultimately the only winners would be the law firms and lawyers engaged by the providers to navigate this legislation and duplication. Furthermore, the process to prescribe service providers by regulation remains unclear and may lack transparency. Finally, and incredibly importantly, there has been no consultation with key stakeholders, including public sector agencies, service providers, the New South Wales Privacy Commissioner, the Information and Privacy Commission New South Wales [IPC] and the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] and no consideration of the resourcing impacts these amendments may have on the IPC, the NCAT or service providers.

The issue of whether the PPIP Act should regulate contracted service providers has been the subject of prior consideration. Several reports have recommended that the PPIP Act should require contracted service providers to comply with privacy laws in regard to those functions being performed under the Government contract. These include the 2004 statutory review of the PPIP Act by the then New South Wales Attorney General's Department, the 2008 Australian Law Reform Commission report entitled *For Your Information: Australian Privacy Law and Practice* and the then New South Wales Privacy Commissioner's 2015 annual report on the operation of the PPIP Act. In light of these previous recommendations, I note that the Attorney General has committed to giving further consideration to amending the PPIP Act to require that contracted service providers handle personal information in accordance with the requirements of the PPIP Act if that personal information is collected or obtained as a result of providing services to or on behalf of a public sector agency.

However, the bill goes further than the previous recommendations in two respects. Firstly, prescribed persons or bodies will be required to comply with the PPIP Act not only where they are contracted to provide specific services on behalf of the Government but also where they receive any Government funding in connection with providing services. Secondly, where persons or bodies are required to comply with the PPIP Act, they would be required to comply in relation to all of their functions rather than just those associated with Government contracts or funding. These expansions are problematic and for the reasons stated the Government cannot support the bill. I thank the House.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (11:12:40): In reply: I am delighted to speak in reply on the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Amendment (Service Providers) Bill 2020. I acknowledge the contributions of the Attorney General and the members for the electorates of Charlestown, Ku-ring-gai, Prospect, Seven Hills, Heffron and Manly. In relation to private members' bills about privacy legislation, the iron law of New South Wales politics is that the Government will never support an Opposition bill, and that has been exhibited once again today. It is really quite a melancholy occasion that even with two eminent silks on its side the Government has put a position in this debate that is so profoundly weak.

The Government position seems to be that it supports what I am trying to do in principle but it will not do anything about it. Its opposition to this bill and previous bills that I have introduced in this place would be a lot more credible if it wanted to do anything at all. It has simply sat on its hands over the last six or seven years while

I have been introducing these bills and raising these issues. There was at least a discussion paper issued by the Government and earlier this year the Attorney General said that he anticipated introducing legislation this year. That seems to have disappeared off the radar as well. The reality is that if I did not move these private members' bills the Government would not have issued its discussion paper last year. I add in relation to the horrendous consequences that the Government says will flow from the passage of this bill, if that were the case, it is highly unlikely that the substance of this bill would have been the subject of multiple recommendations by the Privacy Commissioner.

I turn to the arguments presented by the Government in slightly more detail. The Attorney General said he supported the objectives of the bill but did not want to do anything about it. He then suggested that it was probably adequate to have contractual relationships between the Government and various organisations that are delivering those services. As I pointed out in my second reading speech when I introduced the bill, the fundamental problem with that, of course, is that the citizens have absolutely no right to do anything about it. If there is any capacity for anything to be done, it is the role of the Government because it is the contracting party. The individual citizens, whose privacy is perhaps being impinged, do not have any rights under that relationship. That also ignores the fact that despite perhaps there being contractual obligations, most of those non-government organisations [NGOs] still do not know that they are obliged to adhere to any principles of privacy, even if there is a contractual provision binding them. That is clear from the survey that was carried out by the Privacy Commissioner, to which I referred in some detail in my second reading speech.

The Attorney General also talked about not the possibility of overlap but the absolute certainty of overlap between Federal legislation and this provision if it were adopted. Perhaps he and the rest of the Government should read the bill because an organisation cannot be covered by this bill without it being prescribed. It is simply not the case that organisations are covered because the bill is passed. There also needs to be a process whereby particular organisations are prescribed by regulation. It is fairly obvious that if the bill were to be adopted, that is a way to make sure that there is no overlap.

The second member of the Government to make a contribution was the member for Ku-ring-gai. What seems to have most upset him was that the bill was so brief. He made slighting comments about the bill not requiring a lot of intellectual capacity to put it together. I would say that only a silk would complain that a law was too simple and too brief. Presumably he wants the legislation to be as obscure as his arguments against the bill. Maybe he is trying to organise his post-parliamentary career: The more complex the legislation, the more work he is likely to have when he leaves Parliament.

The member for Ku-ring-gai also made comments about overlap and that we should not duplicate legislation. Once again he should have read the bill and worked out exactly what the prescription clause meant. He talked at great length about the burden the bill would impose upon the private sector. Perhaps he should have compared notes with the Attorney General because if, as the Attorney General says, this is adequately done by contractual terms binding these private operators to adhere to the principles of privacy, is there actually that much more regulatory burden if the bill is adopted? It does not require a lot more work if the Attorney General is correct and the organisations comply with the contractual terms.

The contribution by the member for Seven Hill was really about the discussion paper that was issued by the department. I was quite amused listening to him going through all the points in the discussion paper. I ticked off one by one all the private members' bills I have moved. The core of the Government's discussion paper seems to have been to take my private members' bills and put them into a discussion paper. That is marginal progress, I guess, but it has taken an awful long time to get to that point and we still have not got anywhere near a Government bill. In that context, it is extraordinary that the Government keeps opposing the bills that we put up. The member for Manly spoke but, with all due respect, I do not think he added anything more to the debate. He read his speech well but I do not think he added any substantive issues.

As a matter of principle, non-government bodies that carry out traditional government functions should maintain the same privacy standards as do Government agencies. That has been an increasing problem over the years because more and more non-government agencies are carrying out Government functions. It is blindingly obvious that citizens' rights to privacy should not be adversely affected merely because the Government gets a non-government body to carry out its tasks. Frankly, because non-government bodies are not subject to quite the same rigour as Government bodies, it is not surprising if their concerns for privacy are not as great as those of a Government body. That is what the bill is trying to address.

As I have said on a number of occasions, the legislation is over 20 years old. Even the Privacy Commissioner has conceded that it needs to be updated. This is a part of the process of highlighting those provisions that need to be updated. I would again remind the House that the bill comes from a series of recommendations from statutory reviews, after discussions by the Law Reform Commission and multiple recommendations from the Privacy Commissioner. As the member for Ku-ring-gai noted, it is a brief and simple

bill. The logic in favour of it is overwhelming. If the best opposition to it is, "We agree with the principle but we cannot do it", that deserves to be seen for the farce and charade that it is. I am delighted to commend the bill to the House.

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

The House divided.

Ayes42
Noes46
Majority.....4

AYES

Aitchison, J
Atalla, E
Bali, S
Barr, C
Butler, R
Car, P
Catley, Y
Chanthivong, A
Crakanthorp, T
Daley, M
Dalton, H
Dib, J
Donato, P
Doyle, T

Finn, J
Greenwich, A
Harris, D
Harrison, J
Haylen, J
Hoenig, R
Hornery, S
Kamper, S
Lalich, N
Leong, J
Lynch, P
McDermott, H
McGirr, J
McKay, J

Mehan, D (teller)
Minns, C
O'Neill, M
Park, R
Parker, J
Saffin, J
Scully, P
Smith, T
Tesch, L
Voltz, L
Warren, G
Washington, K
Watson, A (teller)
Zangari, G

NOES

Anderson, K
Ayres, S
Barilaro, J
Berejiklian, G
Bromhead, S
Clancy, J
Conolly, K
Constance, A
Cooke, S (teller)
Coure, M
Crouch, A (teller)
Davies, T
Dominello, V
Elliott, D
Evans, L
Gibbons, M

Griffin, J
Gulaptis, C
Hancock, S
Hazzard, B
Henskens, A
Johnsen, M
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Pavey, M
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Provest, G
Roberts, A
Saunders, D
Sidgreaves, P
Sidoti, J
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Smith, N
Speakman, M
Stokes, R
Taylor, M
Toole, P
Tuckerman, W
Upton, G
Ward, G
Williams, L

PAIRS

Cotsis, S
Mihailuk, T

Wilson, F
Williams, R

Motion negatived.

WATER MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT (TRANSPARENCY OF WATER RIGHTS) BILL 2020

Second Reading Speech

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (11:29:52): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It has now been more than a year since I started fighting for the right of Australians to find out who owns their water. Never in my 60 years have I faced such nasty and fierce opposition when trying to get something done. It is a very simple question: Should water ownership remain secret or should there be public transparency?

Amazingly, the New South Wales Government has fought tooth and nail to protect secrecy. If the National Party put half as much effort into protecting rural jobs as it has into protecting the right of foreign companies to buy our water in secret, our regional economies would be booming. Our small towns would be thriving, not dying as they are now under the National Party's watch. The fact that so many powerful people do not want a proper New South Wales water register is exactly why we need one. When I started this fight last year, I thought there was something dodgy going on. Now I know there must be corruption. We have to lift the lid on this now.

In voting down this bill in August, all National Party MPs sang from the same hymn sheet. Melinda Pavey repeated the phrase "mum-and-dad farmers" up to a dozen times. A water register would violate the privacy of mum-and-dad farmers, she said; it would lead to greenie activists attacking them. That was the National Party's excuse: privacy. It is a wonder it has not tried to ban the *White Pages* phone book for the exact same reason. The phone book has all sorts of personal details about irrigation farmers. But the National Party cannot use the privacy excuse any longer. Today I will table an amendment to my bill that makes it clear that no personal phone numbers, residential addresses or emails are to be included on the public online register—not that they ever were, but let us make it crystal clear today. Now there is absolutely no excuse for those opposite to vote down the bill. Unless members own water and do not want people to know about it, they must support this bill which promotes transparency while protecting privacy.

Put simply, my bill will do four things. Firstly, it will require New South Wales MPs to declare their water interests on the pecuniary interests register. This includes any water they previously owned in the past five years and any water that their spouse owns. Who here would be against that? No-one; I would not be. Secondly, the bill will change the application process for getting a water licence so people cannot hide their identity when they apply for their licence. All current licence holders will also have to provide more information about company directors, major shareholders and related corporations. We know they can hide water behind companies, and they do. Thirdly, the bill will change the online water register to allow people to search for the water holdings of people, companies and government departments.

Today I will also table an amendment that strengthens transparency for irrigation corporations. All irrigation corporations—like, for example, Murrumbidgee Irrigation and Coleambally Irrigation—will have to disclose all entities that hold water within their irrigation schemes. Currently, foreign companies can hide water within the bulk licence of an irrigation delivery company. If they do so, the foreign companies' water holdings do not appear on the water register. My bill will change that. We will, for the first time in history, have genuine transparency, which is what mum-and-dad farmers want. Fourthly and lastly, my bill will protect the privacy of mum-and-dad farmers by ensuring the public register does not publish personal phone numbers, emails or residential addresses. The register was never going to publish personal details anyway; that was just a ridiculous scare campaign waged by a National Party member who had no other reason to reject this bill. Today's amendment will make that perfectly clear.

We desperately need this law changed. Water ownership in New South Wales is shrouded in secrecy. There is no justification for that. Currently, the online New South Wales water register makes it impossible to find out who owns water. There is a register, but it is impossible to search for who owns what. People can search for a water access licence number, but the register prevents us from searching for the name of a person or company. Why on earth does an online register prevent people searching by name? Imagine if the *White Pages* stopped people searching for surnames? How on earth would anyone ever find anything? They would have to search by phone number. It makes no sense; they would never find out anything. Something dodgy is going on.

Furthermore, applying for a water licence is currently easier than opening up a bank account. People can hide behind a corporate veil so the general public does not know that they are the purchaser. It would be easy for a member of Parliament to set up a shell company in the Cayman Islands, where shareholder details are secret, and buy and trade water. There is no requirement for that MP to declare it on the pecuniary interests register here. New South Wales MPs are required to declare their land, property, jobs and shares, but not their water entitlements. I believe the first step in fixing our water problems is to find out who owns the water. There are heaps of water problems—stacks of them. This is just the first little step. Politicians, foreign companies, Sydney traders and government departments could be owning water and manipulating the water trade, but it is impossible to identify them. We know Canadian superannuation funds are snapping up water in the Murrumbidgee. Chinese government companies are buying up large quantities of water in northern New South Wales, but the public cannot identify who they are or how much they own.

That is disgraceful. Unemployed Australians are required to declare their water interests on their Centrelink forms, but Chinese companies can buy our water in secret. Imagine that: We have to declare it on Centrelink forms but they can come in and buy it and no-one asks any questions. This Government is defending that. How fair is that? Why do the Liberal Party and The Nationals—the parties of protecting our borders—allow it to happen? We know there are dodgy people buying our water, holding it until there is a drought and then selling it to farmers at

inflated prices when they are desperate. Multinational traders are making a fortune while family farms go broke. We need some transparency over water—a scarce natural resource—to plan for our growing population and to protect our long-term food security. We already know that Australian rice is not on our shelves—you would be hard pressed to find it—and that is because of what is happening with our water. It is not because of drought; it is water mismanagement.

We have a land register. There is no reason for water ownership to be secret. The public wants this reform: 11,000 people have signed a Speak Up 4 Water petition calling for a public water register and also for a royal commission. More than 2,000 people so far have signed another petition—the e-petition supporting this law change, which has only just gone live. The Griffith and Deniliquin branches of the NSW Farmers Association—these are the mum-and-dad farmers—support my bill. I have been told that even the northern beaches branch of the Liberal Party, in Dee Why, unanimously passed a motion supporting a transparent, searchable water register and a royal commission. That was in the Dee Why branch of the Liberal Party. Why do the Liberals and The Nationals in this Parliament keep opposing it? Their voters want this reform but Coalition members do not. What are they hiding? Why are they doing that? I call on the Liberals and The Nationals to end their fierce opposition and to do what the Australian public wants them to do, that is, to support this very important bill.

Second Reading Debate

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (11:40:03): I support the Water Management Amendment (Transparency of Water Rights) Bill 2020. I am happy to have supported bills that relate to transparency that have been introduced in this House over the past several months because fundamentally on a bipartisan basis in this Chamber, including a bill moved by the Government and three bills moved by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party—this is the third one—we have a broad consensus of agreement that we need more transparency. It starts here with parliamentarians and extends well beyond the walls of this Chamber. Significant concerns have just been raised by the member for Murray about, in particular, international ownership and more importantly speculator ownership, whether it is international or onshore, that interfere with the market price of our water.

Several months ago, when we dealt with the private member's bill of the member for Murray, Government members were at pains to refer to page 391, from memory, of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC] report, which had been released just two hours before the debate. I congratulate them on being able to read a 500-page document in just two hours and finding that piece of information on page 391. A number of months have passed now, which fortunately has given me the opportunity to read that report. I will now draw the attention of the House to a couple of not just isolated comments from the ACCC but comments that are repeated throughout the report. To save people too much reading, I am going to refer a couple of comments that appear in the early part of the report. On page 20 of it states:

Our efforts to gather and analyse trading data and other information to assess the impacts of market conduct make it clear that the current information and data collection arrangements across the Basin make analysis of market participants' trading behaviour challenging.

There is no institution responsible for, or capable of, gathering the necessary data to effectively monitor trading behaviour in the Basin. Better data collection and coordination across the Basin would be central to better market oversight.

That is the crux of the entire report and of transparency. That is the crux of having a register that is easily accessible, easy to understand and allows people to search and identify where, how and when water trades are taking place. They can identify where market manipulation is happening. Water, unlike all other stocks and shares on the Australian Stock Exchange, does not have the sophisticated rules in place that are required under the Australian Stock Exchange. If the type of behaviour that happens in relation to water, happened on the Australian Stock Exchange, people would be jailed. The member for Murray is trying to introduce a bill in this House on behalf of her party, her team and her community that deals with the issue of transparency, openness and access to information. The question of access was also dealt with by ACCC because its report talks about the existence of well-resourced traders—interpret that as incredibly wealthy, large corporate, lots of money, power, access and opportunity. I quote from page 19:

... the time and cost needed to identify and pursue trade opportunities mean that these traders—

the well-resourced traders—

may have opportunities to use the market to their advantage, in ways that other parties, particularly some smaller irrigators, cannot.

The ACCC is belling the cat on the fact that someone with money can get access, but someone with no money cannot get access. That is why transparency and the water register are so important. Under New South Wales legislation the Minister for Water, Property and Housing has the capacity to set up, design, demand, instigate and follow-through on a water register of his or her making in a way, shape or form that the Minister chooses. That power exists right now. New South Wales claims to be the leader on so many fronts and platforms. Indeed, we can be the leader on this platform as well because trades inside New South Wales can be registered inside a New

South Wales register. With regard to those well-resourced traders I will refer to comments of some farming communities around that issue. The first comment is from nut grower Select Harvests:

A lack of consolidated, accurate, comprehensive and timely data on water rights trading activity gives a significant informational advantage to large, well-resourced and connected, sophisticated investors and large-scale irrigators over small market participants.

That is a direct comment from the farming community. It talks about the need for a register to be transparent, open and accessible and fair to all, not just for well-resourced traders. It goes to the part of the bill which deals with the need for this register. That is why tens of thousands of people have signed the petition to talk about the need for transparency around water in New South Wales. As members of Parliament we absolutely need to lead the way; but, more broadly, so that informed decisions can be made by us, the ACCC and the Natural Resources Commission should be informed about whether or not these markets are being manipulated to the benefit of some traders. In order for people to understand the value of market manipulation, I refer to the graph on page 93 of the ACCC report. It refers to allocation prices for Southern Connected Basin 2012-13 through to 2019-20. I can inform the House that for anyone who purchased water as late as May-June 2017, within 12 months that asset would have increased in value by five times.

Debate interrupted.

Motions

HUNTER REGION FLOOD MITIGATION

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (11:44:83): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes Wallsend was overwhelmed by tempest and flood in 2007.
- (2) Notes the City of Newcastle cemented \$20 million towards flood mitigation on 26 May 2020.
- (3) Notes Hunter Water must accept responsibility for canal widening to complete lifesaving flood mitigation.
- (4) Calls on the Minister for Water to direct Hunter Water to urgently carry out flood mitigation before the next devastating storm and tempest.

It has been 13 years since a storm and tempest besieged Wallsend. In the years since, particularly in 2015, floods have threatened damage on a similar scale. In fact, twice this year sufficient rain caused fear for our businesses and our residents. In both cases, properties further upstream adjacent to Ironbark Creek flooded. Backyards, sheds, cars and garages were damaged yet again. Finally we have a chance to complete necessary Wallsend flood mitigation works. The City of Newcastle replaced the Tyrell Street bridge earlier this year, months ahead of schedule, and has committed funds to do the remainder of the works, including replacing the Boscawen Street and Nelson Street bridges, and the culvert underneath Cowper Street.

I note there is only one member opposite present, and I thank the Parliamentary Secretary for being in the Chamber. I know that the Parliamentary Secretary knows Wallsend. I am sure that his colleagues, despite not having visited Wallsend—including the Minister, who has continually denied my many polite invitations to visit—will tell members that flooding is not within the remit of the State Government and that the council should fix it. But the causes of Wallsend's CBD flooding and upstream inundation are the stormwater channels owned by Hunter Water. Last February I asked the Minister a question on notice whether Hunter Water owned the stormwater drains that run through the Wallsend CBD and if it is the responsibility of Hunter Water to maintain and upgrade these assets. In her response the Minister advised me:

While Hunter Water owns the infrastructure, stormwater risk management, planning and capacity upgrades across Hunter Water's area of operations remain the responsibility of local councils ...

Is the Minister unaware that in 2017 the Hunter Water operating licence was changed to authorise Hunter Water to do the work? Section 1.2.4 of the Hunter Water operating licence states:

... authorises ... Hunter Water to provide, construct, operate, manage and maintain a drainage service within the Area of Operations in excess of the drainage service it is required to provide, operate, manage and maintain under clause 1.2.3. For the avoidance of any doubt, this clause authorises ... Hunter Water to enhance, expand and add capacity to the drainage service described in section 13 (1) (b) of the Act.

I say to the Minister—who is not in the Chamber—that the operative words are "add capacity". The New South Wales Government funded the Northern Beaches Council flood mitigation study in 2017, which is great. Why will the Minister not fund Wallsend? Last year Hunter Water decided as part of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] applications to put a proposal via phone survey to 700 of its Hunter-wide customers—that goes up even as far as Muswellbrook—for work on Wallsend canals. Hunter Water's justification for refusal of the Wallsend flood works is this survey. I would be interested to know what other proposed

infrastructure was put to popular vote—or was it just Wallsend? We know it is just Wallsend. Hunter Water conducted a self-fulfilling survey prophecy. It was a Clayton's survey.

Widening Ironbark Creek would provide a welcome reassurance to residents and business owners in the Wallsend area that their investment in the local area will not be threatened the next time an east coast low causes damage and large-scale flooding—and it will happen. History and science back that up. The water Minister must step in and direct Hunter Water to deliver this important infrastructure upgrade for the Wallsend community. Perhaps the Minister will say that Hunter Water cannot afford to conduct these works. Last year the Government required Hunter Water to pay a \$100 million dividend, which was funded with New South Wales Treasury Corporation bonds.

Now that interest rates are at record lows, and spending and job creation are needed more than ever the Minister must direct Hunter Water to spend the money to widen the canal, ensure the safety of Wallsend residents and businesses, and stimulate the Wallsend economy. It is time to give Hunter Water the ministerial and regulatory direction to undertake the necessary work and fix the ongoing flooding issue in Wallsend once and for all, before the next devastating storm and tempest—because we will get another one.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (11:55:03): I thank the member for Wallsend for bringing this motion to the House. I acknowledge the member's interest in this particular topic and also acknowledge the work of this Government to support the efforts to minimise the flooding risk in Wallsend and across New South Wales. To be honest, the member for Wallsend is probably one of the wisest people sitting on the opposite side of the House. I deeply respect her and her commitment to her electorate. However, I am compelled in this particular instance to put some facts on the table that the member may wish to consider about her own thoughts and actions on this particular issue.

As members are aware, stormwater management and flood mitigation planning are primarily responsibilities of local government across New South Wales. In urban areas such as Wallsend this particularly recognises the key role that local councils play in the planning and management of development across urban stormwater catchments, including through zoning controls in their local environment plans and development controls within their development control plans. This approach has been consistent from both Coalition and Labor governments. In the case of Wallsend, the responsibility for stormwater management and flood mitigation is held by the City of Newcastle Council. I understand the member for Wallsend served as a City of Newcastle councillor prior to her service in this place. Indeed, we have also the member for Newcastle in the Chamber, who also served as a Newcastle city councillor. Of course, the member for Cessnock served as a Cessnock city councillor—

Mr Clayton Barr: No, not true.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: You did not?

Mr Clayton Barr: Never.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: Well, there you go. I am happy to stand corrected on that. Let us also not forget that the Leader of the Opposition was the Minister for the Hunter following the 2007 flood. In recognising the role of local government in managing stormwater and flooding risk, New South Wales councils can collect a levy from their ratepayers for stormwater management services under the Local Government Act 1993. I understand that the City of Newcastle currently levies its ratepayers with a stormwater management charge under section 496A of the Act and will raise more than \$200 million from this charge in 2020-2021. I am advised that in levying this charge the City of Newcastle notified its ratepayers that it would be spent on both capital projects and recurrent expenditure, including:

... planning, construction and maintenance of drainage systems, including pipes, channels, retarding basins and waterways receiving urban stormwater.

This is on page 125 the council's own draft budget. While it is primarily the responsibility of local government to provide stormwater services, the New South Wales Government does provide financial support to local councils to assist in managing flood risk. This support includes the annual floodplain management grants program, which supports applications for flood, floodplain risk management and feasibility studies, as well as implementation, including structural works, warning systems, evacuation management and voluntary purchase. The Government supports the implementation of the New South Wales Flood Prone Land Policy, which is outlined in the New South Wales *Floodplain Development Manual*. Projects are eligible for funding across four project stages: flood study, floodplain risk management, feasibility and implementation. Support provided under the programs usually involves \$2 from the New South Wales Government for every dollar provided by the applicant council or local authority.

In 2019-20 grants totalling \$9.15 million were awarded to local councils and authorities. In the Hunter region this included funding to Hunter Local Land Services to reduce the impacts of flooding in the Hunter. I am

also advised that the City of Newcastle previously sought and received funding from this program, including in 2015-16 when funding was awarded for the detailed design of the *Floodplain Risk Management Plan for the Wallsend Commercial Centre*. As I have outlined, the responsibility for flooding risk and stormwater planning remains with the City of Newcastle. However, responsibility for the ownership of the stormwater assets within Wallsend is shared by both the City of Newcastle and the Hunter Water Corporation, with a number of existing concrete stormwater channels owned and maintained by the Hunter Water Corporation. Indeed, the Hunter Water Corporation's enabling legislation confirms that the City of Newcastle remains the responsible authority for flood management in the Newcastle local government area. Section 62 (2) of the Hunter Water Act recognises that the corporation, Hunter Water, has no duty to upgrade or improve its drainage systems.

Recognising the lead role played by the city, I understand that Hunter Water has committed on multiple occasions to work with the council to progress the city's plans to manage flooding risk to the Wallsend community. This includes an open offer from Hunter Water for collaboration with the City of Newcastle to develop a solution to shovel-ready status, as well as supporting any grant applications that the city should prepare to progress a solution for flood mitigation at Wallsend. Consistent with the outcomes of the flood risk mitigation plan that was partly funded by the New South Wales Government, I understand that the City of Newcastle Council is currently implementing a range of improvements to prevent flooding in the Wallsend CBD.

This includes replacement of the Tyrrell Street Bridge, which was opened in March 2020. In the interests of collaboration and partnership and noting the advocacy from the member for Wallsend, Hunter Water previously sought the advice of its community, as mentioned, to include part funding for the Wallsend CBD stormwater upgrades within its 2019 regulatory pricing proposal to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Authority [IPART]. Noting that flooding upgrades are not part of its legislative remit to demonstrate a case for potentially funding a portion of the works discretionary charge, Hunter Water was required to test the willingness of its broader customer base in order to provide funding solutions to address flooding of the Wallsend CBD. I see that the time allotted to me has expired.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (12:02:03): No doubt my colleagues have heard of the notorious *Pasha Bulker* storm that lashed the coast of New South Wales in June 2007. That ferocious storm not only beached the huge coal carrier, *Pasha Bulker*, but also flooded around 10,000 Newcastle properties after more than 300 millimetres of rain fell in just over 24 hours. Five thousand cars were written off and by the end of August the Insurance Council of Australia advised that insurance claims exceeded \$1 billion. Tragically, the storm ultimately claimed nine lives. The *Pasha Bulker* storm also wreaked havoc on the Wallsend CBD, in particular. As the flooded stormwater got to the notorious choke point in Ironbark Creek and spilled over, it left people trapped and scrambling to get out of the suburb's central business district. There was severe damage to Nelson Street businesses, with water breaching the second storey of buildings. Power was out for days. The economic cost from the destruction of the flood itself and the costs of repair and rebuilding are well known. This also carried severe personal and emotional costs.

That is something we never want to see repeated. Yet 13 years later those drains are still a narrow choke point. Thirteen years later we should not be arguing about life-saving infrastructure needs. Quite simply, Hunter Water needs to undertake urgent canal widening to complete this lifesaving flood mitigation measure. With every storm, the people of Wallsend are now nervous. The stormwater guzzles up the notorious choke point and everyone in the Wallsend CBD makes preparations for flooding because no-one wants to see people trapped and scrambling again. The Newcastle City Council is doing its bit and later this year will begin work to rebuild the Tyrrell Street Bridge. The council said that a Hunter Water owned stormwater drain needs to be "significantly" widened and that is absolutely true. However, Hunter Water says it has only a "small role" to play, adding:

Hunter Water plays a small role in the management of flooding in Wallsend, through the ownership and maintenance of the main concrete stormwater channel in the CBD.

This is a vital piece of infrastructure. As Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said:

Quite simply, if Hunter Water's drain isn't significantly widened, then during heavy rain the Wallsend CBD will continue to flood no matter what work council undertakes.

Since it is Hunter Water's asset that causes the flooding it is only logical for Hunter Water to take action. In addition, the Minister can direct Hunter Water to do the work as part of its operating licence. Thirteen years on from the deadly June 2007 storm that ravaged New South Wales, some shops in Wallsend's CBD still remain empty. Glenn Jennings' embroidery shop was destroyed. He said:

There will always be that nagging doubt now that, if you were to even rent a building down here, I don't think you'd get insurance for flood ever again in this area.

That is a problem and a great risk. One would not want to throw good capital after that. If we look at the big picture we know that climate change is already increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events.

We know that there will be more flooding events in Wallsend as a result. We know that widening the channel will prevent flooding in the Wallsend CBD. Now the Government says it does not have enough money to pay for this project. But I remind the Government of the \$100 million it ripped out of Hunter Water in dividends in 2018 on top of the \$44 million representing the standard annual dividend. I say to the Minister that money from Hunter residents is flowing down the M1 to Sydney despite urgent lifesaving infrastructure needs that are not being met in Wallsend. I say to the Minister: This is vital infrastructure that will mitigate a potentially fatal disaster. Does someone have to die before she will act?

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (12:06:48): I thank the member for Wallsend for moving the motion and bringing this issue to the attention of the House. I acknowledge this is an important issue and that Hunter Water plays a role in the management of flooding in Wallsend through the ownership and maintenance of the main concrete stormwater channel in the CBD. However, as members are aware, responsibility for floodplain management and flood mitigation is the responsibility of the council. In the case of Wallsend, the council is the Newcastle City Council.

Mr Alister Henskens: A Labor council and a Labor mayor.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: I acknowledge the interjection by the member for Ku-ring-gai.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Cessnock will come to order. The member for Coffs Harbour has the call and will be heard in silence.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: This is not new; it is consistent with the approach taken to flood planning and mitigation across New South Wales and is linked to local government's responsibility for local planning and appropriate development controls. The New South Wales Government provides financial assistance to local government to support the management of flood risk. The Floodplain Management Program supports applications for flood, floodplain risk management and feasibility studies, as well as implementation including structural works, warning systems, evacuation management and voluntary purchase. As has been mentioned, in 2019-20 grants totalling \$9.15 million were awarded to local councils and other authorities, including Hunter Local Land Services, to reduce the impacts of flooding.

Support provided under these grants usually involves \$2 from the New South Wales Government for every \$1 provided by the applicant council. I am advised that City of Newcastle previously sought and received funding from this program in 2015-16 for the detailed design of the *Floodplain Risk Management Plan for the Wallsend Commercial Centre*. I understand that Hunter Water has committed separately to continuing to work with the City of Newcastle to progress the city's plans to manage flooding risk to the Wallsend community. This includes collaborating with the City of Newcastle to develop a solution for Wallsend to shovel-ready status, as well supporting any grant applications the city should prepare to progress a solution for flood mitigation at Wallsend.

Hunter Water stands firm on its commitment to working collaboratively with the City of Newcastle to understand how it can support plans to manage flooding risk to the Wallsend community. I am advised that a solution for flood mitigation at Wallsend is estimated to cost in the order of tens of millions of dollars. Such upgrades are not something that Hunter Water can invest in directly on its own to manage flooding risk. It needs to be acknowledged that funding of any solution for the Ironbark Creek stormwater channel will require a partnership approach. This is because, as I outlined earlier, Hunter Water does not have responsibility to manage flooding risk. To reinforce the matter, it does not have a regulatory requirement to do so—be that legislative or in its licence to fund the upgrades. In addition, Hunter Water does not have the support of its customers across the Lower Hunter region to fund such investments at Wallsend.

As part of Hunter Water's pricing proposal to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART], it tested the appetite of its customers through a willingness to pay survey. The independent survey was a comprehensive, statistically significant representation of the Lower Hunter community, with 700 Hunter Water customers taking part. Completed by Marsden Jacob in late 2018, the results of the survey state, "Most Hunter Water customers are not willing to pay for flooding investments at Wallsend". Given that responsibility clearly fits within the remit of local government, the previous support from this Government by way of grants to the City of Newcastle council to assist it in its role to manage stormwater in Wallsend, and without the support of its customers, Hunter Water should not be required to invest directly in these upgrades. I again reiterate Hunter Water's open offer of collaboration with the City of Newcastle and its offer of support with funding applications. I would encourage the member for Wallsend and the City of Newcastle to accept this offer, and work collaboratively towards a solution. I thank the member for moving this motion in the House.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (12:10:16): I will start by drawing the attention of the House to the logical lacuna. The Government's defence is that Hunter Water has no responsibility, it is all council's. But they have both individually acknowledged that Hunter Water has done a survey of customers to see whether or not

they want to pay for it. If it was not the responsibility of Hunter Water to deal with the issue, why the survey? For those members of the House who do not understand the concrete channels of the Hunter, which are the responsibility of Hunter Water, let me explain it briefly. We all have floodplains, creeks and rivers that run through our various electorates that take the water away, but across the Hunter we also have specially built concrete channels that water is funnelled into and is then carried in great volume to where it is designed to go. These channels are throughout Newcastle, the Hunter and Cessnock. They are the responsibility of Hunter Water. They are 100 per cent the responsibility of Hunter Water.

I know that from a Cessnock perspective because one fell apart during a flood and when questions were asked of council as to why it was taking so long to repair to occur the council said, "No, that is the responsibility of Hunter Water." Sure enough, when the repairs were done the trucks and inspectors on site were from Hunter Water. That would indicate that the channel is the responsibility of Hunter Water. There is also a problem with flooding in South Cessnock where, due to coalmine subsidence, it is falling below the levels originally designed when the concrete channels were built to take the water away from South Cessnock. Guess who is involved in that conversation about the need to redesign, improve and lift those concrete drains—Hunter Water. The problem at Wallsend is with the concrete drains, which belong to Hunter Water, the same company that surveyed customers to see whether or not they would be willing to participate in a subsidised payment to get the work done.

One of the most remarkable things that I have seen in my 9½ years in this Chamber is a change in personality of one particular member, who went through a terrible experience over the Christmas-New Year break. I speak of the member for Bega, who was confronted with a natural disaster coming right down his driveway, the poor fella and his poor community. It was devastating for him and he is a changed man. We have all seen it in this Chamber. Think of the people experiencing flood in the Wallsend region who are frequently exposed to this type of natural disaster. It is a life-changing experience. It is scary and frightening. But it is the type of disaster that can be addressed through funding.

It can be addressed through an instruction by the Minister in this place to Hunter Water. No-one can say that Hunter Water cannot afford the works. It has just sent a \$100 million dividend down the M1 to this place for projects in Sydney. It is some vanity project—a stadium or a tunnel or a bridge or a light rail somewhere in Sydney. That is more than \$100 out of the pocket of every family in the Hunter. It came down the expressway to improve the life of someone in Sydney when it could have improved the lives of thousands who face the harrowing experience of flood in the Hunter, which is where that money came from. That is why I support the motion moved by the member for Wallsend. That is why it needs to be dealt with. I would prefer, if you guys are going to put up an argument, that you at least have it make sense.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (12:14:15): I thank the member for Wallsend for raising this matter with the House. I concur with the statement of the member for Upper Hunter when he says that the member for Wallsend is the most intelligent person on the other side of the House. I will address comments made by the member for Newcastle and the member for Cessnock. They have said that the Government should direct Hunter Water to do the works. They are not telling the full truth. As they know, if you look at section 62 of the Act it is not part of the remit of Hunter Water. Hunter Water is willing to assist and partner with Newcastle council. Newcastle council has a responsibility for flood mitigation.

The concrete canal, as they know, is not the only piece of the works in the tapestry of flood mitigation. Retention ponds and other areas capture water and slowly release it into the canals further down the system. Hunter Water does not have responsibility for flood mitigation. It cannot put in the water traps, flood retention ponds and other pieces of infrastructure that are needed to slow down the water that goes into the canal. They are turning their back on what is needed. What is needed is a partnership. The two previous speakers for the Government said that Hunter Water is willing to work with Newcastle council, which does have responsibility for the flood mitigation works that are required.

The Government will look at applications for funding that should be submitted by Newcastle council and grant funds. Newcastle council has responsibility for flood mitigation and for the works. It requires a partnership of a local government council, the water authority and the State Government working towards a solution. To come into this place and say that the Minister can order action is wrong. The legislation does not allow the Minister to do that. There is legislation specifically to set up Hunter Water and section 62 does not allow the Minister to do that. The member for Cessnock is misleading the public when he says that the Government has responsibility for the water.

The member for Cessnock says that by asking ratepayers the survey question somehow Hunter Water has taken responsibility for the flood mitigation works that are required, as well as the canal. Hunter Water went to its ratepayers as part of the requirement and process of going to IPART to have a special increase in rates to pay for works in partnership with the Newcastle council. Newcastle Council has ultimate responsibility. The ratepayers said, "No, we do not want to be part of this." That does not mean that Hunter Water does not want to

be part of the partnership. It does not mean that the Government is not open to assisting the council. The council has responsibility for the flood mitigation works. It is important that people understand that flood mitigation works is the whole-of-floodplain work of retention ponds and other infrastructure before it enters the canal. The Government does not support the motion.

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (12:18:14): In reply: I thank the members for Upper Hunter, Newcastle, Cessnock, Coffs Harbour and Myall Lakes for their contribution to this debate. On behalf of all of the businesses and people in Wallsend I am disappointed. The Minister for Water has not responded to any of my written invitations to visit Wallsend and see the problems for herself. I am disappointed that she skulked out of this Chamber the minute I began this speech. It was very naughty of her and very disappointing. I remind the member for Myall Lakes that in 2017 the Act was amended and Hunter Water's operating licence was changed to authorise Hunter Water to do the work under section 1.2.4 of the Hunter Water operating licence. The bureaucrats who wrote some of the speeches in the Minister's office obviously were not aware of that and did not do their homework. I thank everybody for their concerns for Wallsend, and I thank the member for Upper Hunter for his praise of the people of Wallsend—that was very kind.

Ultimately, I have brought this debate to the House because I am getting really frustrated with the Minister not responding. As I said, I want polite responses when she sees for herself the problems that have occurred. I do not want the 2007 flooding to happen again in Wallsend, Cessnock, the Upper Hunter, Myall Lakes and Newcastle. We cannot do it again. I do not want to be told again by Hunter Water that it does not need to fund this as it is the responsibility of the City of Newcastle. To the city's credit, it has done more than it needs to. It has actually done more than its fair share. The City of Newcastle is willing to work with Hunter Water, but Hunter Water is not willing to work with the city. Hunter Water is willing to give all of the responsibility back to the Newcastle council, which is not fair or just.

As the member for Cessnock mentioned, why put out a dodgy survey if you are not going to do the work? The only survey that Hunter Water conducted was about Wallsend and it was conducted to get the response that it wanted, which was that it was not willing to undertake this necessary work. This is the most important motion I have ever moved because it is about the people of Wallsend's lives and their safety. It is a lifesaving decision. The Minister has the authority to direct Hunter Water to do its job—much to the chagrin of some members of the Government. I am asking for Hunter Water to do its job.

In 1897 the Plattsburg Council received permission to conduct a royal commission into flooding, and that is when the canals were built. Wallsend floods and it will continue to flood, but it will be worse because of the population increase. When Wallsend floods again, if any businesses or lives are lost—and I really hope we do not lose any lives—they will be on the Government's, the Minister's and Hunter Water's heads. We lost so many businesses in 2007 that were insecure and afraid to come back because the insurance companies would not insure them again. We lost businesses. It affected the economy and I do not want to lose anymore people. I ask the Minister to do her job and direct Hunter Water to do its job. I urge members to support this important motion for Wallsend.

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

The House divided.

Ayes43

Noes45

Majority.....2

AYES

Aitchison, J
Atalla, E
Bali, S
Barr, C
Butler, R
Car, P
Catley, Y
Chanthivong, A
Crakanthorp, T
Daley, M
Dalton, H
Dib, J
Donato, P
Doyle, T

Greenwich, A
Harris, D
Harrison, J
Haylen, J
Hoenig, R
Hornery, S
Kamper, S
Lalich, N
Leong, J
Lynch, P
McDermott, H
McGirr, J
McKay, J
Mehan, D (teller)

Minns, C
O'Neill, M
Park, R
Parker, J
Piper, G
Saffin, J
Scully, P
Smith, T
Tesch, L
Voltz, L
Warren, G
Washington, K
Watson, A (teller)
Zangari, G

AYES

Finn, J

NOES

Anderson, K
Ayres, S
Barilaro, J
Berejiklian, G
Bromhead, S
Clancy, J
Conolly, K
Constance, A
Cooke, S (teller)
Coure, M
Crouch, A (teller)
Davies, T
Dominello, V
Elliott, D
Gibbons, M

Griffin, J
Gulaptis, C
Hancock, S
Hazzard, B
Henskens, A
Johnsen, M
Kean, M
Lee, G
Lindsay, W
Marshall, A
O'Dea, J
Pavey, M
Perrottet, D
Petinos, E
Preston, R

Provest, G
Roberts, A
Saunders, D
Sidgreaves, P
Sidoti, J
Singh, G
Smith, N
Speakman, M
Stokes, R
Taylor, M
Toole, P
Tuckerman, W
Upton, G
Ward, G
Williams, L

PAIRS

Cotsis, S
Mihailuk, T

Wilson, F
Williams, R

Motion negatived.

SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT FUND

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (12:29:56): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes 35,000 New South Wales businesses have benefited from emergency grants of \$10,000 from the \$750 million Small Business Support Fund.
- (2) Welcomes the announcement that from 1 July 2020 a wider range of small businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic will be able to apply for \$3,000 grants to assist with reviving business activity.
- (3) Commends the Government for its prudent financial management and strong economic performance, which have enabled New South Wales to be able to provide greater support to businesses during the COVID-19 crisis than any other State.

Like the rest of the world, the New South Wales Government had no foreknowledge that 2020 would bring the challenge of a pandemic that would require a robust and vigorous response to protect the community. However, the sound economic approach of the Government since being elected, and its sound approach to the budget, has meant that New South Wales is starting from a strong position. This has enabled it to deliver \$16 billion in measures designed to boost the health system, and provide economic stimulus and support in response to the COVID-19 pandemic—far more than any other State. I stress that both of those responses have been managed simultaneously by the New South Wales Government. It has shown concern for the health system and concern for the protection of the health of the people of New South Wales and, at the same time, it has shown a strong focus on the protection of livelihoods, businesses and income streams to protect people while we recover and stabilise the situation. The pandemic was totally unexpected for New South Wales, just as it was for everyone else in the world.

To support small businesses, the New South Wales Government established a 24-hour hotline to give businesses greater access to advice and support for non-health-related COVID-19 matters. It provided grants of up to \$10,000 for businesses below the payroll tax threshold who employ between 0.5 and 19 full-time equivalent staff. It paid or approved \$528 million to over 53,400 small businesses, supporting over 150,000 employees, with a further \$1.7 million in grants still in progress. Those numbers have changed since this notice was put on the *Business Paper*. In the motion that I read initially, it was 35,000 businesses. Now 53,400 workers have benefited from the scheme. Since 1 July 2020 the Government has provided a \$3,000 small business recovery grant, which is also available to non-employing businesses and sole traders. Over \$101 million has been paid to or approved for over 34,000 small businesses supporting over 96,000 employees. A further \$9.7 million in grants is in progress. From 8 September the Government provided southern border small business support grants of \$5,000 or \$10,000,

with 278 small businesses receiving a total of \$1.765 million. Applications from a further 132 small businesses seeking to access an additional \$1 million are in progress.

The total of those schemes and small business grants paid or approved is nearly \$631 million, with a further \$12.5 million in progress. The Government has deferred payment of payroll tax for six months for all businesses to assist with cash flow. It waived three months' worth of payroll tax for businesses whose small total grouped Australia wages for the 2019-20 financial year are no more than \$10 million. It has brought forward payroll tax cuts and the payroll tax threshold went from \$900,000 to \$1 million from 1 July 2020. This will save eligible businesses thousands of dollars per year. The Government has also waived a range of fees and charges, including \$50 million worth of licence fees for up to 200,000 tradies and \$19.5 million worth of fees for the entertainment and hospitality sectors. The Government has given effect to the national code of conduct for commercial tenancies impacted by COVID-19 to provide a framework to help landlords and tenants get through the crisis. It has injected the NSW Small Business Commission with \$10 million to increase mediation services between commercial landlords and tenants.

The Government has accelerated payments to our suppliers, injecting more than \$2 billion into the economy. It has amended planning rules to allow food trucks and dark kitchens to operate on any land at any time, with the landowner's consent. It has provided more flexibility for supermarkets and pharmacies to operate around the clock to meet the needs of customers. Relaxed liquor licensing compliance, set out in the Liquor Act 2007 and the Liquor Regulation 2018, has allowed licensed venues such as restaurants, cafes and small bars to sell alcohol for offsite consumption. The Government has injected more than \$14 million into Business Connect to engage 40 additional business advisers, and to ensure that the program continues for another 12 months to support businesses through these tough times. It has also rolled out free webinars for small businesses doing it tough, with topics including how to maximise cash flow, turning your restaurant into a ghost kitchen and marketing to build your business.

The Government has rolled out fee-free TAFE NSW short online courses to assist anyone who wants to upskill during the COVID-19 pandemic. Short courses include eMarketing for small business, social media customer engagement, writing and presentation skills, and team leader skills. It has allowed construction sites to operate on weekends and public holidays, allowing projects to progress while workers follow social distancing guidelines due to the potentially limited number of workers on a site at any given time. The Government has allocated \$12.6 million to a support package for the tax industry to provide operators with financial relief during the COVID-19 shutdown. A \$50 million rescue and restart package for New South Wales arts and cultural organisations has also been allocated, including funding that allows New South Wales not-for-profit arts and cultural organisations to temporarily hibernate. Further funding will become available in the coming months and will enable these organisations to restart operations after the COVID-19 pandemic.

This lengthy list of measures is designed to protect businesses throughout New South Wales, particularly those small businesses that are most vulnerable to external shocks. They are designed to protect and sustain businesses through this period of crisis until general economic activity picks up and health-related restrictions can be relaxed or removed. These measures are designed so that businesses can come out the other side of the pandemic and so that people in New South Wales are still able to earn a living, employ their friends, neighbours and colleagues, and contribute to the betterment of people's lives in this State. This is just as much from an economic perspective as it is from a social and mental health point of view, because we know how important those businesses are to the people who put their heart and soul into them throughout the course of their lives. They are often the fruits of people's lifework. It is not just a dollar and cents issue; it is very much a people issue. The Government is doing everything possible to protect small business in New South Wales through the pandemic.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (12:37:07): It is interesting that the member for Riverstone went through a list, in praise, of what the Government has done for small business, but he missed out a couple of things that it has done recently. We can use the word "for" but as we will see later, these measures "for" small business are actually anti-small business. I am pleased that the member for Riverstone took the time to update us on some of the statistics around the \$750 million small business support fund. It is pleasing that 53,000 out of the nearly 800,000 small businesses in New South Wales have been supported by the fund, but that is a pretty small fraction. It is good that \$631 million has been allocated in grants and that there is still \$12 million more to be considered, but quick maths takes that figure to \$643 million. When it was announced, that fund was \$750 million. That leaves \$100 million not in the pockets of and supporting small business but instead in Treasury coffers. I do not know about the member for Riverstone, but I do not think that he has understood that small business grant programs only help small businesses if you get the funds to them. When you have \$100 million sitting there despite the fact that you have changed and extended the program three times, something has gone horribly wrong and small business owners know it.

As the son of a truck driver and cleaner who later went on to own their own small business—and as someone who started his working life at a number of small businesses while at high school and university, and who has worked with small businesses in the Wollongong area during not only the pandemic but also my entire time in this place—I appreciate how much hard work, heart, passion and effort small business owners put in to make sure that their businesses work.

The latest statistics I have—of course the Government does not provide us with terribly much—show that only 861 businesses in the entire Wollongong local government area accessed the grants as of 1 June. Wollongong is the third-largest city in the State and only 861 small businesses had gotten hold of the \$10,000 grant, and those that had received an average of less than \$10,000. When a city has more than 10,000 small businesses in it and only 800 are getting the grant and when only 5,300 small businesses in the State are getting the grant, something is wrong. And why is that? It is because the Government has excluded small businesses from its support programs with surgical precision.

If you want an example of how to excise something, you only have to look at the way the Government has treated most small businesses under this program, because most small businesses do not get the grant. That is a hit to confidence and that hit to confidence means a hit to jobs in the future. Earlier I touched on the fact that the member for Riverstone had not completely outlined to the House some of the other things the Government has been up to when it comes to small business. Setting aside the fact that household final consumption expenditure has fallen by 13 per cent in New South Wales, gross capital formation has dropped by 7.8 per cent and final demand has dropped by 8.6 per cent, and not content with supporting small businesses dealing with the impact of that aspect of the global pandemic, the Government has decided to put on some new taxes in the form of tolls.

One of those new taxes is on the M5. I note the member for Macquarie Fields and the member for Campbelltown, both of whom are well and truly aware of this, are present in the Chamber. One of those new taxes is on a road that was built by Labor and was free for years under Labor. But now when those tradies go in to work, when small businesses get on the road or when their deliveries come out that way they get slugged \$6.95 per car or \$20 for a truck each way. And that is not just a temporary tax. This unfair toll slug will go up 4 per cent a year every year for 20 years. That is a tax on small business, it is a tax on tradies and it is a tax on families, and no-one from the Government—not the member for East Hills or anyone from out that way—has stood up for it.

But it gets worse because, not content just to hit the south-west, the Government has also imposed the new NorthConnex tax—another plan to whack a hefty bill on small businesses, mainly truckies, at the height of a recession. The tolls or road taxes range from \$7.91 for cars to \$23.73 for heavy vehicles and they will continue to go up 1 per cent every quarter for the life of the 28-year toll contract. But it gets better. Not content to implement a great big new tax on small businesses using NorthConnex, the Government has said, "If heavy vehicles do not use the road they face a fine of \$194." The Government cannot come to this place and sing its own praises about its support for small business during an economic recession and a pandemic when in fact it has been giving with one hand—sort of, because it has left most small businesses out—and then taking away with a tax on small business in the form of a road toll that will go on for decades both in the north and in the south. I move:

That the motion be amended by leaving out paragraphs (2) and (3) with a view to inserting instead:

- (2) Notes that the Government has introduced new, unfair and expensive tolls on the M5 and NorthConnex, which creates a massive annual cost for small business, tradespeople and families.
- (3) Calls on the Government to scrap the new M5 toll and to introduce a toll-free period for NorthConnex because tolls are nothing more than new taxes on small businesses and families.

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (12:44:22): The small business support grants were a lifeline to many small businesses in my electorate of East Hills. On Monday Minister Dominello was with me in Revesby to open the new Service NSW centre. Before we cut the ribbon, opening the amazingly beautiful centre at Revesby, with Premier Gladys Berejiklian the Minister and I visited Kylie Moses, the owner of Ella Baché at Revesby. I went to high school with Kylie. She became an apprentice beautician at age 17 and when she turned 22 she bought the same business at which she had been an apprentice.

With the shutdown of beauticians earlier in the year due to the COVID-19 pandemic it was the first time in close to three decades that she had more than a couple of weeks off, not working in her business, and she cried. She cried because she did not know what would happen to her life's work and the business that she had built. She also cried because she did not know what the future would hold for her and her staff. The \$10,000 small business grants were very much a lifeline for Kylie and helped her pay her rent for her business premises and kept her going until she was able to reopen.

The further \$3,000 grant also helped her purchase extra cleaning supplies and paper towels, and assists with the new cost of the extra laundry required to operate her beauty salon in this all new COVID safe world. Just over 500 businesses in East Hills took up the \$10,000 grants to the tune of almost \$5 million. There was also a

further take-up of the \$3,000 grants with over \$660,000 being delivered to businesses in my electorate of East Hills. The Minister and I were told by Kylie that accessing this assistance was easy and really gave her hope that her business would survive the uncertainty of the shutdown and also the disruption that was caused to her business.

As well as the small business support grants, one of the most significant things small businesses need in this challenging time is sound advice, including advice on how to access grants but also on how to pivot a business to survive and indeed flourish in the new and unexpected economic and social environment. The New South Wales Government's free advisory service for small businesses, Business Connect, has played an essential role in the Government's integrated package of COVID-19 supports for small businesses. The Business Connect program is a dedicated and personalised service that provides practical advice and training to support New South Wales small businesses to start, run, adapt and grow. It provides high-quality professional business advice and skills training events across every local government area in New South Wales.

The Business Connect service can be found on the business.nsw.gov.au website. It is a great service and extremely helpful as the services provided are run by trusted local business advisers online and also by phone. The Business Connect advisers are supporting small businesses affected by COVID-19, the terrible summer bushfires and the ongoing drought with practical advice and referrals to other Government support. The New South Wales Government has injected additional funds into Business Connect to help small and medium businesses navigate this challenging time. Forty new advisers have been deployed across New South Wales, bringing the total number of advisers to over 120. A number of the new Business Connect advisers have experience running their own businesses in industries dramatically impacted by COVID-19, including five in the arts and creative industries. There are also advisers with expertise in procurement and tourism.

Additional advisers with language expertise in Cantonese, Mandarin, Arabic, Farsi and Dari are also in place or under recruitment. This is greatly welcomed by businesses in my electorate of East Hills as 50 per cent of the people in my electorate have a parent who was born overseas and these languages are prevalent in the small businesses in my area. An extensive series of Business Connect webinars are also available and provide invaluable information for businesses facing these challenging conditions. Again I urge all the small businesses in New South Wales to go to the business.nsw.gov.au website and connect with Business Connect.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (12:48:47): Firstly, I commend my friend and colleague the member for Wollongong for his amendment to the motion, which is about supporting small businesses. If we are going to talk about small business we must also talk about the facts. As someone from a family of small business owners I know the tough times, the hard work and the effort that go into running a small business. One of the great tragedies of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the pressure on and the subsequent collapse of so many small businesses. It has been well documented for years that small businesses have been struggling under the burden of red tape and taxation. As I go around my electorate and speak to many small business owners I am constantly reminded that things have never been tighter or more tough. The many empty shops I see on the main street reinforces this economic pain.

One would think that at a time of unprecedented pressure and financial strain on small business the Government would do all it could to support those who are struggling. Instead, this Liberal Government is showing its true colours. It chooses to do backroom, corporate deals at the expense of hardworking small businesses. The Liberals have sat back and done nothing as the new, unfair M5 East toll and NorthConnex toll takes thousands of dollars from small businesses. It was this Liberal Government that gave the rights to a new toll on an old road that was free under Labor. We say the Liberals message is that they support small businesses by taxing them more and taking more of their earnings. This Liberal Government is not the party of small business; it is the party of high taxes and inflicting more costs on small business owners.

Every day thousands of vehicles, tradespeople and small business representatives use the M5 East to go about their business. I note the member for East Hills is in the Chamber. When the public interest debate on the M5 East was being debated she was silent and she voted against her community's interests to go about their business. They will be inflicted with more taxes and thereby suffer more economic pain because they now have to pay for a road that had been free for almost 20 years. These small businesses should not have to pay a cent to use the M5 East; under the Liberals, they do. This is the party that purports to be the voice and champions of small business but its actions prove otherwise. It has consistently rejected calls to scrap the unfair toll on the M5 East. When it comes to taxes, tolls and support for small business never listen to what the Liberals say; look at what they do.

My friend and colleague the member for Wollongong rightly exposes the hypocrisy of the Liberal Government in supporting small business. He, like all members on this side, recognises that now is not the time to impose crippling taxes on our small business owners. There can be no doubt that this crippling tax from the new tolls over many decades will send some small businesses to the wall. The profit margins in small businesses are small at the best of times, and now is not the best of times. Parliament is here to serve the people of New South

Wales and their interests. It is not here to prop up the profit margins of multinationals in corporate backroom deals at the expense of hardworking small business owners and their families.

If this Government was serious about getting the economy moving again, it would not rob small business owners of thousands of dollars a year. On the contrary, it would do everything it could to support them. I am proud to support the member for Wollongong's amendment. It shows that Labor stands with small business owners, in particular those who use the M5 East, who are trying to get a fair go. I wish that members on the other side of the House, particularly the members of south-west Sydney—the member for East Hills and the member for Holsworthy—would do the same and support Labor's amendment. [*Time expired.*]

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:53:02): I support the member for Riverstone's motion. I congratulate the member for East Hills, who was recently at the opening of the Service NSW facility in her electorate—something Labor never wanted to give the people of East Hills. Not a thing, as usual. It is this Government that is delivering for the people of East Hills and, as the member very clearly outlined, looking after its small businesses. The member for Wollongong talked about the poor turnout of people adopting the small business grants. I am extremely proud to inform the member that more than 1,300 small businesses on the Central Coast have applied for and received the \$10,000 grant. That is more than \$13 million going back to the local economy on the Central Coast.

As the local member I was very proud to champion this particular grant funding for our small businesses. The member for Wollongong might want to put in a bit more time and tell his local businesses about what is available. When they are told, they will grab it. Indeed, the Central Coast is a perfect indicator of that. More than \$13 million is going back into the Central Coast local economy in support of small businesses because we were happy to tell them it was there. The same can be seen with the \$3,000 small business grant because we are telling small businesses we are here to help them, unlike those opposite who absolutely ignore small business and have their entire lives treated small business as a problem. If they cannot unionise it, they do not want to support it.

The reality is this Government is providing record support for small business—whether it be the \$10,000 NSW Small Business Grant, which has provided millions of dollars for small business, or the \$3,000 grant, which has been extended because it was so popular. All one has to do is talk to some of our small businesses. I have mentioned in the House before the South End Social, which is a fantastic coffee shop owned by a local chap from Copacabana. All the staff are locals and not one has had to be put off during the pandemic. South End Social received the \$10,000 grant, which was used to pay local suppliers, and it also received the \$3,000 grant. Real small businesses are taking up the Government's support mechanisms to protect their staff and to make sure their businesses are still here. The busiest day for South End Social in the Gosford CBD is a Sunday. That is because, unlike Labor, this Government has invested record amounts of funding to revitalise town centres like Gosford, which means it is a living heart.

Labor spent nothing on the Central Coast and small businesses were left languishing. Now we have real businesses—real mum and dad industries—getting the support they need at the time they need it. Businesses, whether at Riverstone or East Hills, are making sure they utilise the support from Service NSW on 137788, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That is the support that this Government is providing to small businesses when they need it. There are a thousand additional employees at Service NSW because of this Government's commitment during the unfortunate COVID-19 pandemic. The Government is backing in small business and those mums and dads who put everything at risk to make sure they provide an income for other people's families as well.

I congratulate the member for Riverstone on bringing this motion. It is plainly obvious which side of the Chamber supports small business, and always has. That is why 85 per cent of small businesses on the Central Coast know exactly who backs them in. It is not that side of the House; it is this side of the House. We will continue to deliver for small businesses right across New South Wales, despite the protests from the other side. No-one is listening to them. No-one believes them.

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

Mr ADAM CROUCH: The member for East Hills recently opened the Service NSW facility in East Hills. In fact, I think Mr Temporary Speaker cut the ribbon on his own Service NSW facility only a week ago.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I did.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: That is how you deliver for small businesses and mums and dads across New South Wales.

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

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (12:57:22): I thank the member for Riverstone for bringing this motion to the Chamber. I also acknowledge the commercial breaks we heard from him, the member for East Hills and the member for Terrigal. I thank the members for the electorates of Wollongong and Macquarie Fields for their very informative debates. The COVID pandemic has had a massive impact on local businesses. During the COVID-19 lockdown period I have visited a lot of businesses and I have had many coffees at many coffee shops as they have reopened. A lot of people were feeling a lot of pain. I thank all the business owners, their workforce, supply chains, landlords, tenants and customers for working together to try to make their businesses survive. I acknowledge that not all cases have been positive during this period and many businesses are on the brink of collapse.

We need effective government programs to support the survival of these enterprises. We do not need nonstop, sycophantic, ra-ra-type motions and commercial breaks. The motion mentions 35,000 businesses that have benefited from emergency grants—that number has now increased to 53,000. There are still 310,000 New South Wales businesses that employ people and probably hundreds of thousands of other businesses, as the member for Wollongong mentioned, that unfortunately under the Liberal reign are forcing individual workers to take out Australian Business Numbers and survive on their own in labour hire. Even with the additional numbers the member for Riverstone has thrown up, we are looking at something like only 15 per cent of businesses that have put their hand out. Is the Government saying that 85 per cent of all businesses are not affected? I do not think so.

We need more considered motions that acknowledge the program and that we need to put money into businesses. However, as much as the member for Terrigal may have been walking up and down the Central Coast talking to people, as I have in the great city of Blacktown, essentially we need to inform more people about this fund. In relation to the \$3,000 grant, in my electorate is a specialist small cleaning business that cleans tourist boats. Obviously there are no tourist boats operating at the moment. This business owner was excluded from applying for the \$3,000 grant because his business was not listed as one of the categories.

Mr Adam Crouch: Yes, he can.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: No, he could not. A tourist operator could apply. Your Minister said no. The business owner could not apply for the grant. I propose to move an amendment to the amendment as follows:

That the amendment be amended by adding the following paragraph:

- (4) Calls on the Government to consider amending the criteria by removing the prescribed list of business categories that can apply for the grant and focus on needs based funding, including reduced turnover and/or other important factors, and to reintroduce the program to the end of the year.

The program has been cut; it does not exist. A lot of businesses missed out. Many businesses are suffering today. Are the members for the electorates of Terrigal, Riverstone and East Hills saying that none of these businesses is suffering? We are saying that the fund should be extended and let us open up the ability to give more. There is still \$100 million that has not been invested. Have a heart, give small business one more go.

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (13:01:35): By leave: I stand here today as the member for Cootamundra and as a former small businessperson but always a small businessperson at heart—a world that I very much hope to return to one day.

Ms Eleni Petinos: Not too soon.

Ms STEPH COOKE: Not too soon but when it is in your blood that is pretty much where you want to be. My parents are still in small business. They are in their seventies now and are still working hard every day. That is how I was raised. I am passionate about small business and the contribution that it makes to our communities. COVID has been particularly difficult on so many of them. I am pleased that across New South Wales so many small businesses have been accessing the support measures that the New South Wales Government has offered to help them combat the economic impact of this COVID pandemic. I thank the member for Riverstone for bringing this motion to the House because it is important that we acknowledge the contribution that small business makes to our communities. They employ between them hundreds of thousands of employees. In a lot of cases they are the main breadwinner for a family. In small communities they are the spine of the business community and the community at large. Over the last few months they have suffered as a result of this COVID pandemic.

The grants program that has been spoken of today targets small businesses that have between 0.5 and 19 full-time employee equivalents and those that are under the payroll tax threshold of \$900,000. For the Cootamundra electorate that means that 254 small businesses have accessed the \$10,000 grant program. That is a

total of \$2,537,660 in support from the Government. That is significant in what is an extremely large seat but a seat of small communities. I will touch on that a little later. One hundred and ninety-six businesses have accessed the \$3,000 grant program, adding a further \$584,650 to our local communities. Further grants totalling \$21,000 are in the process of assessment. For so many of the businesses close to the Victorian border, the impact has been extraordinary and devastating. Hundreds and hundreds of businesses along the border have applied to access the loans. I am pleased that the State Government has been able to offer this program.

As restrictions are progressively eased and we turn our attention from response to recovery, we are continually looking at how best we can support businesses to reopen and to welcome customers back to their places while they remain COVID safe. As a small business owner, I know firsthand the responsibility of keeping staff employed and how one job in a business can support an entire family. The largest town in the Cootamundra electorate is Cowra with 10,000 people. Just one job loss in this community has an incredible effect on a range of businesses and people in the community. I thank the member for Riverstone for bringing this motion to the House and I am proud to support it.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (13:06:05): By leave: I thank the member for Riverstone for bringing this motion to the House. I thank the member for Wollongong for his sensible amendment which relates to the challenges confronting small business, particularly our tradies and our truckies, local families and commuters who use the M5 and NorthConnex. My friend and colleague the member for Macquarie Fields knows this all too well as, like me, he is a resident of south-west Sydney and Campbelltown. Our community is outraged. Before I speak on the tolls, I acknowledge the vital role small business plays in our economy and society as the largest employer body. The member for Blacktown made a specific reference to eligibility. There was a misleading directive from the Government to many small businesses that applied for these grants but missed out on the basis of ineligibility. That has had a serious and detrimental outcome for many small businesses.

The tolls on the M5 and NorthConnex are a new tax. They are not just tolls, they are a huge tax that will have an impact not only on our hardworking truckies but also on people who do not use these toll roads because the expense will be passed on. Make no mistake, the margins of some of these small businesses, particularly in the transport industry, are as low as 3 per cent. The tolls will have a detrimental effect on their bottom line and largely make them ineligible to tender for contracts in a competitive market. This will have a negative, adverse effect. I call on those opposite to stand up for their communities, particularly those in the south-west. The members for the electorates of East Hills, Holsworthy, Camden and Wollondilly know that their communities are outraged at this unfair imposition and that there needs to be a step change.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (13:08:37): By leave: I am pleased to join my colleagues to support the member for Riverstone in his motion on the Small Business Support Fund. So many members on the other side of the Chamber have said that small business is the engine room of their communities. I am somewhat aghast that when we are debating a motion about supporting small business they try to make about toll roads. It is disappointing that the Opposition cannot join with the Government to support small business. I say that coming from a family that has been in small business. I have seen how hard my father has worked his entire life to run his small business.

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

Ms ELENi PETINOS: I am proud of the fact that my brother and sister have followed my father's legacy and joined in small business as well. I know that each and every member—certainly on our side of the Chamber—has welcomed the relief that has been put forward by the Coalition Government to support the 35,000 New South Wales businesses that have benefited from the \$10,000 emergency grants. They are so important to keeping our communities afloat at this time. We welcomed also the Government's further announcement of a broader range of small businesses. For those who are unfamiliar with the types of businesses that were added to that list, we are now talking about building and other industrial and cleaning services, creative artists, musicians, writers and performers, employment placement and recruitment services, intra-urban and rural bus transport, labour supply services, metal coating and finishing, allied health services and many more.

It has always been this side of the Chamber that truly believes in small business. We are demonstrating that at this time, when our communities are hurting the most. As members should know—I trust that they do know—these grants have made the biggest difference to our local community. That is why the Coalition Government has worked to support not only small business with these grants, but also many other types of industries to get them through—as the member for Terrigal said—one of the most difficult times: the COVID-19 pandemic. I encourage the Opposition to put its money where its mouth is and support small business. Those opposite should stop lecturing us about tolls and instead recognise the importance of these grants to each and every one of our communities. I commend the motion to the House.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (13:11:50): By leave: I commend the member for Riverstone for bringing this motion to the House and for placing on the record the support of the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government for small business across the State. The \$750 million small business support fund goes a significantly long way towards supporting the individuals and the mothers and fathers who work tirelessly—often seven days a week—to run small businesses. History will reveal that this period of time, not only in Australia but also globally, has been an extremely challenging time—not necessarily because of the immediate health impacts of COVID-19, but more so for the significant fracturing that has occurred within economies and financial and economic markets across the world. The impact of COVID-19 on individual livelihoods and business and government balance sheets will prove to be a shocking and ongoing challenge for governments globally to respond to. We understand the significant impact that the response to COVID-19 is having on our communities.

Mr David Mehan: Under Standing Order 86, can I move that the question be now put?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): No, the member for Mulgoa has not completed her contribution.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES: Do you hate small business? Let the record stand that the Labor Party is against small business. You will not allow us to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on small business.

Mr David Mehan: This expires next week. We just want to have a vote.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES: You are stopping debate on small business and how we are supporting small businesses across the State. Let the record stand that the Labor Party is against small business in New South Wales. Why do you want to gag my debate when I am highlighting how my community is benefiting from the Small Business Support Fund?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The member for Mulgoa will resume her seat.

Mr DAVID MEHAN: I move:

That the question be now put.

The House divided.

Ayes35
Noes51
Majority..... 16

AYES

Aitchison, J
Barr, C
Chanthivong, A
Dib, J
Harris, D
Hoenig, R
Lalich, N
Mehan, D (teller)
O'Neill, M
Scully, P
Voltz, L
Watson, A (teller)

Atalla, E
Car, P
Crakanthorp, T
Doyle, T
Harrison, J
Hornery, S
McDermott, H
Mihailuk, T
Park, R
Smith, T
Warren, G
Zangari, G

Bali, S
Catley, Y
Daley, M
Finn, J
Haylen, J
Kamper, S
McKay, J
Minns, C
Saffin, J
Tesch, L
Washington, K

NOES

Anderson, K
Berejiklian, G
Clancy, J
Cooke, S (teller)
Dalton, H
Donato, P
Greenwich, A
Hancock, S
Johnsen, M
Lindsay, W
O'Dea, J

Ayres, S
Bromhead, S
Conolly, K
Coure, M
Davies, T
Elliott, D
Griffin, J
Hazzard, B
Kean, M
Marshall, A
Pavey, M

Barilaro, J
Butler, R
Constance, A
Crouch, A (teller)
Dominello, V
Gibbons, M
Gulaptis, C
Henskens, A
Lee, G
McGirr, J
Perrottet, D

NOES

Petinos, E
Provest, G
Sidgreaves, P
Smith, N
Taylor, M
Upton, G

Piper, G
Roberts, A
Sidoti, J
Speakman, M
Toole, P
Ward, G

Preston, R
Saunders, D
Singh, G
Stokes, R
Tuckerman, W
Williams, L

PAIRS

Cotsis, S
Lynch, P

Williams, R
Wilson, F

Motion negatived.

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

*Members***MEMBER FOR HOLSWORTHY**

The SPEAKER: I wish the member for Holsworthy a happy birthday for tomorrow.

*Announcements***GET READY WEEKEND**

The SPEAKER: I remind members that this weekend is Get Ready Weekend when the NSW Rural Fire Service encourages communities to prepare for the fire season. Like myself, many members attended the event in The Domain today, which I thank the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and his staff for organising. I also acknowledge the efforts of Chief Superintendent Simon Davis, volunteers from the Sutherland shire district and the Rural Fire Service communication staff.

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

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:18:47): What is the Deputy Premier's response to comments made this morning by the Minister for Transport and Roads that he is "politically reckless"?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:18:59): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. This issue is not about the Minister for Transport and Roads and member for Bega or me. This is a significant issue in relation to this State. When Minister Constance stood tall and strong post bushfires in relation to bushfire recovery and held everybody to account, including the Government, I backed him 100 per cent. I am so determined on this issue to keep fighting because I know what is right. It has nothing to do with what the Minister or I think. It is what the people of regional New South Wales are saying and we will fight for the right policy outcome. That is all I have to say on this matter.

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:19:52): I ask a supplementary question. Given the Deputy Premier's answer, what is the Deputy Premier's response to comments by the Minister for Transport and Roads this morning that the Coalition has never been so divided because of the Deputy Premier's political recklessness and that he is "buggering up the stability of the Government"? In other words, it is all about the Deputy Premier.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:20:17): I refer to my previous answer. This is not about an individual; this is about the issue at hand. When I look at what the Coalition has achieved for regional and rural New South Wales over the past almost 10 years—since 2016 when I became Leader of the National Party—I see the investment in rural and regional areas, not just in National Party seats but also in Liberal, Labor and Independent seats, right across the board. I acknowledge the members of the crossbench who, when they spoke in debate on the no-confidence motion, said that the threshold for a no-confidence motion is misconduct or corruption and that the threshold had not been breached. To the three Independents who spoke to me privately, I thank them for acknowledging the work that I have done for rural and regional New South Wales. We have done it together as a Coalition.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I have finished my answer.

The SPEAKER: The answer has been concluded.

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING POLICY (KOALA HABITAT PROTECTION) 2019

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (14:21:14): I direct my question to the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales. Why has the Minister not addressed the concerns of the timber industry about the koala State environmental planning policy for five months?

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (14:21:45): I am not the Minister responsible for forestry. I am the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales. Under the Local Land Services Act I have responsibility for private native forestry. The premise of this question is absolutely false and presumes that I, as the Minister for Agriculture, have not been active in this space. Both on the public record and in private conversations that is not the case. I am not one who will go into the public domain and reveal private conversations, meetings or Cabinet discussions. I can assure the member for Wollongong and this House that I have written—there is email evidence and the relevant Ministers know very well of my advocacy in this space—and the result will be seen in due course. Any other matters relating to forestry should be directed to the appropriate Minister.

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING POLICY (KOALA HABITAT PROTECTION) 2019

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (14:23:13): I direct my question to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Does the Minister agree with the comments of the member for Myall Lakes last night in this House that "the SEPP in its current form will fail to protect even a single koala" and "the science is fundamentally flawed"?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (14:23:38): I thank the member for his question. I have not had the opportunity to read the comments to which the member refers but I am happy—

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I will hear the member's point of order, but it had better be a point of order.

Mr Greg Warren: It certainly is. My point of order relates to Standing Order 129—

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

Mr Greg Warren: I am happy to read the question. The point of order relates to relevance.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is being highly relevant. The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat. The Minister will continue.

Mr ROB STOKES: I was merely going to make the point that I had not read the comments to which the member is referring. Nevertheless, I note where he is coming from in relation to asking about koalas. The Government is committed to the protection of the koala. We have released a Koala Strategy and I am happy to put a variety of facts on the table in relation to it. We have worked to protect koala habitat on public lands, including \$20 million to purchase land with priority koala habitat to add to the New South Wales national park estate, transferring 24,000 hectares of unproductive State forests to the management of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and also investing through Saving our Species in improved outcomes.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was quite specific: Does the Minister agree with comments made by the member for Myall Lakes in the House last night that the SEPP in its current form will fail to protect even a single koala?

The SPEAKER: The Minister is being relevant and will continue.

Mr ROB STOKES: As I was saying, the Government is committed to protecting koalas on public lands, but also on private lands. Since 1995 the koala protection SEPP—SEPP 44, as it was previously known—has been aimed at regulating, managing and identifying where koala habitat is and ensuring that significant development applications that might have an impact on koala habitat are considered properly, in light of scientific evidence, in the form of a survey. That has been the status since the mid-1990s. We had the opportunity some years ago to get advice from the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, who indicated that there was a need to update—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

Mr ROB STOKES: —the planning laws. I am answering the question quite directly.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition has taken a point of order. If it relates to relevance, the Minister is being relevant. Is it something else?

Ms Jodi McKay: It is relevance.

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

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: The Minister will continue.

[Interruption]

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

Mr ROB STOKES: As I was saying, the koala SEPP is being updated in the light of the best available science. That includes recommendations from the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer's report in relation to this matter, as well as evidence from the Environment and Science division of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. That science has also been subject to peer review.

TAFE NSW CAMPUS SAFETY

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (14:26:57): My question is directed to the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education. What measures will the Minister now implement to provide transparency to and for the protection of TAFE NSW students and staff from any potential danger from forensic mental health patients with a history of violence? I refer to the unsupervised patient from Bloomfield Hospital who recently absconded from a public class at the Orange TAFE campus while on day release and was deemed dangerous by virtue of a homicidal history, with the public later warned by police not to approach him.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (14:27:40): I thank the member for Orange for his question and acknowledge his concerns. I assure the House that the safety of our students, staff and visitors at all TAFE NSW campuses is a priority for me as Minister. I appreciate that the question from the member is prompted by community interest in this issue and I welcome the opportunity today to provide him and the House with a response to reassure his community that TAFE NSW takes these matters very seriously. As the member will understand, privacy restrictions prevent me from disclosing details of the student's personal circumstances. However, I clarify to the House that I am advised by TAFE NSW that the student in question did not in fact abscond from a public class at Orange campus. I advise the member that, regardless of the particular circumstances of this case, I have directed TAFE NSW to conduct an internal review of the processes and procedures relating to students with a history of violence.

As the public trainer, TAFE is required to provide access to education and training to any student regardless of their background or circumstances. TAFE does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, mental health, disability or disadvantage. TAFE NSW is committed to ensuring a safe and healthy working and learning environment for all staff, students and visitors. I am advised that TAFE NSW has long-established policies and processes in place to manage any risk to staff and students. I am also advised that any student with a history of violence is required to disclose this to TAFE NSW as part of their enrolment. As part of the enrolment process, a risk assessment is completed and a management plan tailored to the individual's circumstances to support educational outcomes while maintaining the safety of staff, students and visitors.

TAFE NSW has a responsibility to protect the privacy of its students and to treat all personal and health information sensitively and confidentially. The advice of NSW Health or Corrective Services NSW is also a key part of this planning when the student is under the care or supervision of either of these organisations. TAFE NSW relies upon this advice in ensuring the safety of our students, staff and visitors alike. Campus operational security staff are involved in supporting the safety and wellbeing of the broader campus community. I thank the member for his question and I am happy to meet with him to discuss this or any other matters concerning his community.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

The SPEAKER: I announce receipt of the following paper petitions with 10,000 or more signatories:

South-east Sydney Bus Services

Petition calling on the Government to abandon its plans of devastating cuts to south-east Sydney bus services, which will lengthen travel times and hurt the community, received from **Dr Marjorie O'Neill**.

M5 East Motorway Toll

Petition calling on the Government to not impose an unfair new toll on the M5 East Motorway, received from **Mr Anoulack Chanthivong**.

South-east Sydney Bus Services

Petition calling on the Government to abandon its plans of devastating cuts to south-east Sydney bus services, which will lengthen travel times and hurt the community, received from **Mr Michael Daley**.

The SPEAKER: I set down debate on the petitions as orders of the day for a future day.

Private Members' Statements

TRIBUTE TO BARRY GLOVER, OAM

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:31:57): It is with great sadness that I inform the House of the passing of one of the St George region's leading citizens, Mr Barry Glover, OAM. Mr Glover was the long-term president of the Kogarah RSL Sub-Branch, Kogarah RSL Sub-Branch Youth Club and the RSL NSW Southern Metropolitan District Council. Mr Glover served his nation with distinction in the Australian Army, including during the Vietnam War, retiring with the rank of major. He was appointed to numerous positions on the RSL's Southern Metropolitan District Council, including treasurer, vice-president and senior vice-president, and was president of the organisation from 2001 until he stepped down earlier this year. He was awarded life membership of the RSL in 1993 after 30 years of service.

In 2015 Mr Glover received the RSL NSW Meritorious Service Medal. His years of service to our community were recognised in the 2018 Queen's Birthday Honours List with a Medal of the Order of Australia. Through his work, Mr Glover was instrumental in keeping alive the values and ideals of the Anzacs and all those who came after them. While this year's Anzac Day marches were sadly cancelled due to the pandemic, in 2019 it was Mr Glover who delivered the *Anzac Day Requiem* at the dawn service at the cenotaph next to Jubilee Oval in my electorate. The requiem states:

On this day, above all days, we recall those who in the great tragedy of war gave their lives for Australia and for the freedom of mankind. I believe this sentiment is what inspired Mr Glover's lifetime of service. It is a belief that by honouring and remembering fallen colleagues we preserve and protect the freedoms they fought for. Mr Glover is survived by his two daughters, Karen and Janet, his two grandsons, David and Ross, and four great-grandchildren. His daughter Karen informed me that her son Ross Glover is following his grandfather's tradition of service and is currently a Navy reserve lieutenant. As Karen said, "Dad was very, very proud."

One of the measures of a full and successful life is how many people your actions benefit and how many lives are enriched through your deeds. By this measure, few other sons of St George have lived as significant and successful a life as did Barry Glover. Mr Glover's passing will be felt by his fellow veterans as well as the many young people in the Kogarah electorate who have benefited from his example of tireless service. I was very sad that I, as the member for Kogarah, was unable to attend his funeral service owing to COVID restrictions. But I am sure that I speak for every member of this House when I extend my deepest condolences to Mr Glover's family in their profound loss.

INTERNATIONAL SPACE SETTLEMENT DESIGN COMPETITION

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (14:35:07): I congratulate seven year 12 students from my alma mater, Caringbah High School, on their recent victory in the International Space Settlement Design Competition—the world's premier aerospace engineering competition for secondary school students. The competition's website at spaceset.org says:

SpaceSet competitions are set fifty years in the future, in a fictional futuristic society where humanity has expanded into the solar system. Each competition cycle involves the design and development of the next iterative expansion from Earth – from the very first settlement in earth orbit through to the colonization of the asteroid belt.

Participants enter the SpaceSet environment, and discover a rich, immersive world – 'futuristic' technology extrapolated from today's cutting edge, sub-contractors that specialise in off-world equipment, and existing inter-system infrastructure they can leverage in their designs.

Spencer Llewellyn, Ian Wong, Lachlan Mackenzie, Justin Sheedy, Nicholas Tong, Kelvin Huang and Hayden Edwards were all successful in the regional rounds of the Space Design Competitions Australia and progressed to the national finals. The team of talented Caringbah High students gained entry into the International Space Settlement Design Competition, which was to be held at the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, United States. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, travelling to Florida was not possible. The competition moved to an online format. The students were teamed with other students from India, the United States and England. Moving the event to a virtual format created a new challenge for the students—namely, managing different times zones when communicating and collaborating. The students even went to the extreme of camping out in a Scout hall for four days to counter the time zone challenge.

Nevertheless, working with the other international students, the Caringbah High team designed and developed a futuristic environment for the expansion of life from earth to Mars. This design won them the entire international competition. It is pleasing to see young students embracing science and using it to create, explore

and discover new ideas, theories and concepts. These students are discovering how science is imperative for the progression of humanity in the future. Just about every object we enjoy today—big or small, ranging from vehicular travel to a simple pair of glasses—is the result of scientific discovery and innovation. These students are exploring the potential colonisation of Mars. Not too long ago, this idea was only something ever thought about in blockbuster Hollywood films. Now it is a real possibility and it may be a goal that is not out of reach.

Australia's space industry is constantly growing and evolving. Startup companies now make up 87 per cent of the Australian space market, which means that the industry is accessible to bright, creative and ambitious minds. According to KPMG, the Australian space economy also recently crossed the \$5 billion revenue mark. As the industry continues to grow, so too do the benefits to humanity. The growth of the space industry has contributed to the creation of several everyday items, such as wireless headphones, scratch-resistant lenses and baby formula. The International Space Settlement Design Competition gets participants to adopt roles within a company, ranging from chief executive officer through to department and technical staff. This helps to prepare students for life outside school by encouraging teamwork and collaboration in a style similar to the modern workplace. I congratulate those seven students from Caringbah High School on their outstanding achievement and wish them every success in their upcoming HSC exams.

MARANATHA GUNYAH INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING SPACE

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (14:39:03): As a member of Parliament, I must admit that I do not often get a huge amount of time to sit down and enjoy television programs, but one I did enjoy watching last year was *Old People's Home For 4 Year Olds*. In an age when we have a lot of cooking, home renovation and matchmaking programs dominating the reality television market, it was really refreshing to see a program that is thought-provoking and showed the way that people from different generations can have a profound impact on each other. The Australian version of the television show, which aired on the ABC, was based on a British show of the same name. It followed 11 retirement home residents and 10 preschool-age children who spent time with each other playing games and participating in different planned and mixed activities. It was a delightful program to watch. Although it may seem to be a slightly odd topic for a speech, I am speaking about it today because I am very proud to say that similar initiatives are being rolled out in the Dubbo electorate.

Just a couple of weeks ago I was in Wellington and had the chance to tour the new Maranatha Gunyah intergenerational learning space. For a variety of reasons, the town of Wellington, sadly, has a bit of a stigma associated with it, but I am proud to represent the town. The Maranatha Gunyah project is just one of the many great things happening in the community and it will be the first of its kind in Australia. The centre will incorporate not only child care, but also before and after school care, emergency care and, very importantly, the integration of the existing aged-care facility right next door. It is taking the *Old People's Home For 4 Year Olds* concept and turning it from reality television into absolute reality.

Maranatha Gunyah will be using the Early Years Learning Framework to create a range of short and long-term goals for children. Time spent between the generations will be optional. Those who have been involved in its development have suggested things such as singing, reading, craft, music, gardening and a host of other activities that could be included in a specially designed program. Activities will be planned and based on the abilities of both generations while at the same time providing valid outcomes to both parties. Various rooms have already been set up with custom furnishings. For me, being able to spend time in those areas certainly brought to life in a really good way the simple reality of how it can work. It is very comfortable and certainly will work for both age groups. There is also a yarnning circle, literacy and numeracy stations, and a pretty amazing outdoor play, recreation and meeting area.

Construction of this amazing place began in September last year and it is just about complete. It has been funded jointly by Maranatha House aged care itself along with the Federal Government through programs from the Building Better Regions Fund. Wellington building company Matt Redfern Constructions received the contract to build the premises, which is really good. Matt has used a large number of local subcontractors that has kept the work, and in turn the economic stimulus, in town—which we love to see. Dubbo architect Kirk Gleeson from local firm Barnson designed the centre. I have to say I was pretty gobsmacked when I visited. Until you actually go there and lay your eyes on it, inside and out, you do not necessarily get a real understanding of just how innovative and modern this facility is.

As I mentioned previously, the centre will be the first of its kind in Australia. I am sure that once it is up and running plenty of other areas will be interested in following suit and getting involved in the benefit of having intergenerational centres. It is not only the Maranatha Gunyah that is heading down the path of attempting to bridge the gap between our beloved elderly residents and our future generations; there are other examples of preschools and day care centres forming partnerships with aged-care facilities that result in the wonderful building of relationships and development of wonderful respect. The Dubbo & District Preschool is one of those. It is

looking to branch into this area and earlier this year partnered with Kintyre Living to allow students to visit some of the elderly residents.

The children, most of whom will be entering kindergarten next year, got the chance to go on an excursion and to sit with some of the residents of Kintyre. They talked, read books and did some colouring and other activities. The feedback was fantastic. The children loved having their new friends. Unfortunately, that has had to be curtailed and changed during COVID-19. But it made a difference to the lives of the residents of Kintyre, some of whom do not have grandchildren or great-grandchildren. Through the great use of modern technology, more recently visits have been possible by using Skype and Zoom. That type of staying in touch has been fantastic in keeping the contact going. There are lots of examples of how centres can interact. In conclusion, I acknowledge the Maranatha Gunyah committee and chair Terry Ford, the board, and childcare director Dixie Robinson and her team. I wish them all the very best for the upcoming opening of the brand-new centre.

TAFE NSW TEACHERS

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (14:44:11): I speak today in support of local TAFE teachers in my electorate who are currently seeking an urgent resumption of enterprise bargaining negotiations with the Government. These are dedicated educators who provide an incredibly important service to our State and they deserve to be heard by the Minister both in this place and at the negotiating table. In February of this year the previous TAFE NSW enterprise bargaining agreement [EBA] expired. Since then the process to achieve a new EBA has sadly become an absolute shambles.

Despite correspondence being sent to TAFE teachers from the managing director of TAFE and the president of the NSW Teachers Federation on 27 February regarding an EBA ballot—an agreement on the proposed wording of that ballot having been reached on 11 March—and plans on 18 March this year to put a ballot to teachers on 1 April, the Berejiklian Government reneged on this good-faith agreement. Tomorrow it will be six months to the day since stalling tactics and a stubborn refusal to engage with the workforce by those opposite denied a fair pay rise to TAFE teachers across the State.

Due to the poor conduct of the Government my local TAFE teachers have been denied the certainty and decency they need to continue providing the great learning experiences on offer at St George TAFE. Currently, more than 70 per cent of TAFE teachers are in insecure employment. That is a shockingly high number. The Berejiklian Government knows exactly how much the promised job security and permanency arrangements in the proposed agreement are needed by TAFE teachers if TAFE is to continue to deliver for our communities. It has been nearly two years since TAFE teachers last received a pay rise—back in November 2018. They are the only TAFE employees that did not receive a pay rise in 2019.

Anybody who has managed any sort of business would know that you cannot treat different classes of employees in arbitrarily different ways if you expect them to show any sort of loyalty towards you, which is just as true in the public sector as it is anywhere else. Notwithstanding this disheartening treatment, TAFE teachers have continued to provide teaching of the absolute highest standard. Unlike this Government, these TAFE teachers care about people. Like many in this place who have TAFE campuses in their electorates, I know how important St George TAFE is to my community. St George TAFE currently offers an enormous range of incredibly valuable courses, particularly in the business space, including accounting, commerce, auditing, business administration, construction management, information technology, marketing, project management and courses ranging from nursing to art design.

These courses provide incredible opportunities for young people in my electorate and across St George to obtain real skills leading to a career as well as genuine retraining opportunities for people of all ages to reskill and upskill for our changing workforce. I was 17 years old when I began my TAFE course to become qualified as a tax agent and accountant. It was thanks to that educational start that I went on to run a successful business within my community. I am grateful to the many fantastic teachers I had at TAFE, people with real experience as professional accountants. They provided an incredibly rigorous program that saw those of us who made it through the course emerge with all the skills we needed to be business-ready on day one in the workforce.

My TAFE teachers gave me the opportunity to succeed in life. They are dedicated professionals who do not just provide a great education but also underpin our State's economic success by delivering real vocational skills and training designed for the workplace. Following this Government's election 9½ years ago the sustained attack against TAFE NSW has been horrific. TAFE has been forced to endure privatisation, outsourcing, increased fees, a reduction in services, closure of campuses and staff cuts. Despite all of this pain and uncertainty, TAFE teachers have continued to show up every day to deliver outstanding educational opportunities for our State. Local TAFE teachers in my electorate and across the State deserve better. They deserve a Government that cares about them, that will come to the table, negotiate in good faith and deliver fair pay and conditions—that is all they are asking for—that will attract and retain the best vocational teaching staff to TAFE NSW for many years to come.

CAMDEN ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (14:49:08): I was pleased to inform the residents of the Camden electorate recently about the Government's COVID-19 recovery plan and what it means for them and our community. The Government's Planning System Acceleration Program will result in a number of projects fast-tracked in the Camden electorate. These projects will create almost 2,000 new jobs for our local community and that is not including the 200,000 jobs we will see with the fast-tracked planning for the aerotropolis. These projects include a new Bunnings warehouse in Leppington, which will generate 400 jobs, and a new 60-hectare jobs hub on the former Glenlee coal washery and emplacement site, which will generate 188 jobs in the Macarthur area.

The fast-tracked Spring Farm Advanced Resource Recovery Technology facility will recover and recycle valuable resources from waste that would otherwise have been sent to landfill and will provide even more jobs in the Camden area. Fast-tracked planning by the Government will see 100 jobs created in South Western Sydney for modifications to the Badgerys Creek Quarry project that will provide beneficial water transfers for construction of the Western Sydney Airport.

Fast-tracked assessments by the Government will deliver the following school projects: St Anthony of Padua Catholic College in Austral will accommodate 2,480 students and provide 339 jobs and East Leppington Primary School will accommodate 940 students from kindergarten to year 6 and provide a further 454 jobs within the Macarthur area. A fast-tracked assessment on a new school campus for Amity College with a capacity for 1,000 students will provide 214 jobs, and Catherine Field Primary School will accommodate 1,000 students and provide 411 jobs right in the heart of the Camden electorate. Gone are the days of school backlogs left by the Government in power prior to the 2011 election. This year two new schools have opened: Gledswood Hills Public School and Oran Park High School. The foundation principals, Lisa Whitfield and Bradley Mitchell respectively, have done an amazing job.

I hear from parents of students at these schools that the feeling of school spirit and community has grown quickly. Oran Park Public School was upgraded to increase the capacity of the existing school with 24 new innovated learning spaces. I thank principal Donna Shevlin for all her hard work at that school. Delivering the promises I made to my constituents before the 2019 election has been a goal that I have worked towards since day one. As I have already mentioned, the Government has delivered on a of those promises already and, in many cases, exceeded them. I promised 350 additional parking spots for commuters at Leppington station and that number has now increased to 1,000, which is 650 more than originally promised. Construction is now underway to deliver this for residents.

We cannot talk about infrastructure without talking about roads. On that note the Government has delivered. The Bringelly Road interchange and new section of The Northern Road between Belmore Road and Thames Road at Bringelly opened in mid-July. The Northern Road and Bringelly Road upgrades will deliver new and upgraded roads to support integrated transport in the region and capitalise on the economic benefits from developing the Western Sydney airport at Badgerys Creek. It will also improve safety, increase road capacity, and reduce congestion and travel times in the future. Between meeting the election commitments I made to my constituents during the 2019 election campaign and this new COVID-19 recovery plan, the Government has met, and always will meet, the infrastructure needs of the residents of the Camden electorate. I am proud to have been able to inform the House of this progress today.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (14:53:39): I acknowledge the great work being done by the member for Camden. He outlined the delivery of literally thousands of brand-new classroom spaces across the Camden electorate in addition to 1,000 car park spaces at Leppington station. The member is getting it done for his community. During these very tough times of the COVID-19 pandemic projects such as St Anthony's, East Leppington and Amity College provide thousands of student spaces and hundreds of vital jobs for local tradespeople in the Camden electorate. It is all about delivering for our communities. I acknowledge the great work being done by the member for Camden and his staff in looking after his community during these very difficult times. He is a tireless campaigner, whether it is about car parks, schools, hospitals or roads. The member for Camden is absolutely resolute in delivering for everybody in his community.

TWEED ELECTORATE

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (14:54:46): I give the state of the Tweed address. Many things have been happening in the Tweed recently. One of the significant things is the effect of the border closures with the Queensland Government. I am particularly looking at the construction industry. From Tweed down to Ballina we have approximately \$170 million worth of building projects—mainly residential—that have all ground to a halt. Why? Because a lot of our trades come across the border and once they go outside the bubble they cannot return

home. I have 70 houses that cannot have their roofs put on because the roofing steel comes from Brisbane. It is the same for staircases, glass, bricks, nails—you name it.

Recently we conducted a meeting of 150 members of the construction industry—under COVID safety. Peter Leotta, the President of the Master Builders Association Tweed division, and Brian Seidler, the executive director of the Master Builders Association of NSW, were present and we discussed the way forward. We were also joined by our Premier Gladys Berejiklian via Zoom and we had our Cross-Border Commissioner, James McTavish, present. We ended up working out a bit of a plan—it is quite novel. Each building site will develop a COVID-safe plan and submit it to Dr Kerry Chant, the NSW Health Chief Health Officer. We are also making an offer to Queensland to pay for its work health and safety officers to randomly audit the sites within New South Wales. Whether that will be successful or whether the Premier of Queensland will wait until after the election—I think that may be the case—I do not know, but we need to try because, unfortunately, we have had some self-harm within the construction industry in Tweed. They are very sad cases. It is hurting both the New South Wales and Queensland side.

On a more positive note, Tweed was visited recently by the effervescent Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Hon. David Elliott, who participated in Zoom conferences in New South Wales on the border issues with senior Queensland police. We welcomed four new probationary constables, once again greatly received by the local area. We made some funding available to Tweed Valley Rescue—a great organisation, led by Drew Carr, that attends many car accidents, rescues and so on. That funding has enabled the organisation to buy eight harnesses for vertical rescue. I did the unthinkable and volunteered to be winched some 18 metres in height. I felt totally secure with the boys and girls from the Tweed Volunteer Rescue. The only thing that deeply concerned me was that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services had a hold of the safety line. It is a great organisation and we will continue to support it.

The Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales, the Hon. Adam Marshall, was also in the Tweed when we established the first artificial reef. Some 800 tonnes of concrete and steel structures were placed 25 metres underwater. They will be an enormous benefit to our recreational fishing industry. It is great to see the commitment from the New South Wales Government and the money raised from fishing licenses going back to the environment and supporting the great industry of recreational fishing. There are 32 concrete blocks, each 5.5 metres high and weighing 22 tonnes. The steel structure is 30 metres high and weighs 109 tonnes. Once again, we did it COVID safe. It was constructed in Queensland and shipped on a large barge. The crew was not allowed to come to the shore. We got it in in time. It looked a great sight.

What we are doing for our fishing industry, emergency services and police is a continuation of the focus of the New South Wales Government delivering in regional areas. I am very proud to be part of a Government doing that. Unlike many in this room, I served four years in opposition and I can remember the bad old days of going cap in hand and receiving nothing for our regions other than vague promises. Tony Kelly was the police Minister and for four years he promised a police station. Our Government delivered it. There were many other times when the Labor Government starved our hospital—we had wards shut. I am 100 per cent for the Tweed.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (14:59:48): I congratulate the member for Tweed, who is 100 per cent for his electorate. Listening to that private member's statement outlined how passionate he is about delivering across his border community. It is a very difficult time for electorates like Tweed and Albury that border States that are very difficult to deal with, but that has not stopped the member for Tweed—he had Minister Elliott up there for the safety harnesses for his rescue clubs. I also congratulate him on the delivery of the artificial reef. The electorate of Terrigal has an artificial reef within the former HMAS *Adelaide* off Avoca. The benefits that the artificial structures provide to marine life are absolutely phenomenal. It is a great boon to both the ecology, and the local fishing and diving industries. I congratulate the member for Tweed on having that artificial reef installed in his electorate because I have firsthand knowledge of the millions of dollars that it will bring into the local economy. Congratulations again to the member for Tweed for getting that done.

CAMPBELLTOWN ELECTORATE HEALTH SERVICES

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (15:00:53): I again address the ongoing concerns around Campbelltown Hospital and the health services in the south-west and western parts of Sydney. I acknowledge and thank the frontline staff in our health district and at Campbelltown Hospital—our doctors, clinicians, physicians, nurses and allied health workers. I particularly acknowledge and thank the Health Services Union, including organisers Gerard Hayes and his team, who are passionate supporters of having good health services throughout Campbelltown and across western Sydney and south-west Sydney. The upper House inquiry, which is ongoing, is highlighting a number of issues and I welcome it. The issues need to be talked about and must be addressed.

We are one of the fastest-growing regions in the State. Campbelltown is under enormous pressure. I note the capital upgrades, but I also note that it is people who cure people, not bricks-and-mortar. It is one thing to

build a building, but it must be complemented with the appropriate resources, which can only occur when there is appropriate financial contributions through the budget. From a service and resource perspective, we have not seen that from the Government. The Liverpool Hospital Medical Staff Council Chair, Associate Professor Miriam Levy's words really highlight the problem:

When it comes to inpatient services and acute care, Liverpool is grossly underfunded and God help them in Fairfield.

There were similar discussions around Campbelltown Hospital as it continues to confront its challenges. These statistics are representative of the issues and why we find ourselves in a situation where patients continue to struggle. In 2011, when the Government came to power, an average of 13,867 people visited the Campbelltown Hospital emergency department [ED] every three months—around 154 people a day. That number has now increased by 7,000 people—more than 230 people a day. The staff increase at Campbelltown Hospital has not reflected or remained consistent with the increase in demand as a result of urban population growth across the Macarthur region, the Highlands and other parts of south-west Sydney.

Waiting times in the Campbelltown emergency department continue to blow out, with roughly half of those who present themselves waiting beyond four hours for emergency care. These are emergency services. There are patients who need priority care because of an emergency. Quite simply, the demand placed on the ED has far outweighed the supply of staff. That is despite the goodwill, hard work and passion of each and every staff member, no matter what they do. They are there to care for patients, and they do a wonderful job, but a health system cannot rely on the goodwill of staff and doctors, clinicians and allied health workers. It needs to rely on resources, which will only come from government. It was well publicised that the Birunji Youth Mental Health Unit was without a full-time clinical psychologist for more than two years, despite the Government being well aware of the situation. However, there were serious consequences to that. I deeply worry about adolescent mental health in my region, as I am sure each member does in their own electorate.

Children with food allergies face a 400-child long two-year waiting list to get into the hospital for a critical allergy test. This increases anxiety among those kids and their families because it is simply far too long. The Government has mooted the upgrade of Campbelltown Hospital, and I am proud to have stood and fought with my community for the upgrade—we welcome it—but it is not a silver bullet to solve our health crisis. We must look at resourcing, providing staff support and having adequate funding in place through the budget. I urge the Government to reconsider its position and appropriately fund Campbelltown Hospital. I thank the House.

WALAMA COURT

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:06:00): Over the course of my short time as the member for Coogee, my office has received hundreds of emails from local people expressing how troubled and greatly concerned they are about Indigenous incarceration rates and the deaths of Indigenous people in custody in New South Wales. The Uluru Statement states that proportionally, Aboriginal Australians are the most incarcerated people on the planet. They are not innately criminal people yet Aboriginal children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because they have no love for them, yet the youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be the hope of our future. These dimensions of the Aboriginal crisis tell plainly of the structural nature of the problem. This is the torment of our powerlessness. The proportion of Indigenous inmates in New South Wales prisons has risen by over 35 per cent since the Liberal-Nationals Coalition came to power in 2011. Aboriginal people constitute less than 3 per cent of the New South Wales population but make up about a quarter of its prison population. Those figures are nothing short of staggering. They are a blight on our State. If black lives matter in New South Wales, now is the time to act. We cannot keep doing business as usual.

In 2018 the shadow Attorney General, and member for Liverpool, introduced a bill to establish the Walama Court, an Indigenous-specific court that would operate within the jurisdiction of the District Court of New South Wales. The court's introduction would be a significant and positive step forward for Indigenous justice in the State. Along with the Opposition, the New South Wales Bar Association and the Police Association of NSW we have previously and jointly called upon the Government to provide funding for such an Indigenous court. These two significant players in the New South Wales justice sphere presented the idea to the Government with a view to reducing reoffending rates and addressing the disproportionate number of First Peoples imprisoned in our State.

In 2018 the Bar Association made a submission to the Federal Government inquiry into Indigenous incarceration rates. It submitted that the sentencing process should take greater account of Indigenous history and disadvantage. It stated that if judges had a statutory duty to do this, incarceration rates could drastically fall. The concept brought forward by these agencies and the bill proposed by the member for Liverpool would establish a new sentencing court, known as the Walama Court, that would address the specific needs of Indigenous people within the New South Wales justice system. The court would be based on Victoria's Koori Court and the Drug

Court of NSW, which have both had great success in reducing reoffending through diversionary programs. The shadow Attorney General has previously said that the design of the Walama Court would focus on diversion rather than punishment. As I said, precedent for this exists in the Koori Court and the court would function similarly to the Drug Court of NSW, with the focus being the reduction of reoffending rates. I acknowledge and thank Teela Reid, an active member of the Walama Working Group, lawyer and Coogee local resident, and thank her for her work, who states:

The Walama Court is designed to divert Aboriginal people away from the criminal justice process and reduce police contact by involving aboriginal elders in the decision-making process within the District Court of New South Wales.

We know that a proper focus on rehabilitation rather than punitive punishment, like prisons, works. There is an enormous amount of research to suggest that investing in programs which seek to address the underlying causes of crime and divert alleged offenders away from the criminal justice system is not only more successful in reducing reoffending rates and imprisonment but also better value for money. The current primary response to incarceration rates from the State Government is to invest in building 7,000 new prison beds within the next four years at a cost of \$3.8 billion to the taxpayer. This is despite research from PricewaterhouseCoopers predicting that if nothing is done to address the disproportionately high rates of Indigenous incarceration, the cost will rise to \$9.7 billion by the end of 2020 and \$19.8 billion per year by 2040.

Closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous rates of incarceration could generate a saving to the Australian economy of \$18.9 billion per year in 2040. It is a no-brainer. The establishment of the Walama Court would reduce costs and save lives by diverting Aboriginal people away from incarceration. It would be a practical and reasonable step for change. Now is the time for New South Wales to establish the Walama Court in response to the 2020 Close the Gap target to reduce incarceration rates by 15 per cent.

PARLIAMENT EPETITIONS

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (15:11:00): We are at a critical time in history with the rise of the digital age and the disruptive coronavirus pandemic that has swept the globe, so adaptation is a vital response. The introduction of ePetitions by the New South Wales Parliament highlights its desire to adapt, modernise and better connect with citizens into the future. It is an initiative that is relevant to constituents in the Davidson electorate as well as those in electorates across New South Wales, where paper-based petitions have been used in the past. Petitions provide a window into time, leaving an historical snapshot of the challenges faced by individuals and the broader society. The earliest petitions date back to the beginnings of Parliament in the United Kingdom and were quickly adopted in New South Wales. During World War I, the 1915 Alliance "surf reel" petition was presented to the Parliament. Petitioners called for restrictions on the sale of alcohol. It contained over 144,600 signatures and was supported by many members of the national women's movement.

In 1919 Donald Walter Croal created the pandemic petition. He stated that he was falsely imprisoned in his home and wrongfully dismissed from his job for not wearing a mask during the Spanish Flu pandemic. His petition was presented to Parliament and Croal had to appear before the Bar of the House. Petitioning Parliament is significant because it allows individuals or groups to lobby for changes to the law, seek redress for personal grievances or engage with their elected representatives. It remains one of the best ways for the public to raise issues with the Parliament, exert pressure and demand accountability.

In an historic first, residents of New South Wales can now petition State Parliament online through the introduction last month of ePetitions. This digital move makes it easier, faster and safer for people to create and submit petitions. Residents can ePetition via the New South Wales Parliament website and must find at least five members to support it. At this point, the sponsoring member can present the ePetition to Parliament after which it can be shared online and signed by others. If there are more than 500 signatures, the relevant Minister must provide a response. I understand that the system ensures that a website linked to that response is emailed to the relevant petitioners. If there are more than 20,000 signatures a debate will occur in the Legislative Assembly, as currently occurs on a paper-based petition from at least 10,000 petitioners. The platform is unique in Australia, being fully online and almost completely automated. New South Wales is also currently the only jurisdiction where petitions are routinely debated by parliamentarians—an excellent demonstration of community engagement.

The electronic change is significant for democracy in New South Wales, as it makes it easier and more convenient for citizens to engage in the democratic process, especially for young people. Millennials and generation Z have never known a world without the internet, and ePetitions will better enable them to raise local issues of concern and stimulate discussion on a familiar platform. As many of them engage online, the circulation of ePetitions on social media should help engage young people in the political process. Furthermore, with physical distancing requirements due to the coronavirus pandemic, the introduction of ePetitions reflects Parliament's willingness to innovate and adapt flexibly to the changing world. However, as with any digital move—be it online

voting or ePetitions—there are often concerns about security. Fortunately, the platform has been custom built with security in mind so other people cannot see who has signed the petitions.

In a time of both uncertainty and change, the introduction of ePetitions by the New South Wales Parliament reflects its commitment to the transformative power of technology and its ability to promote a strong and safe digital sphere in a truly democratic environment. As the member for Davidson and the Speaker of this Parliament, I again welcome this new initiative on behalf of my local and broader New South Wales community. I am proud to have championed its introduction to this place, and thank all those people who have contributed towards its development.

MACQUARIE FIELDS ELECTORATE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (15:16:11): Like every other member's office, my electorate office deals with local government issues and concerns each and every day. While many of those issues relate to the basic services provided by local government, a great number also deal with residents' concerns about local planning issues. Residents in my electorate take a great deal of pride in their homes, their suburbs and communities. They love their way of life and they love their neighbourhood. They want to have a say in the future direction of their suburbs. Campbelltown City Council recently exhibited its local housing strategy, calling on residents to provide feedback. In my submission I made it clear that it is imperative council champions the needs of the local community instead of submitting to the New South Wales Liberal Government's unfair overdevelopment edicts that will irreversibly change our local suburbs and their much-valued character.

After all, local residents expect their feedback to matter. It is no use councils merely ticking a box when it comes to community engagement. When residents take the time to write a submission, fill in a survey or participate in feedback sessions the resulting planning policy must reflect what ratepayers want and deserve. It is not every day that I agree with members opposite, but I listened with particular interest to the member for Ku-ring-gai when he spoke recently about local government and its role in the planning process. I could not help but agree with much of what he said. Of course, I do not agree with his attempt to absolve the Liberal Government of any guilt when it comes to the draconian housing targets forced on councils. But I do agree with the importance of local government in shaping communities.

Of all levels of government, local government and local councillors are crucial to ensure that the concerns of residents, ratepayers and voters are heard loudly, clearly and meaningfully. For some time now I have been running a very public and strong campaign about overdevelopment in my electorate. Let me be clear: I am not opposed to development but I am strongly opposed to overdevelopment and inappropriate development. By any measure and any standard, my electorate has done more than its fair share of the heavy lifting and borne more than its fair share of the burden in accommodating Sydney's growth. What makes the situation worse in my electorate is that it lacks the most basic infrastructure required to accommodate any development, let alone overdevelopment.

Examples include the lack of a school at Edmondson Park, the plethora of demountable classrooms in existing schools that are at breaking point and the chronic lack of commuter car parking. The response to my campaign—commonly known as Stop the Squeeze—was overwhelmingly positive. People have had enough. That brings us to the question of how residents and their genuine concerns can be heard and addressed. Campbelltown City Council has a vital role to play in listening to residents' concerns and making sure that those concerns are heard loudly and clearly at all levels of government. Residents expect and deserve nothing less than strong advocacy. They do not expect rubber stamps and lip service. They do not deserve a council and councillors who blindly follow housing targets dictated by the Liberal Government's overdevelopment agenda.

I have not been shy about making my views on these matters known. My letters and submissions are available for all to see on my website. My position has been clear and consistent from day one. I could put it no better than my colleague the member for Ku-ring-gai did when he said that residents are relying on councillors to do the right thing for the future of their community. It is time to push back against the New South Wales Liberal Government's plan for densification. I look forward to Campbelltown City Council and its councillors owning their role as community advocates and standing up for what is best for their ratepayers. Unfortunately, the current Campbelltown Local Housing Strategy merely endorses unsustainable housing targets that will have a detrimental impact on our community and its much-loved character.

COFFS HARBOUR ELECTORATE COMMUNITY GROUPS

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (15:20:43): Community organisations and the hardworking people who keep them going are the heart and soul of the Coffs Coast. Every day these local groups provide important services and outreach to members of my community. They comprise people from all walks of life who are passionate about where they live and are committed to seeing the Coffs Harbour area continue to grow. I pay

tribute to each and every one of them today but I mention a few in particular for their dedication and drive. Coffs Coast seniors wanting to learn more about technology and enjoy a social event need look no further than the Coffs Seniors Computer Club.

This is a fine example of a thriving community organisation that is doing wonderful work in my electorate. Like most local groups, the meetings have been curtailed during the COVID lockdown but it hopes that things get back to normal soon. I caught up with computer club members at their recent morning tea to announce \$6,000 in funding to help the club with the cost of purchasing additional computer and tutorial equipment. The Coffs Seniors Computer Club is proudly led by a hardworking committee comprising president Mary Voutos, vice president Vera Simpson, secretary Kerin Merat and treasurer Bruce Rutter.

Likewise, our natural environment is in excellent hands thanks to the important work of organisations like Landcare. On the Coffs Coast we are blessed to have a small army of volunteers who are meticulous in looking after our beautiful part of the world. Today I congratulate Jane Ireland on her national Landcarer Champion Award. Her hard work has been an inspiration to many in our community. Jane is retiring as Coffs Harbour Jetty Dunecare chair after 35 years of outstanding leadership. She was recently surrounded by her many colleagues and wellwishers for her awards ceremony at the Jetty Foreshores. I also pay tribute to Jetty Dunecare vice president David Christie, secretary-treasurer Lorraine Woodbridge, and coordinator of volunteers Lindy Davis.

Coffs Harbour Girl Guides is at the centre of our community and their hall on Harbour Drive is the focal point of their activities. I was delighted to be at the Guide hall recently as part of our COVID-19 stimulus program to announce \$25,000 in State Government funding for much-needed improvements. Coffs Harbour Guide Hall will get a security fence and have gutter mesh installed around the building to stop leaves and tree debris accumulating. Coffs Harbour Girl Guides offers young girls fun, friendship and adventure, and they are always on the lookout for new recruits. They are led by Region Manager North Pacific Coast Elise Crofts, District Manager Coffs Harbour Susan Gibson, leader of pre-junior guides Kylie Rees, leader of junior guides Dianne Egan and Pamela Provost, leader of guides Belinda Hopewell and Annaliese Hopewell, leader of senior guides Pamela McLaughlin, and leader of youth and resources Toni Nyssen.

The Galambila Aboriginal Health Service in Coffs Harbour is making a real difference to the lives of Aboriginal people in my community. The Galambila staff—who number almost 80—are passionate and committed to delivering high-quality services in our community. I applaud them for their important work. A New South Wales Government program that helps more Aboriginal people with disability to access the NDIS has allocated \$200,000 in additional funding to Galambila. The health service will partner with Windaan, an Aboriginal NDIS provider delivering services across the mid North Coast, to support people and their families throughout the NDIS registration process. Galambila has a strong leadership team, comprising chairperson Alex Webb, secretary Aunty Kerrie Burnet, wellbeing coordinator Andrew Bartha and NDIS coordinator Jake Hall. The Coffs-Clarence police are achieving outstanding results as they continue to reach out to our local youth.

One program achieving particular success is the Youth Active Rewards Program, which is engaging young Indigenous males in our region. When I called in to see them at Moonee Beach recently they were trying their hand at fishing and learning about sustainable fishing practices and bait collection. The group was led by Coffs-Clarence crime prevention officer Senior Constable Daniel Dunn, Coffs-Clarence Aboriginal community liaison officer Kevin Wilson and Youth on Track caseworker Jason Sciacca. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services joined me at PCYC Coffs Harbour recently to announce a \$2,500 grant for the Youth Active Rewards Program. I congratulate the Coffs-Clarence Police District on this important initiative and acknowledge the fine work of all our local police, led by their district commander, Superintendent Steve Clarke.

RACISM

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (15:25:20): I acknowledge that we are standing on Gadigal land and I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging. The electorate of Balmain, which I represent in this place, is on Gadigal and Wangal land. That land was never ceded. Events of the past weeks and months have made it clear that racism is an enduring and insidious blight on our community. It seeks to divide us. When we talk about racism, it may be more convenient and comfortable to point to racial divides in different countries—for instance, to point to systemic racism in places like the United States of America. It may be reassuring to point the finger at public figures who openly spout racism. It may also be a comfort to rely on our national self-image as a multicultural success story.

But in order to address racism we do have to acknowledge that it is a problem—not a problem overseas and not a problem online but a problem in all of our communities. A national survey conducted by Western Sydney University in 2016 revealed that around 30 per cent of respondents reported having experienced racism in their workplace, on the street, on public transport and in restaurants and 17 per cent of survey respondents stated that they had experienced racism in the last 12 months. The rates of racism experienced by Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander participants were much higher than for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants. They were also higher for those respondents who spoke a language other than English compared to those who speak only English.

Aboriginal people are incarcerated at more than 10 times the rate of the general population. Discriminatory laws for public drunkenness, incarceration for unpaid fines and other laws that target poverty and the social consequences of a colonial history impact on Aboriginal people disproportionately. This insidious institutionalised racism has infected our justice system and drives Aboriginal deaths in custody, which is a national shame. I am thankful to everyone in our community who has come out in support of Black Lives Matter and the values of equality and justice that the movement represents. Black lives matter. Aboriginal lives matter.

Statistics only go so far when describing this problem. The lived experience for people of colour and First Nation people in Australia who experience racism is something altogether worse. They are called names and insulted, they are distrusted and they are treated without respect and dignity. Racist incidents against Asian Australians have increased dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic, as documented by the Asian Australia Alliance. Most of this is in the form of racial slurs like "Go back to China", "Chinavirus" or "chink". This is absolutely unacceptable. This is the type of individual, overt racism that I know many members would clearly condemn.

But Aboriginal people and people of colour are also treated differently by biases in our institutions and individuals who may not see themselves as racist but still benefit from systems that privilege white faces and voices. The impact on diverse communities is real. We need to stand against anti-Semitism and the scourge of Islamophobia where just last month an Australian terrorist—that is right, an Australian; it is an issue that we need to face—a right-wing extremist, was sentenced to life in prison for murdering 51 Muslims in attacks in Christchurch. Speaking out is especially important when it comes to incitement to violence by white supremacists and extremists like Jim Saleam or Ismail al-Wahwah.

We all have a responsibility to be anti-racist. I am thankful to those who this week called out police officers in Queensland who donned flag patches associated with far-right extremism. While I am thankful to all those people, I remind the House that it is not the job of Aboriginal people or people of colour to police racism. It is the job of everyone in the community who wants to live in a society that is truly multicultural, accepting and equal. Admitting we have a problem is the first step but I encourage each of us to call out racism, to examine our own privilege and to expend a little of it by trying to propel someone who has less. Anti-racism is everyone's responsibility.

COVID-19 AND SCHOOLS

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (15:29:05): Today I thank the educators in the schools, TAFE, universities and early childhood education across the Granville electorate and across New South Wales for the tremendous job they have done this year in adapting learning to deal with COVID-19 restrictions. These frontline workers have not been given the recognition that they deserve for taking on board many years' worth of professional development to adapt learning in this environment over the last six months. I have recently met with many of the principals and teachers in my electorate and in some adjoining schools where many students who live in the Granville electorate study, across both the State and Catholic education systems.

The resilience and determination they have shown in supporting students this year is nothing short of amazing. But the need for adaptation has also highlighted shortcomings that really need to be addressed by this Government in TAFE and our State schools. Three schools in the Granville electorate closed for deep cleaning after COVID cases. They are Cerdon College, St Margaret Mary's Primary School in Merrylands and St Paul's Catholic College in Greystanes. There have also been many students who have had to miss school to self-isolate for 14 days when they have been exposed to COVID-19. To date these have all been in the Catholic system.

I thank the local schools and the Catholic Education Office of the Diocese of Parramatta for ensuring students have been notified about what is happening and for supporting and engaging their students in learning when they have been stuck at home due to school closures or other reasons. I thank them also for making sure the small number of students who did not have internet access or devices at home were supplied with them. None of the State schools in my electorate has had COVID-19 cases at school. However, some have had students stranded overseas and then in quarantine on their return to Australia. I thank the teachers who ensured these students also stayed engaged.

Going back to the period of the school closures, this was a huge challenge for students and teachers alike across the Granville electorate. It exposed a huge digital divide which especially affected the schools more characterised by disadvantage. While there are very few students who live in a house with no internet, in many cases this was limited to mum's smartphone, often with a small data plan, which was being shared between

multiple children. Some students also live in quite overcrowded conditions and do not have a dedicated study desk of their own. A number of local schools spent \$50,000 to \$90,000 on equipping students with devices, dongles and even lap desks. The support requested from the Department of Education was slow and in some cases ineffective.

A number of schools in my electorate stayed open during the lockdown and all had about 10 per cent of students still coming to school. This was enormously important for students who lack space, stability or internet access at home. Some students were also distracted by their parents struggling to work from home. Throughout all of this, people have debated whether schools should be open, based on how likely children are to spread or contract COVID-19. Overlooked are the dozens of adults at every school who are risking their own health to teach our children and to keep them engaged and supported.

I also acknowledge the enormous efforts of teachers in moving to online learning and staying in touch with students and keeping them engaged. Every single one of them has put their students first every single day. The increase in their own productivity is enormous and it is not fair for those in the State system that the Government is refusing to give them a pay rise this year. They have never worked harder and have never deserved a pay rise as much as they do in 2020. The same goes for our TAFE teachers. I have spoken to teachers from Granville TAFE about the challenges they have faced in moving to more online learning. In some ways it is not ideal for vocational education. To make matters worse, after last year's round of redundancies at TAFE, Granville TAFE has only one IT support person to assist everyone in the transition to more online learning.

Universities and early education have also had to adapt. My husband is a lecturer at the University of Technology Sydney and is now mostly working from home. It has been a huge change for him, his students and everyone he works with. In science it is particularly challenging as laboratory and field work have always been so important. Our Great Dane, Knox, seems to find a way to interrupt nearly every lecture, tutorial or meeting by barking or sticking his head in. The students call him Professor Knox. I thank the Government for the support it has provided to preschools and council-run childcare centres to stay open. Being ineligible for JobKeeper looked like an insurmountable problem which would have forced many parents out of the workforce to stay home and mind their children. Cumberland City Council wrote to 600 local families threatening to close childcare centres, which caused huge distress. Thankfully this support, negotiated with Local Government NSW and its president, Linda Scott, allowed them to stay open.

My area has seen huge increases in unemployment since this recession began. The suburb of Merrylands has been the worst hit locally, with unemployment increasing from fairly average levels to now having the fourth-highest number of JobSeeker recipients in New South Wales. The number of unemployed people has more than doubled. I fear this will only worsen as JobKeeper is withdrawn. This will place even more pressure on local families and, in turn, on local schools as parents struggle more and more. One teacher recently told me that it feels like term 10. I am sure this is a widespread sentiment across schools everywhere. Again I thank all the teachers, principals and support staff across my local schools, Granville TAFE, early childhood education and the university sector for their tremendous perseverance and commitment to students this year. They have all been amazing.

DRUMMOYNE ELECTORATE PROJECTS

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (15:34:22): I inform the House of some local funding commitments that have been announced by the New South Wales Government to support projects in the Drummoyne electorate. Locally I have been working with all levels of government to ensure that the community is well supported. As we deal with the economic and social implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is my priority to have a good working relationship with local and federal representatives for collaboration. The range of projects that have been funded will inject important funds into the economy, and create good local jobs and infrastructure that my community will benefit from in years to come.

I begin by acknowledging the New South Wales Government's contribution of \$42.2 million through the Department of Planning to deliver a redevelopment of Concord Oval. As part of the redevelopment, the Office of Sport has also given the Wests Tigers club \$5.5 million to develop a centre of excellence at the site. The construction of the new facility at Concord Oval has now commenced with the project set to be completed in 2021. This is great news for the community, as it will have a new recreational and gym facility, as well as a training ground for local clubs including the Wests Tigers and the West Harbour Pirates.

Just across the road at St Lukes Oval, the New South Wales Government has announced as part of the Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund that the City of Canada Bay Council will receive \$939,000 to upgrade the ground. This funding will help to improve the amenities available to local rugby and AFL clubs in my area, both of which have had a surge in participants in recent years and have seen a greater number of female enrolments. The Concord Golf Club has also received funding of \$808,000 to develop a water harvesting system. The project

will reduce the need for the club to rely on potable water. This project works by diverting stormwater that would otherwise end up in the Parramatta River and uses this water for the golf course gardens and facilities. The project highlights the environmental sustainability of the club by ensuring that it will be able to run almost entirely on recycled water.

It is important to encourage innovation and environmentally sustainable projects. This is a wonderful example that diverts waste water and pollution from entering the Parramatta River. The plant will use solar energy to run. Again, another example of how the project will contribute to the environmental sustainability of Concord Golf Club. This is great news, particularly as the club has invested in excess of \$6 million for a redesign by golfing guru designer, Tom Doak. A couple of weeks ago the Deputy Premier announced that Concord Golf Club will be the host golf course for the finals of the NSW Golf Open for the next two years. There is a great history with the club being in existence since 1899. When the Open was last hosted there in 1988 the then winner was little known Greg Norman. I am looking forward to bringing all the benefits of a great event to my community, which will support in turn many of the small businesses in the areas.

In respect of funding for local sporting clubs, a share of \$40,500 has also been awarded to clubs, including the Briars Sports Club, Concord Baseball Club, West Harbour Rugby Club, Drummoyne Power and Drummoyne Water Polo to assist with equipment and administration costs. Finally, \$300,000 has been announced through the Community Building Partnership program for local community organisations, including the Sir Roden and Lady Cutler Foundation, the Point Anglican Church, Concord Occasional Care and St Patrick's parish and school at Mortlake; not to forget an \$80,000 mini bus for the Briars Sporting Club. These are great initiatives and I am proud to be delivering important funding for all my community. I will continue to work hard to ensure local organisations are supported, that new infrastructure is delivered to support local sports and local jobs, and to provide amenities to support current and future growth.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:39:05): I acknowledge the great work done by the member for Drummoyne as we have heard this afternoon. I do not think there is a sporting club in the electorate of Drummoyne that is not receiving some form of support after hearing the interesting investment in the golf club and all around Concord. These great initiatives provide jobs on the ground for tradies and other people. In addition to the member for Drummoyne providing this financial support for his community, there is a knock-on effect, which is the benefit that is flowing directly to businesses and tradies in his electorate, who will be delivering these projects and upgrades from one end of Drummoyne to the other. Again, I congratulate the member for Drummoyne. Whether it be Community Building Partnerships, whether it be funding from the Deputy Premier or other sports funding, he continues to work tirelessly for the people and community organisations within his electorate.

TRIBUTE TO LINDA TUNNICLIFF

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (15:40:04): The community is mourning the passing of Linda Tunnicliff, who contributed greatly to the sport of netball in my electorate of East Hills. Linda founded the Padstow RSL Demons Netball Club with her sister in 2008. The club stated that Linda was the club's umpires convenor, national C umpire, umpires coach, trivia night quiz master, fundraising queen and friend. She was also a founding member of the Saints Netball Club and a life member of Bankstown Netball Association. She served as the competition convenor for BCNA for 14 years, making sure the competition ran smoothly year after year and she has been involved in the Deverall Park competition either as a player or a volunteer for over 20 years. Linda was a passionate volunteer who dedicated many hours to the sport of netball, serving her club and the association. We will miss her and are so grateful for the work she put into our club over the years. We will keep her mother, Pat, siblings, and their families in our thoughts as we mourn the loss of this wonderful lady who we were so lucky to have as a volunteer, a member and a friend. Linda joined the City of Sydney Council in 1993. The Chief Executive Officer, Monica Barone, paid this tribute to Linda:

Linda arrived on the dot at 7 a.m. every morning, rain, hail or shine. Over the years Linda worked in a number of areas across the city, including the Office of the Lord Mayor, with Protocol and the former City Engagement team before moving to City Life Business Support in the role of project officer, a position she held for over a decade.

Memories of Linda are many. Blessed with a unique personality, Linda will be remembered as the funny, kind, organised, always helpful fountain of knowledge with a heart of gold whose 'can do' attitude was unsurpassed. Linda also held the record for the most purchase orders raised across the city and had the sharpest of memories when quoting cost codes. Apart from her work expertise Linda was a fire warden, ran the lotto club, and always kept the fundraising chocolate bowls full in aid of a netball team. Baking was also a passion and Linda's famous rum balls at Christmas will be missed.

As an example of Linda's devotion to the city, she also volunteered every year at Art and About, Chinese New Year, New Year's Eve, the Lord Mayor's Picnic and was the featured 'Mrs Claus' special guest at Christmas events.

A keen traveller who loved adventures on cruise liners, Linda wore a different pair of earrings every day to match her outfit, many of which had a story attached to her many holidays around the world. On a more personal level, Linda was extremely devoted to her family and the main carer to her Mum, Patricia.

From the observations of her other colleagues, Linda was well known for playing music at her desk. The low hum of the radio on WSFM could be heard when you passed Linda's desk and she would turn it up a notch when her favourite group, Queen, was on. Linda also arranged Melbourne Cup sweeps and kept her colleagues well fed on fundraising chocolates for the Padstow RSL Demons Netball Club. When Linda became ill, her colleagues made her a special video with personalised messages of love and hope. It was named Linda's Love boat, after her well-known love of holiday cruises. My family knew Linda as a neighbour: She lived diagonally behind my grandparents' house in Revesby Heights. She was a true community-minded person with great spirit who certainly will be missed. Vale Linda Tunnicliff.

PEAK HILL AND GOONUMBLA RURAL FIRE SERVICE BRIGADES

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (15:43:28): Last week I had the honour of being invited to join locals from both the Peak Hill and Goonumbla communities for the official opening of the new Rural Fire Service [RFS] sheds in their respective communities. The Rural Fire Service is recognised as the largest of its kind anywhere in the world and the dedicated volunteer members have been involved in many fire incidents that occur each and every year. In the past 10 years, members from each of these brigades have fought major bushfires burning across the Mid Lachlan Valley RFS region, such as fires in the Goobang Ranges, Weddin Mountain, Alectown, Lake Cowal, Burcher and Bogan Gate. Many of them have also been deployed beyond their fire districts to assist fellow RFS members to combat bushfires, such as we have witnessed in last season's unprecedented and widespread fires across multiple eastern States.

I am in total admiration of the men and women who drop everything, temporarily abandoning their work and family commitments, to help fight fire and protect life and property far away from the comfort of their own homes and, in many cases, at a financial loss due to their absence from work. They display unity, courage and commitment. The very least we can do is support our brave and selfless volunteers by providing them with adequate safety apparel, up-to-date equipment, shedding infrastructure and the resources they need to respond to bushfires and emergencies. Importantly, the shedding infrastructure provides more than just a roof over the tanker and brigade gear; it serves as a country community meeting point. The RFS is very much a community-involved organisation that has the ability to provide a place for the community to come together and support not just the brigade but also the community itself. That is so important, especially in these trying times with issues of drought, bushfire and COVID. The provision of infrastructure to support social gatherings has enormous social and psychological health benefits.

It was an absolute pleasure to join with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Hon. David Elliott, MP, and RFS Assistant Commissioner Kelly Browne to recognise and support our fantastic RFS volunteers from the Waratah and Coradgery brigades. The opening of the Waratah RFS brigade shed was a notable event. The new shed, located on Mingerong Road, was erected on land that was donated by Cliff and Maria George of Waratah station. There is no better example of giving and a commitment to community than that. It exemplifies the RFS volunteers and community. I applaud Mr and Mrs George for their tremendous generosity and thank them on behalf of the community. A combined \$570,000 was invested in the new shed and a new tanker which replaces a 24-year-old tanker that needed to be retired after many hard years fighting fires.

The official opening of the \$97,000 Coradgery brigade shed at Adavale Lane, Goonumbla, was a fantastic event and brought the tight-knit Goonumbla community together for a special medal presentation ceremony as well. Michael Browne was awarded the National Medal for 20 years of service, Scott Baker received the first clasp to his National Medal for 25 years of service, David Cooney received the first clasp to his National Medal for 30 years of service and Terrence Job was presented with the third clasp to his National Medal for 54 years of service. Between them, those four individuals have an astonishing 129 years of combined service to the RFS and the State of New South Wales.

I look forward to again joining locals and RFS volunteers tomorrow afternoon for the opening of the new RFS shed for the Mickibri brigade at Peak Hill. The event will also involve a medal presentation ceremony to recognise significant service of the brigade's members. I congratulate the New South Wales Government on delivering to communities in my electorate funding and resources to support our RFS volunteers. I now invite the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to further assist our volunteers by expediting the supply of requisite personal protective equipment that adheres to the RFS standard operating procedures. Due to RFS members not being classified as first responders, brigades in my electorate have been unable to source or be supplied with chemical-resistant coveralls to protect volunteer members when attending accident scenes. I congratulate the many volunteers across the entire State who are part of the RFS community and are selflessly devoting themselves to the community and protecting life and property.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:48:00): I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Orange and also the great volunteers in the RFS brigades in his electorate. Every season these volunteers, from one end of New South Wales to the other, put their lives on the line. The member mentioned many of his brigades who

travelled to areas throughout New South Wales, as did many brigades from the Central Coast. When the Minister visits his electorate, I strongly encourage the member to put the bite on the Minister for more supplies for his local RFS brigade. I do so on a regular basis and we recently delivered a brand-new vehicle to the Bays RFS. The Minister has been travelling from one end of New South Wales to the other. I am very proud to be part of a Government that has delivered record funding for infrastructure and equipment to our RFS volunteers, as has happened in the electorates of the Deputy Speaker and the member for Goulburn. We cannot thank RFS volunteers enough for what they do for our community.

KENMORE PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (15:49:03): I express my concerns for the Kenmore Psychiatric Hospital complex in Goulburn. On 31 July 2020 I visited the hospital site, at the request of constituents who were concerned about the lack of ongoing maintenance and the dilapidation of the buildings. By way of background, the Kenmore site was designed by the first New South Wales Government Architect, Walter Liberty Vernon. The site was originally constructed in 1894 and was the first purpose-built complex for mental health care in New South Wales. External buildings were added as the years progressed and the need for mental health care in rural New South Wales grew. The Kenmore site is essentially a hospital village that was self-supporting up to World War II, with 19 ward buildings, administration buildings, a kitchen, assorted staff dwellings and a river pump house—all built of orange-red brick that was kilned on site, with sandstone features on the walls.

The site is far more than simply bricks and mortar. The institution of Kenmore has important links with the community of the locality, the region and, importantly, the State. Those links were particularly strong in the early twentieth century, when Kenmore was a thriving hub for regional sporting and cultural activities. It has been said that the early buildings of Kenmore, particularly the core Vernon buildings, represent perhaps the finest corporate architectural expression of the Edwardian style and later Federation Free Style in Australia. A small portion of the site is still used for psychiatric facilities but on a much smaller scale, with the majority of buildings being vacant.

On my recent visit I was shocked and saddened to see the poor condition of the unused buildings, which were in a state of disrepair. I am certainly not alone in that response. Vandals have been breaking into the facility and lighting small fires, breaking holes in walls and ceilings and causing extensive damage to doors and windows. Whilst I acknowledge the grounds are being maintained, I am concerned for the significant buildings, including those that are heritage listed. I note there are 77 buildings in total on the site, with the majority no longer being used or maintained. In 2005 the Labor Government sold the site to private enterprise.

In 2016 the site was purchased by Australia China International Holdings Pty Ltd, which has flagged potential development opportunities. To my knowledge, none of those options has progressed further than idea conception. To put it bluntly, I am angered that an institution of rich heritage can be in such a poor state of disrepair. I call on the Heritage Council of NSW to intervene and ensure that the owner's obligations to manage the property are enforced in accordance with the minimum standard provisions of the New South Wales Heritage Act 1977. I have brought this matter to the attention of the Minister responsible, the Hon. Don Harwin, MLC. It is important to note the impact of the matter and the importance my community places on the site's heritage and history.

Mr Leighton-Daly, author of *The Mouldering Secrets of a Psychiatric Hospital: A Photographic History of Kenmore*, recently said to me, "It is a sad indictment on a nation whereby vandals determine the ultimate fate of a city's colonial buildings, where the lawless defile and degrade the arts and crafts designs of an acclaimed colonial architect, where the considerable desecration of the chapel by vandals is clearly unchallenged, and where respect for the fallen at the war memorial is forsaken. No Australian flag commemorates that site, mourners are denied access under threat of prosecution, and wilted lawns and withered gardens hardly pay due reverence to the sanctity of the site. Such an ignoble end does not befit the stately old lady, Kenmore Psychiatric Hospital."

It was at the Australian war hospital at Kenmore that Mr Leighton-Daly's mother nursed battle-fatigued, diseased and maimed soldiers during World War II. It was in the now desecrated hospital chapel that his mother, nursing staff and afflicted soldiers received much comfort and spiritual sustenance. He rightfully ask the questions: What foreign investor has the right to disdainfully prevent mourners attending sacred sites associated with our war dead? What foreign investor has the right to remain totally disrespectful about Australia's colonial heritage? We need to fix this. I hope there will be a quick response.

COLAN AUSTRALIA

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:53:48): As of today the COVID-19 pandemic has seen some 939,289 tragic deaths worldwide, with 816 deaths occurring in Australia. Now is a more important time than ever to champion scientific and technological development, to utilise great minds and to adapt, innovate and respond

to the new challenges faced during this unparalleled health crisis. An example of such innovation is a manufacturer based at Huntingwood in the electorate of Prospect. Colan Australia has manufactured high performance textiles for over 60 years and has become an internationally recognised leader in the field.

Colan Australia has developed, in conjunction with the CSIRO, a world-first reusable cloth face mask that kills the virus that causes COVID-19. This facemask, the Colan PAM face mask, is interwoven with a unique material that is proven to be antiviral, antibacterial and antifungal. This unique material contains Metis PCA fibre, which has been certified to kill the COVID-19 virus by the independent National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia approved laboratory 360biolabs in Melbourne. This is Australia's only clinical services organisation currently working with the COVID-19 virus that is certified by the International Standards Organisation.

The Metis PCA fibre has also been certified as a Class 1 medical device for use in face masks by the Therapeutic Goods Administration. Rigorous testing of the Colan PAM face mask by 360biolabs revealed that after one hour the Colan PAM face mask reduced the COVID-19 virus by 63 per cent and after three hours the COVID-19 virus was completely inactive. This face mask is the first in the world that kills the virus. The creation of the Colan PAM face mask is an incredibly exciting and innovative development. Having a laboratory-tested facemask proven to kill COVID-19 available on the market is a fundamental step in the right direction when combatting the current health crisis.

Although the community have been very responsible and vigilant in wearing face masks, it is difficult to use them 100 per cent correctly. We are all guilty of wearing a facemask for a little too long—especially disposable ones—which can, in some cases, cause more harm than good. The Colan PAM face mask, with its antimicrobial and antiviral properties, does not need to be washed, unless it becomes dirty. This directly responds to the current issue of people wearing disposable face masks for long periods of time. Unlike other antiviral fabrics on the market that have been treated with an antiviral coating only, the Metis PCA fibre used in the Colan PAM face mask is inherently antiviral.

This level of technology has never been seen before within Australia or, in fact, the world. Not only are antiviral face masks the most hygienic and effective way of protecting yourself and others from spreading COVID-19, but the environmental benefit of utilising a reusable face mask is inarguable. In addition to Colan PAM face masks there is the potential for fabrics made using the Metis PCA fibre to be used to make other forms of personal protective equipment. The use of such groundbreaking technology is invaluable to the health and hospital sector, with the potential of a COVID-19 killing fibre to be used in hospitals throughout New South Wales.

I have written to health Ministers at both the Federal and State level about this product. I have also invited our health Minister to the factory at Huntington because this is groundbreaking material. It is imperative that we work together as a community. It is imperative that we also listen to and learn from the inventive individuals around us. I thank managing director Genelle Coghlan and her team at Colan Australia for their groundbreaking work. I hope that we can give Colan Australia the exposure it deserves to allow a world-leading product like the Colan PAM face mask to become easily accessible to our entire community. The global health environment is rapidly changing and we need to promptly and uniquely respond to such dilemmas.

COVID-19 AND MENTAL HEALTH

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (15:58:40): The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the great need for mental health support. It is vital that we work to create a mental healthcare system and society that helps to prevent illness and supports both physical and mental wellbeing. The potential of the coronavirus to spread and infect, harm and kill is a trigger for anxiety. Many people are worried and the ever-changing situation with continually updated advice can overwhelm. While keeping informed is important, bad news, misinformation and alarmist speculations around each new discovery on the virus can contribute further to stress and fear.

Physical distancing helps prevent the spread of the virus but it is resulting in mass social isolation. We no longer regularly see family, friends or workmates and social activities are limited. We no longer hug or touch others. Much volunteer activity has stopped and public places where people spend time like libraries and theatres are closed. Even as places reopen, some people are too scared to attend, especially those who are vulnerable. Elderly people are especially impacted because some do not have the technical skills or experience to connect online without support and equipment. They also do not have regular contact with people through jobs and close contacts who want to protect them, so they do not visit. Support for getting online can help mental health.

Increasing rates of unemployment and underemployment are causing significant distress, with the poor economic outlook adding to the toll. Lack of access to financial support for overseas students and visa holders is having health and welfare impacts. Many people are separated from family and supports. Humans are social beings

and loneliness is detrimental to our wellbeing. This situation follows devastating bushfires which saw loss of life, homes and communities, and lots of choking smoke, followed by floods. The increasing disruption due to climate change adds to concern about our future. The uncertainty of when life will settle down is also a significant strain. Many people are mourning their old life. Many are wondering when social activities and job security will resume and the fear will end.

We need to ensure that the mental health system is accessible to all who need help. New ways to provide treatment, including online and telehealth, are important—especially for those who need to self-isolate or quarantine. The small rebates for people on a mental health care plan for up to 10 psychologist sessions are welcome, but it should be expanded. There is a case for full Medicare coverage of mental health support that prevents crisis and breakdown. It is important to get the message out that anyone who is having trouble coping or feeling fragile can seek help through the New South Wales Mental Health Line, Lifeline, their general practitioner, or a psychologist, psychiatrist or counsellor. These services must be supported and expanded to meet increasing demand.

For most people when the pandemic ends their emotional wellbeing will recover, but the prolonged heightened state of worry will have lifelong mental health impacts for some. The most vulnerable are people who already experience illness like depression or anxiety. Indeed, there are growing reports that their mental health is eroding, with health services already seeing elevated levels of distress. People with pre-existing conditions must be a focus of any mental health response to the pandemic. They will need additional treatment and intervention; we also need to establish a long-term plan to prepare the mental health system for new trends. My electorate office has seen increased stress and anxiety in vulnerable social housing tenants and older people living alone without support. It will be important to give them support and respond to their concerns quickly to avoid distress and deterioration in health.

We must remind people to reach out to others who may be lonely or needing help with day-to-day things. Support from Facebook groups in my electorate has been great. I have seen strangers reach out to vulnerable people in their neighbourhood to do shopping, to provide food and household goods or to run COVID-safe get-togethers. Councils, institutions and organisations across the State are providing COVID-safe activities for residents, such as free online courses and discussions, to help them keep active. Strategies to help people cope include establishing a routine, connecting with family and friends, staying physically active and eating well.

The State and Federal governments have increased mental health and suicide prevention funding, and this will strengthen available support. I hope that it indicates greater emphasis on preventing illness and getting early help. I hope also that it strongly supports the calls for mental health to be included in the National Preventive Health Strategy currently being developed. I know all members are closely monitoring our communities and we will all continue to listen to mental health providers, consumers and advocates so that we can make sure that our mental health system addresses the pandemic and the significant changes we face in our society and economy.

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM MELLING

LEANNE GEARSIDE

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (16:03:57): I pay tribute to William Melling who sadly passed away in January 2020. I commend also Senior Constable Leanne Gearside of the Hawkesbury Police Area Command for going above and beyond the call of duty in response to veteran William Melling whose war medals were lost. William Melling was a merchant sailor who served with the Royal Navy during World War II. During a rescue mission on 7 June 1944, the day after D-Day, Mr Melling saved the lives of many of his fellow merchant sailors after a torpedo struck their ship. He was awarded a clasp for his bravery. In the 1950s our country was lucky enough to have Mr Melling migrate to Australia. The latter years of his life were spent at a nursing home in North Richmond in the Hawkesbury electorate. Our community was enhanced by having such a brave man living amongst us. Communities of the free world owe their peace and prosperity to men like Mr Melling.

In late 2019 Senior Constable Leanne Gearside was tasked with responding to a report of Mr Melling's war medals going missing. What she did from this point on was quite extraordinary and befitting the respect that the brave veteran deserved. Mr Melling passed away whilst the inquiry about the missing medals was still being conducted. With the realisation that the medals would not be found in time for Mr Melling's funeral, Senior Constable Gearside took the initiative to organise four replica medals to be made and presented to Mr Melling's daughter, Brenda Melling, for the family of Mr Melling to present on his coffin.

I am proud that my electorate of Hawkesbury is home to such considerate and caring people. I could not imagine the value that this wonderful gesture by Senior Constable Gearside has brought to Mr Melling's family. A brave and honourable veteran was given the respect he deserved as he was farewelled. Senior Constable Gearside's actions portrayed the very values of dignity, mateship and respect of one another that are among those

qualities Mr Melling fought to protect. I commend the Hawkesbury Police Area Command for its role in Senior Constable Leanne Gearsides work, and for the daily work of its officers. Members of the Hawkesbury Police Area Command have a strong affection for their community. This is demonstrated by their dedication to the work they do, day in and day out.

Whether it be situations such as their response to Mr Melling's lost medals or running seminars educating the community on issues of concern in Hawkesbury, I am always in awe of the officers' commitment to the area. I also acknowledge that they risk their lives and health each day as they serve to protect us. I pay tribute to the life and service of Mr Melling. I hope the original medals are recovered, although his bravery and service will always be recorded regardless. This country enjoys its freedoms because of the commitment and loyalty of veterans such as Mr Melling.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:07:16): I acknowledge the speech given by the member for Hawkesbury and the outstanding contribution made by Senior Constable Gearsides. Our wonderful police go above and beyond the call of duty to help our community. The effort made by Senior Constable Gearsides is a perfect example of how our magnificent NSW Police Force goes well outside the normal bounds to look after our communities. To arrange a duplicate set of medals for Mr Melling's family and his daughter, Brenda, was an incredibly generous gesture. We are so lucky to have people like Mr Melling in our communities. The William Mellings of this world live throughout our communities in New South Wales. I cannot thank them enough for the risks and sacrifices they made during World War II and conflicts since to keep our country safe and give us the liberties we have. Again, I thank Senior Constable Gearsides for treating the Mellings with so much respect.

ENGADINE SERVICE CENTRE

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (16:08:25): This evening I will talk about the new Service NSW centre in my electorate, which we opened officially on Monday. It had been open for a fortnight prior to that. In 2014 the Roads and Traffic Authority [RTA] service centre was taken out of my community at Engadine. Locals were greatly displeased that they had lost their RTA. Service NSW subsequently opened in Miranda and has been servicing the Sutherland shire ever since. On Monday the Premier and Minister Dominello officially opened the brand-new, modern Service NSW centre. The office has a different feel to it—it is much more comfortable, to be honest. There are a lot more lounges, as well as power sockets and upgraded wi-fi. It is fantastic to have Service NSW back in my electorate, particularly in Engadine, as it will increase the number of people coming to the area.

Engadine has had a hard time over the past couple of years, including this year with the pandemic. A lot of businesses have closed, and the centre will give the whole community a bit of a boost. The best part about having Service NSW in Engadine is that the Service NSW people ensured the majority of those the centre employed were from the local area. I am happy to report to the House that one new employee of the Engadine Service Centre is a lady who lost her job at Qantas. She had no opportunities moving forward so applied for the job. She can now walk to work. She had worked at Qantas for 13 or 14 years and is quite skilled at talking to people and making them feel calm. The centre has several computer screens. The demographic in my electorate is fairly aged, and a lot of people do not use computers. It was fantastic to see the staff sitting down with older people and going through processes with them to make sure they were comfortable and in future can visit Service NSW and complete transactions by themselves.

Another innovation is that people can pay for transactions at the terminal with tap and go. For example, renewing a licence, paying something or even getting a refund can be done through the terminal at the Engadine Service Centre, which is fantastic. The most important thing I need to highlight is the Service NSW cost-of-living reviews. People must book to have a review. Of the over 1,400 people who have passed through the centre in the past fortnight, quite a few have booked in for a review of what they can get back from the Government. It is fantastic to see people received money they did not realise they were entitled to. A lady who used to work in my office had a cost-of-living review and learned that she will receive \$1,800 a year—which, as a self-funded retiree, means she can go on holiday knowing she will not necessarily pay for it out of her own pocket.

It is fantastic news for the people of the Heathcote electorate. I am very proud. I had the world's biggest scissors to cut the ribbon—metre-long scissors to cut this tiny ribbon. I thought, "This is not going to go well"—but it did. Luckily, I did not lop somebody's leg off. My psychologist said I should not have anything sharp—but that is another story. It was fantastic to have the Premier there for the official ribbon cutting. I quickly mention that we also visited Sydney's Flowers to the World. Sydney started the business when she was 17 years old. She is now 23 and the business is still going strong. The Premier dropped in to say hello, which was a fantastic thrill for Sydney. I thank the House.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (16:13:30): That is how you do it. I say to members of the House that the member for Heathcote is one of the greatest local members in this place. He works hard and gets results. He knocks on doors to get outcomes for his

community. As a Minister, I know how hard he fights. Because of his hard work his community now has an improved service, a Service NSW centre, where we have brought all services together—a great reform by this Government that the member for Heathcote passionately believed in and wanted to deliver. Members in this place today could see the passion dripping from him. That was one of the greatest orations I have seen in this House. Without the assistance of a single written note, he delivered an absolutely outstanding, Churchillian address, because he believes passionately in his community and in the services the centre will provide. I know he will go on to win the next election because we know that Labor believes so much in recycling that it has recycled the same candidate time and time again. He absolutely wipes the floor with them because he gets things done. He is an outstanding local member who delivers for his community. We are all proud of you!

RACISM

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:14:50): Recently I was invited by the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies to participate in a webinar series on human rights with the spotlight on health, racism and the media. I commend the board for running this series of webinars and providing an opportunity to highlight the role that we can all play in ending racism and racist attitudes in Australia. The five-part series also examined the link between structural racism, health and quality of life for those who have to face racist attitudes every day. At its simplest, the end of racism starts when we reinforce and recognise that we all come from diverse backgrounds and that we are all Australians, irrespective of the way in which we speak, dress or celebrate our religious beliefs and traditions. This is what makes us such a great nation.

When we see the normalisation of hatred, homophobia, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, racism and sexism it is our responsibility to do something. We must commit to taking strategic action alongside each other to eradicate this scourge that often festers in hidden pockets of our communities. Focusing on the negatives of our great nation can be uncomfortable, but it is necessary if we are to continue to grow and to be great. It may not always be wanted but a little bit of self-reflection is needed. I commend the Jewish Board of Deputies for providing a forum where that can take place and for bringing together people such as Dr Norman Swan and Elaine Pearson from Human Rights Watch. Unfortunately, as the webinar series made clear, racism is an issue that we need to acknowledge and work through as a society.

While I believe that members of the Australian community who hold racist views are a vocal minority, unfortunately racism affects many more Australians in their day-to-day lives irrespective of whether it is unexpected and unwanted: a comment on the bus on the way to work, the security guard following someone around the shops simply because of their skin colour, or the so-called casual comment from a schoolmate because of what they had for lunch. There is really no such thing as casual racism. The impact is not casual. There is much work to be done to reflect and build on our inclusive society, and it starts at grassroots level—in our classrooms and playgrounds, on the sports fields, in our police force, on our company boards and on our television screens. This is where our diversity is best showcased and where it offers real hope for marginalised young people that they will be given a fair go.

The current worldwide focus on Black Lives Matter provides us with an opportunity to educate ourselves further about the inequalities and lasting impacts on our First Nation people. But we need to do more than just educate ourselves. We need to make a real and lasting change. Reducing the disparities between First Nation people and non-Indigenous Australians is essential to the process. The 16 new targets under Closing the Gap are an important step in tackling Indigenous disadvantage, but we need to ensure that those targets do not remain aspirational. All 16 targets need to be met, and soon. While I am pleased to see all States and Territories, including New South Wales, have signed up we need to see the policies and funding that will help us meet those targets and preferably ahead of the stated timeline of 2031.

Obviously, Aboriginal deaths in custody remains a critical issue. The position is particularly stark for Indigenous children as they comprise only 7 per cent of the general youth population but an astounding 54 per cent of young people in detention across Australia. It is pretty obvious that Closing the Gap targets are needed. As the shadow Minister for Skills and TAFE, Youth, Juvenile Justice and Assisting on Multiculturalism I am pleased to see that many of the Closing the Gap targets are being met. I acknowledge the presence in the Chamber of the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services because I know he also feels passionately about this issue. Some of the targets cover the most fundamental elements of life that most of us take for granted, such as enjoying the same average life expectancy as other Australians and reducing the rate of representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care. I am also pleased to see educational opportunities are being addressed by the targets.

But perhaps just as importantly as the measures themselves in addressing some of the structural racism that First Nation people have faced is the need for increasing Indigenous involvement in leading and implementing the measures. Only by partnering with Indigenous Australians will the Closing the Gap strategy be truly effective and will we see the ongoing structural racism being faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders being

addressed. The question for us as legislators is where we want this State to be in the future. In the argy-bargy that happens in this place sometimes we forget that our most important job is to make everybody's future better and everybody's life better across this great State.

I acknowledge those who make the effort, regardless of which side of the Parliament's aisle they sit. What is really important is the effort that every single person makes. Australians of all backgrounds, faiths and socio-economic status deserve the very best from us. They deserve us to call it out. Far too often we just let it go. I can state from personal experience that if we do not face that monster head-on, it will run over us and we will just accept it as the norm. Racism is not normal. I again thank the Jewish Board of Deputies for its leadership. I acknowledge every person, in both public and private domains, who does everything they can to fight against racism.

SHELLHARBOUR HOSPITAL

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)
(16:20:01): I stood for Parliament to get things done. When it comes to major infrastructure in the Illawarra region, residents can be assured that when I make a promise I keep it. While our community has witnessed enormous investment in roads in my time as the local member of Parliament, I want to see improvements to local hospitals that make a real difference. Tuesday 8 September 2020 will be recorded as a historic day for our region. It was the day our region was given \$700 million reasons to smile. On that day years of hard work culminated in an announcement of \$700 million for a brand-new hospital in the southern Illawarra. The announcement will not only provide for a world-class facility but construction of the project will generate an estimated 2,800 jobs. To put the project into context: The largest single infrastructure project in the history of our entire region was previously the Albion Park rail bypass—a project I secured. Construction is ahead of time and on budget.

The bypass aside, it has now been eclipsed by the size and significance of a brand-new hospital at Shellharbour. I was able to secure that funding as part of the New South Wales Government's COVID-19 recovery plan that focuses on infrastructure investment and job generation. It would be fair to say that this project has had an interesting history. While I had secured agreement from the New South Wales Government for a quarter of a billion dollar upgrade of the Shellharbour Hospital and while the project would have made a major difference, my concern was simple: Would it be enough? In 2013 the draft Shellharbour Hospital services plan was released. The plan examined addressing the clinical services needs of the local health district through a prioritised and staged approach, and reconfiguring of services around a hub and spoke model to deliver on reform areas by addressing challenges, positioning health services for the future to meet the needs of our local community, investing in contemporary patient-centred models of care and building the workforce of the future.

The southern Illawarra region is the second-largest growth area in New South Wales outside of south-western Sydney. People want governments to take visionary approaches to infrastructure, think beyond the horizon and plan, not for today, but for tomorrow. The new hospital does exactly that. It not only will be a much larger facility with additional services but also will attract more world-class clinicians and hospital staff to our region. Importantly the Shellharbour Hospital will relieve pressure on the existing hospital network, particularly the Wollongong and Shoalhaven hospitals, and offer local people first-class facilities on our doorstep. We know that in the next decade one in four people in the Illawarra will be aged over 65 years and will require access to care. Work is now underway to identify a site that will be large enough to construct the project so that work can begin to build facilities as soon as is possible.

I conclude by offering some words of thanks. Firstly, I thank the hardworking Health staff across our region. Our community deeply appreciates your dedication and your professional commitment. Your diligent work means that we have excellent care in our community and you deserve the best possible facilities in which to do it. I thank the people who supported me in securing this major announcement, particularly my friend the Premier of New South Wales, Gladys Berejiklian, the Minister for Health and Medical Research, Brad Hazzard, and the Treasurer, Dominic Perrottet. In particular the health Minister has backed me on this project from the very start. I have no doubt this project would not have happened without him. Minister Hazzard has been a mentor and a friend to me since I entered this Parliament. I thank him for his support of our community but also for his ongoing personal support and friendship.

I acknowledge my regional parliamentary colleagues from both sides of the House who supported this important project. We work together and this effort is a reminder that our community does not really care much about the politics, but they deeply value outcomes. I acknowledge my friend Professor Denis King, OAM, who is Chair of the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District board and who for many years has been a tremendous advocate for establishing world-class health services and facilities across the Illawarra region. He described this announcement as visionary. He convinced me that an upgrade, while welcome, would not provide for the future. This project simply would not have happened without him. My thanks also go to the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District CEO, Margot Mains, for her hard work and dedication to this project.

In my time either as a regional spokesperson or a local member of Parliament I have secured funding for a new hospital and aged care facility and centre of excellence at Bulli, a major upgrade of the Wollongong Hospital and the doubling of car parking at that hospital, a new car park at the Shoalhaven Hospital, and planning for a \$434 million upgrade of services at the Shoalhaven Hospital. The Government's investment in the Shellharbour Hospital will make the hospital the largest and most significant health institution in the region. It is an investment our community has long called for and rightly deserves. Since becoming a local member of Parliament I am proud to advise the House that I have secured commitments of investments in health care that exceed a record \$1.2 billion. It is a record of which I am incredibly proud. I know our community deeply appreciates it.

HOLSWORTHY ELECTORATE KOALA PROTECTION

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (16:25:05): Today I speak about the new plan announced by the Government to protect koalas in growing parts of south-western Sydney. On 26 August 2020 I was glad to join Matt Kean, Minister for Energy and Environment; Rob Stokes, Minister for Planning and Public Spaces; Peter Sidgreaves, member for Camden; and Nathaniel Smith, member for Wollondilly to announce a new plan to better protect our koalas. The new plan not only includes the commitment to better protect koalas but also to conserve biodiversity assets in growing parts of Sydney. Last year I spoke in Parliament and called for better protection of the disease-free koalas in south-western Sydney. This plan will help to do just that. It will work to directly support a range of protection actions in an effort to sustain the numbers of koalas across New South Wales.

An important part of this new plan will involve the implementation of new koala reserves to ensure that Sydney's largest and healthiest koala population is protected and preserved. This reserve will protect up to 1,885 hectares of existing koala habitat and improve the connectivity of disjointed patches of vital habitat, including protecting the important north-south koala corridor, so that the koalas are able to move about safely. The Government's conservation plan will prevent further large-scale clearing of land for development from decimating koala corridors. The Lendlease proposal for a south-western Sydney housing project would interfere with conservation works and the natural habitat of koalas. It is important that this vulnerable species is protected, along with their natural environment, so it is paramount that the Lendlease proposal takes the Georges River Koala Reserve into consideration.

The Government's substantial investment of \$84 million over five years will go towards planting 100,000 trees in the Georges River Koala Reserve to directly restore koala habitat. Along with this, 120 kilometres of koala fencing will be installed. It is amazing to think that the Georges River Koala Reserve is a part of the biggest strategic conservation plan in the world. This just shows that the Government is committed to protecting this Australian endangered species. The Georges River Koala Reserve is just one of the reserves that will span across eight other local government areas, covering 200,000 hectares of land as part of the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan. Public consultation on this plan will conclude on 9 October, at which point we will be another step closer to making this a reality.

In addition, I am pleased to say that the Government has also listed the beautiful Mount Gilead Estate as an item of State heritage significance. The Mount Gilead Estate, which runs along Appin Road, is home not only to some of our colonial heritage but also to a population of our healthiest koalas. This will ensure that both the estate and the endangered koala species in south-western Sydney are protected. I have previously thanked Gae Constable in this Parliament but I will take this opportunity to thank her again. Gae was the Animal Justice Party candidate for Holsworthy at last year's State election. I have had multiple discussions with her about the importance of protecting the koalas in the Holsworthy electorate. It is not often that you have great chats with your opposition, but we had many while we stood around at pre-poll.

Gae took the opportunity to educate me about our local koalas and I am pleased that she did. Those conversations lead to something truly valuable—namely, to meetings and a site visit with Minister Kean. In fact, when we got out of our cars on Appin Road we saw a koala with a joey in a tree on the edge of the road—it was almost as if it was planned. It was not only thrilling to see a koala in the wild but also to see a koala that I know this plan will protect. This plan will enhance our koala environment conservation and is a major step forward in the protection of koalas. However, in the Holsworthy electorate we still have a long way to go, especially along Heathcote Road, to protect our koalas.

In this Parliament I have previously mentioned the need for the Government to investigate strategies to reduce the number of koalas being hit by cars along Heathcote Road, especially near Deadman's Creek Bridge. Options such as an underpass or overpass near the bridge will allow koalas to safely and surely cross to the other side of the road without the risk of being killed or injured by cars. Those options need to be investigated, as does the option of koala fencing. Signage should be installed along Heathcote Road displaying a contact number for motorists to call if they hit a koala or any native wildlife, or if they drive past an injured animal on the road. I am proud to see this incredible conservation plan become a reality, especially in my local area.

*Community Recognition Statements***COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS WOMEN'S NETWORK RESILIENCE AWARDS**

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (16:30:23): Congratulations to the nominees announced at the Community and Business Women's Network Resilience Awards on 19 August 2020. I was honoured to officially open the resilience awards ceremony luncheon at The Ary Toukley. I joined with members from the Community and Business Women's Network who had nominated nine women from the Central Coast who have faced challenging times in their lives. The nominees were: Keron Irving, Laura Shaw, Emma Worrell, Kerry Greenhalgh, Miriam Smith, Alison Evans, Jenny Darbin, Mary Louise Clifford and Sharon Cheer—who was named the 2020 honouree. Those nine local women had faced difficult situations or tragedies in their personal or professional lives and had shown amazing resilience, an ability to recover from tough events and skills in maintaining a stable mental wellbeing. The nominees shared their powerful stories through the highs and lows, and shared advice from their life experiences. Today they are an inspiration to women and their local communities. Sharyn Burgess organised a great luncheon for the resilience awards. Her advice to those facing challenges is: Believe in yourself. It's going to be hard. You will want to give up, but you can do it!

HORNSBY KU-RING-GAI WOMEN'S SHELTER

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:31:33): A group much deserving of support in my community is the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter. Over the past few months they have seen an increasing demand for services due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since 2015 the shelter has played a key role in alleviating the impact of homelessness and domestic violence faced by many women. In June the shelter launched the Safe Place Appeal, in conjunction with the Turramurra and Lindfield branches of the Bendigo Bank. A little gift goes a long way in protecting those most vulnerable—from over 1,800 donations to date, over \$195,000 has been raised. The target is \$200,000. The shelter will use the funds to find a permanent safe home. I think we would all agree that everyone deserves a safe place to live. I thank the community for their incredible generosity in helping to make the shelter's dream a reality. I take this opportunity to thank President Louise McCann and her team.

KARIONG NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:32:36): Thank you so much to Kariong Neighbourhood Centre coordinator Shayne Silvers and her band of dedicated volunteers who continue to support locals in need. For eight weeks now SecondBite have been operating at Kariong Neighbourhood Centre, with food donations from our local Coles and Aldi stores. The community need has grown tenfold since the service commenced two months ago—with numbers increasing from 16 in their first week to 100 in week eight. All customers are met with a welcoming smile and a volunteer keen for a chat. I would like to make special mention of John and Bev Zappia who give up their time three days per week to assure food donations are collected and ready for community members in need. John and Bev selflessly contribute financial support each week to ensure that there is enough food to distribute to those in need. These services are vitally important at a time when so many families are facing job losses, insecure work and financial stress. I thank all involved for the tireless work they continue to do.

GREG RYAN

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (16:33:37): Dubbo jockey Greg Ryan recently reached an amazing career achievement by riding his 4,000th winner. It was fitting that he achieved the milestone on the horse's birthday—1 August—at Gilgandra, where he has won the cup on 10 occasions. Unlike a lot of jockeys, Greg did not get into racing in his teens. In fact, he was an apprentice mechanic in Wellington before he became an apprentice jockey. He was a late starter to the sport, but he has wasted little time since joining the riding ranks. His amazing achievements place him second behind only Robert Thompson on the list of most winners ridden in Australian racing history. After riding his first winner at Wellington in 1991, at the age of 25, he has survived almost three decades in one of the only jobs where an ambulance follows you around on a regular basis. Greg has never won a group one race. He has made a career from hard work. He has travelled millions of kilometres, mainly around the Central West, West, Hunter and North West regions. Behind him all the way has been his wife, Pauline, who is also his manager, form guru and books his rides. Well done Greg! Good luck with your path to 5,000 winners.

RIVERWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:34:37): In hard times it is important to remember that there is much goodness in the world. Riverwood Community Centre hosts One Meal and makes a difference every week to support our local community. It provides people with a warm meal and sweet treat. One Meal – It Makes a Difference is a non-profit organisation that helps feed, clothe and support the homeless and those in need. Recently I had the opportunity to join Riverwood Community Centre as it provided meals, and the stories I heard were truly touching. Not many people catch a bus or a train just to have one meal for one night. It made me realise just how

much this service is needed. It was an absolute privilege to be part of the Riverwood Community Centre's fantastic work for the night. I know that Mr Assistant Speaker is constantly there as well. I appreciate that we share the place together. I thank Michelle Newman and Karl Saleh from Riverwood Community Centre, the volunteers from the lending a hand team of Our Lady of Fatima Church, Peakhurst, and Pham from Lugarno Bakery. They all do an amazing job volunteering their time and resources to help the members of our community who need it the most.

MANLY SAVERS RUGBY CLUB

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:35:50): This weekend the NSW Suburban Rugby Union grand final showdown for the Meldrum Cup will take place at Manly Oval. The Meldrum Cup was established in 1976 and in 2020 there will be a spectacular clash between the mighty Manly Savers and the Brothers Rugby Club. The Manly Savers club is led by its outstanding president, John "Fridge" Szaka. It has been playing rugby for 110 years and is greatly supported by the Manly Life Saving Club. The Savers won the Meldrum Cup in 1983, 1994, 1998, 1999, 2003 and 2004. The team comes off an unbeaten season and I know they have one more game in them. I wish the Savers all the best for the big game. I am right behind them. Go Savers!

TABULAM RACE DAY

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (16:36:36): It is with much disappointment that I inform the House that the popular Tabulam Race Day will not proceed this year. It is the first time in a long time, and it is to do with the coronavirus pandemic. The Tabulam Racing Club put out a statement saying that it would not be feasible for it to do it. It is a big event in Tabulam. A lot of people come and camp. A lot of people come from Brisbane and they will not be able to traverse outside the bubble. Last year, despite the bushfires and dust storms, it proceeded and I got dragooned into wearing a fascinator—I have never worn one before. I ended up helping the secretary of the Casino Racing Club be one of the judges of the fashion. The fashion parade is always a big event at the Tabulam Race Day and we had to go out and judge everyone. It really is sad to hear that it is not going ahead; however, it cannot this year.

JANNALI EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (16:37:41): I acknowledge the fantastic Jannali East Public School [JEPS] community. Jannali East Public School is a growing community school with a friendly, happy and dynamic learning environment where all students work towards achieving their personal best. The school not only strives for academic, cultural and sporting excellence, but also strongly believes that every child has the right to feel happy, safe and confident in their learning environment. When COVID-19 disrupted typical school activities, like the Primary School Sports Association and interschool sports competitions, JEPS established its own basketball knockout competition. Teachers and students alike have been participating in the competition during lunchtimes, and keeping active and social during this turbulent time. I commend Principal Katherine Horner for her ongoing leadership, the wonderful staff for their dedication to teaching our local kids, and the students at Jannali East Public School for continuing to work hard and achieve their personal best despite the challenges of the year. In particular, I recognise student leaders Elisa Tello, Amber Harris, Marley Breen, Kaelan Crossie, Lewis Jones and Lucas Flynn. Keep up the great work, Jannali East Public School.

DR MATTHEW DUN

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:38:46): Dr Matthew Dun's work and success have been acknowledged with the prestigious 2020 Young Tall Poppy Science Award from the Australian Institute of Policy and Science. I have enormous respect Dr Dun, who achieved his PhD through the University of Newcastle and Hunter Medical Research Institute in 2012. He has since focused his research on cancers that have extremely poor outcomes, including diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma, or DIPG, which tragically claimed the life of his daughter Josephine late last year. I offer Dr Dun, his wife and family my most sincere condolences on their unfathomable loss. I was extremely honoured to meet Dr Dun when he was presented with a cheque from the District 15 Masonic Lodge and Masonicare for his research into aggressive brain cancers in children. This very personal motivation has fuelled his continued success in his research. I wish him and his family, and his research, all the best for the future.

CANOELANDS ORCHARD

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (16:39:43): On 9 September 2020 Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation the Hon. Kevin Anderson and I visited the Canoelands Orchard. The Christie family have been farming the Canoelands Orchard for a century. Three generations have worked the land, and everyone can experience life on the farm and pick their own produce at this hidden gem in Hawkesbury. The Canoelands Orchard is located just off Old Northern Road, at 27 Canoelands Road, Canoelands. It is a great place to visit and I encourage locals and those from afar to do so. The fruit is delicious—at the moment they have got blueberries

and strawberries—and the scenery is amazing. Everyone I met there was very friendly and welcoming, especially third-generation John Christie. I thank the Christie family for their wonderful and warm hospitality. I hope they continue their great work for many generations to come.

AIMEE PETERSEN

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (16:40:44): I congratulate Aimee Petersen from Wyong Hospital Pharmacy for being nominated in the Caring for the Coast Awards, and for successfully being awarded the Outstanding Leadership Award. The Caring for the Coast Awards 2020 recognise our individuals and teams who go above and beyond, as well as outstanding contributions and achievements. Aimee is the medical team leader pharmacist at Wyong Hospital Pharmacy. She has earned her award for going above and beyond in all aspects of her leadership and professional work. Aimee communicates and engages with all team members and values everyone's opinions and contributions. She has built a positive workplace culture, leads by example and encourages the department to work together as a team with shared goals of patient safety. I say well done to Aimee Petersen for being an outstanding individual and a positive team leader at the Wyong Hospital Pharmacy.

PAUL HOGAN

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (16:41:35): On Monday 17 August 2020 Goulburn High School bid farewell to its outgoing principal, Paul Hogan. I am advised that Mr Hogan has served the New South Wales public education system for an impressive 37 years across six schools. In each of those roles he has demonstrated a significant commitment to the learning and wellbeing of students, staff and the wider school community. On behalf of the Goulburn community, I express our sincerest gratitude to Mr Hogan for his contributions to Goulburn High School since 2017. Although his tenure was relatively short, he has certainly made a significant positive impact to the school through the provision of an inclusive, future-focused learning culture that has been established to promote high expectations for all as well as explicit teaching and instructional leadership. He successfully led the school through some very complex challenges calmly and professionally. I wish Mr Hogan all the very best for the future.

LEE-ANNE CURBY AND BRIE ROGERS

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:42:40): Thanks ever so much to Lee-Anne Curby and Brie Rogers who administer our Gosford and Peninsula Neighbourhood Community Alerts page on Facebook. I take my hat off to Lee-Anne and Brie for their commitment and diligence in keeping our community informed and up to date. Both local women are hardworking volunteers who have their fingers on many aspects of the community pulse. They do an incredible job of ensuring that information and comments are respectful and inclusive. The Facebook page is often used by many members as a forum to discuss breaking local, national and even international stories. Members share their opinions in an understanding and tolerant virtual environment. I encourage my community to continue to engage in stories and to notify my office should they wish to hear my thoughts on various matters. Again I thank Lee-Anne and Brie and all of the community members who moderate community information pages on Facebook with the purpose of caring for and informing communities across New South Wales.

CENTRAL WEST LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (16:43:33): A team from the Central West Leadership Academy, based in Dubbo, has qualified for the national final of the Future Problem Solving academic competition. The team of Carrigan Baker, Imogen Bassett, Finn Randell and Noah Randell has competed in this competition for three years. Through their hard work and dedication they are now recognised as being one of the top Future Problem Solving teams in the nation. The competition sees teams research a problem before being presented with a future scenario that they need to solve. Students have two hours to identify 16 problems from a variety of categories, identify an underlying problem, create 16 solutions to the underlying problem, evaluate and rank their solutions and then make an action and implementation plan. It is pretty serious stuff. More than 150 teams were involved in the age bracket being contested by the team from the Central West Leadership Academy. Out of a total of 254 teams that contested the competition, only 40 have made the national finals. The event will be held remotely this year due to COVID. I wish Carrigan, Imogen, Finn and Noah all the best.

ROTARY RIDE & RUN BUNKER & BACK

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:44:40): I thank the members of the Rotary Club of Rutherford Telarah and all others who took part in this weekend's Ride & Run Bunker & Back event in support of the Hunter Medical Research Institute [HMRI]. This year funds raised from the event will support the HMRI's sports concussion clinic and the Jill Emberson memorial fund's research into ovarian cancer. The event was held through farm country at Tocal, with runners and riders giving way to cows and horses while navigating hills and creeks. Participants choosing pedal power were given the option of riding 15, 30 or 45 kilometres. Those on two feet faced a 15-kilometre run. More than 150 people turned out and many topped up their entry fees with additional

donations, meaning that the Bunker & Back is well on track to hit its \$8,000 fundraising target. I thank everyone who gave their time, money and, most importantly, effort to make the event such a great success in support of two important research projects.

GLENWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:45:37): I am pleased to congratulate the Glenwood High School Parents and Citizens Association and in particular President Karen Bonnell for achieving a phenomenal outcome with the establishment of the brand-new Glenwood High School fitness centre. The project was kickstarted in 2018 with a successful application through the Community Building Partnership program. The centre is a combined indoor-outdoor facility with an impressive range of fitness equipment for students to use. Aiming to promote mental and physical wellbeing, the fitness centre will play a part in helping students make positive choices about their bodies as well as in other areas of their lives. Programs will focus on positive social and recreational outcomes for boys and girls and will promote student participation, inclusion and involvement. I congratulate and thank the Glenwood High School Parents and Citizens Association and the school on this fantastic project, which will serve students well for years to come.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (16:46:28): On 10 September I joined the online Lunch with a Legend, organised by Northern Rivers Lifeline community engagement coordinator Catherine Bird, to talk about suicide. The guest speaker, Wayne Wigham from the Balmain Tigers, spoke via Zoom frankly and inspirationally about suicide and depression. He described his personal circumstances but broadened his speech to include how people could help. We know that suicide is far too common but we forget that every year more people die from suicide than in road accidents. John Brogden, AM, chairman of Lifeline and a former New South Wales Opposition leader, wrote about it eloquently in *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

CHERTSEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:47:38): I acknowledge the involvement of students at Chertsey Primary School in helping to shape Leagues Club Field, which is a \$10 million regional play space and park that the Government is creating in Gosford. In July I had the pleasure of meeting with Chertsey Primary School principal Sarah Baldwin and four very special students: Alexis and Olivia Kristidis and Samuel and Elijah Jackson. These students, along with their classmates, quite literally lend a hand by tracing their hands onto a piece of paper. The handprints have now been painted onto hardwood totem poles by Darkinjung artists and I am pleased to inform the House that the totem poles will be installed at Leagues Club Field next week. It is very exciting that COVID-19 has not slowed the work; construction is powering along. When completed, this space in the heart of Gosford will be transformed. It will feature picnic areas, play equipment, a sporting field, pathways, a tidal pool and more. I know that the students at Chertsey Primary School cannot wait.

IRIS FOUNDATION

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (16:48:44): The Iris Foundation on the Central Coast is an organisation that helps to reduce the risk of suicide by facilitating and supporting awareness campaigns and programs. Recently the Iris Foundation ran Connections 2x2 resilience workshops for students aged 9 to 14. These workshops engage young people in creative projects that encourage them to explore their identity, boosting self-esteem and improving problem-solving strategies and connectedness. Local business Sunshine Gifting Co donated \$5 from every order in May to support the workshops and Wyong Bendigo Bank funded 10 of the workshops for local primary schools. The Iris Foundation also created the Box of Hope, which includes items that symbolise those times when we want to reach out to someone. Sunshine Gifting Co distributed each box. It is great to see local businesses like Sunshine Gifting Co, Wyong Bendigo Bank and the Iris Foundation working together during this difficult time to support our community.

JOHN FORD

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (16:49:47): I recognise the work of Junee farmer John Ford, who has turned his passion for local produce into a vital source of food security for people in need. Mr Ford has been named the 2020 NSW Volunteer of the Year for the Riverina by the Centre for Volunteering for his work in the community. He founded the Wagga Wagga chapter of OzHarvest eight years ago, collecting quality excess food from local commercial outlets. He now leads a group of 20 volunteers who collect more than 70,000 kilos of food each year which is then turned into 200,000 home-cooked meals and supplied to 16 local charities. Mr Ford also founded the Junee community Open Kitchen, which provides hampers for vulnerable families in the community. I thank him for his remarkable work in our local food supply chain, where he quite literally has a hand from paddock to plate.

SOUTHERN ETTALONG UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:50:51): Saturdays in the sunshine at James Brown Oval watching Southern Ettalong United Football Club are fabulous. I was privileged to listen to the pre-game pep talk given by supercoach Carl Teeves to the under-12 team. They played an awesome game against an all-girls team from Kincumber, with spirits lifting in the second half to record a great 3-1 victory. I congratulate everyone on the team and I give a shout-out to the scorers: Kainoa and Evan with two goals. I am always a fan of inclusion and Southern does a great job. I was thrilled to hear that Riley Martin, an awesome player of short stature, won the man of the match for the day. In the under-12 firsts the Kincumber team was stronger and it was lovely to see my good friend's son Cooper score a goal even though he was playing for the opposition. I congratulate all at Southern. We are looking forward to the completion of the women's changing rooms and we love the sense of community that the club members take onto the field every single week.

JOHN DOUGLAS

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (16:51:54): I congratulate the NSW Volunteer of the Year from the southern Sydney region, John Douglas of Bonnet Bay. John has been volunteering in our local community for decades. For more than 40 years he has contributed his time to Wanda Surf Life Saving Club, dedicating himself to making the beach a safer place by training hundreds of nippers and coaching rescue and resuscitation operations. John has also volunteered off the beach and on the court and field, coaching St Joseph's Catholic Primary School's basketball and junior rugby league teams. He even kept our community safe as a local volunteer firefighter, forming part of the volunteer community effort against the infamous Jannali and Como bushfire of 1994. Earlier this month John's contribution to the community was deservedly recognised by the Centre for Volunteering. Although he has not spent so many years volunteering to receive such commendations, I am pleased that his efforts have been acknowledged. I thank John for his years of service to our community and I extend my best wishes to him for the future.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN GILBERT

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (16:52:50): Last year I announced \$30 million worth of emergency New South Wales Government funding for Dubbo Regional Council to investigate and roll out expanded bore water and groundwater services for the local government area. The announcement was made at the John Gilbert Water Treatment Plant in south Dubbo, which was named after an engineer who played a pivotal role during a 30-year career in local government between 1953 and 1983. Sadly, John Gilbert passed away recently at the age of 97. He is remembered for overseeing upgrades to both the water and sewage treatment plants in Dubbo and for introducing water-softening technology to overcome the Macquarie River's water hardness issues. At a time when Dubbo was still quite a small town, he advocated for the development of infrastructure that could cope with its expansion into a major regional city. He was a visionary and we have him to thank for much of the water access in Dubbo. John Gilbert is survived by his wife, Margaret, and children Sue, John and Kent. I pass on my most sincere condolences to them.

MAITLAND REGIONAL ART GALLERY

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:53:53): I acknowledge the winners of the 2020 Brenda Clouten Memorial Travelling Scholarship for young achievers in the visual arts, which was held recently at Maitland Regional Art Gallery. Judges Alex Seton and Vicki Woods were so challenged by the quality of the works that not only did they award the \$5,000 first prize to Karri McPherson and the \$3,000 second prize to Bronte Naylor, they also awarded their first ever highly commended prize to Liz O'Brien. The Maitland Regional Art Gallery is really going well at the moment. It currently has six exhibitions, showcasing the work of 90 artists. New director Gerry Bobsien is doing a wonderful job getting the gallery reopened to the public post-COVID.

ABBEY EMERTON

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (16:54:38): Today I congratulate young Abbey Emerton of Goulburn, a senior Mulwaree High School student, on her efforts in the Australian Country Junior Basketball Cup. Earlier this year Abbey represented Goulburn in the under-18s country tournament for the NSW Kookaburras, a team renowned for including the best of the best, with many of its players going on to compete at the national level. As a local player for the Goulburn Bears, I know we will see great things from Abbey in the future. Well done, Abbey. You have done your home town proud. Keep up the great work.

HAWKESBURY RACE CLUB

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (16:55:14): Whilst I am not a betting girl, I was happy to bet that a visit to Hawkesbury Race Club Limited with Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation—and racing—Kevin Anderson, would put a smile on his face and he did not disappoint me. We wanted to meet the new CEO,

Ken Rutherford, who took on the job in February—a few weeks before COVID-19 hit. Ken is one of the Hawkesbury's best-kept secrets. He is a world champion cricketer, having captained the New Zealand cricket team back in the 1990s. Minister Anderson had followed his career and shared some recollections of that great cricketing period as they chatted. I offer Ken Rutherford a big welcome to Hawkesbury. I am looking forward to the spring carnival, COVID-19 style.

GLOBAL SISTERS

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:56:09): Today I commend the incredible work of an Australian NGO, Global Sisters. I congratulate the organisation on the opening of its Sister School program on the Central Coast. This 10-week program gives women the tools and encouragement to start their businesses and participate in the local economy. So far, Global Sisters has been instrumental in starting 333 businesses and supporting 379 women in earning an income. It is excellent to see accomplished local women like Kristy Fox and Adelle Laing utilise their skills and experience in business and advocacy to uplift women in our region to pursue their goals. I thank these women and Global Sisters for their contributions to my community and countless others across Australia. I cannot wait to see the excellent businesses that will emerge from our local Sister School and to work with them to make women on the Central Coast more powerful.

SUTHERLAND TITANS FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (16:57:01): I acknowledge the wonderful Sutherland Titans Football Club for its commitment to ensuring that all children in our community can enjoy and play football. Founded in 2006, the Titans are a unique club doing big things for kids with special needs by getting them involved in games with mainstream teams who have byes in the Sutherland Shire Football Association competitions each weekend. Playing football in a structured environment allows members to develop confidence in their abilities, whilst the friendly interaction between the Titans and mainstream teams develops the sportsmanship of all players and epitomises our community spirit and inclusive culture.

Of course, the Titans would not be the resounding success they have become without the dedication of all parents and volunteers. I recognise the efforts of committee members, president George Lazarou, secretary Lisa Brown, treasurer Gary Lockwood, registrar Steven Burke and member protection information officer Sophie Evans. I commend the Sutherland Titans Football Club for being the largest football club of its type in New South Wales and for providing an environment where everyone can simply have fun and participate in football.

DAVE MARTIN CRICKET NETS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (16:58:01): Recently I helped officially open the upgraded Dave Martin cricket nets in Dubbo. It was not only a great chance to create a wonderful facility for the city's junior and senior players, but also a great opportunity to find out a bit more about the man the nets are named after. Dave Martin sadly could not make the opening but a group of his old cricketing mates came along and shared some amazing stories. After arriving in Dubbo in 1973, Dave won multiple premierships with the rugby and CYMS clubs. In 1975 he captained a New South Wales country side that took on the West Indies in Dubbo. That Windies side featured the likes of Michael Holding, Lance Gibbs, Gordon Greenidge and the Master Blaster himself, Viv Richards. Dave was also an esteemed coach who assisted with the formation of the New South Wales country under-17s program. He also got involved in the administrative side of the game. To say that he dedicated a vast amount of his life to cricket would be an understatement. He was also very involved with council and sport. I thank Dave for his commitment to the sport. I hope he gets a chance to visit the newly upgraded nets that are rightfully named after him very soon.

RYE PARK-BOOROWA RED CROSS

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (16:59:04): Today I recognise the Rye Park-Boorowa branch of the Red Cross. Located in my electorate of Goulburn, the branch recently donated \$1,000 to the breakfast club at Boorowa Central School. This club is supported by volunteer efforts and is always endeavouring to make improvements to the community through local causes and fundraising. The money was raised by the branch at a Father's Day raffle in August last year and the Red Cross looked for a local cause to donate the money to. Each morning volunteers at Boorowa Central School serve breakfast to students who arrive early. The breakfast club is an important initiative that gives students a better chance to succeed in the classroom. The amazing efforts and many hours spent by the Rye Park-Boorowa branch of the Red Cross are quite significant, and I publicly congratulate all those involved.

TRIBUTES TO RICHMOND VALLEY IDENTITIES SHIRLEY WHEATLEY AND CHARLIE COX OAM

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—The Richmond Valley and Northern Rivers are mourning the loss of two former civic leaders – Shirley Wheatley and Charlie Cox OAM. Shirley was elected to the former Casino Municipal Council and served on this council for nine years, including as Deputy Mayor in 1998 and 1999. The marriage celebrant served another 12 years with the amalgamated Richmond Valley Council, including Deputy Mayor in 2000, 2002, 2008 and 2011. She was awarded Life Membership of the NSW Public Libraries Association in 2011. My fondest memory of Shirley is when we burnt the rubber in the 'Old Girls' division of Roger Wood's drag races in Casino. What a lark! A school teacher, Charlie Cox served for 14 years as a councillor, including eight as Mayor of the Casino Municipal and Richmond Valley councils. As Federal Member for Page, I worked with Charlie on securing the Evans Head Pool, Casino CBD upgrade and the Casino Community Centre. I recall taking Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to meet with Secretary Charlie and other Casino Men's Shed members during the 2013 Federal election. I extend my sincere sympathies to Robyn, Anthony, Dean and their families.

TRIBUTE TO JOY COOPER, NURSE, ADVENTURER AND AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY STALWARTS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I wish to honour my friend Joy Cooper, who passed away recently and who would have turned 81 today. Condolences to her partner and my friend Bruce Dorrell. Joy had a career as a psych nurse in her native New Zealand before relocating to Australia in the mid-1970s with her three children David, Linnele and Daryl. Joy met Bruce at Hobart's Customs House Hotel during post-race celebrations following the 1981 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race. Bruce was a crew member of Newcastle boat Helsal II. Bruce, who sailed in seven Hobarts, invited Joy to return to Sydney on Helsal II, and she accepted 'high heels and all'. It was the start of a long and loving relationship full of adventure. The couple spent four years on the motor cruiser Sea Angel, dividing their time between Hamilton Island and East Coast ports. Settling in Evans Head in 1990, Bruce had a prawn trawler for several years before they became active members of the Australian Labor Party's Grafton and Richmond Valley branches. In 2018, they were recognised for their service to the ALP as joint recipients of the Val Melville Award.

ST EUPHEMIA CHURCH

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I was delighted to visit the St Euphemia Greek Orthodox Church, where I had the opportunity to view the progress being made on the replacement of the Church's roof. In 2017, St Euphemia received a \$40,000 Community Building Partnership (CBP) grant to fund the replacement of the existing roof. St Euphemia, which functions through the authority of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia, plays an essential role in serving the spiritual and community needs of the Bankstown area, and through its adjoining school St Euphemia College is also a vital educational institution in the area. I was pleased to support St Euphemia in securing this funding, and I would like to acknowledge the Parish Priest Reverend Father Panagiotis Protosaltis, St Euphemia College Principal Reverend Father Peter Mavrommatis, and St Euphemia President Christos Spiropoulos for their efforts in progressing through the CBP application process, and for their subsequent work bringing this project to fruition.

BIRRONG SPORTS FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I was very pleased to attend a recent match at Birrong Sports Football Club, following a long suspension of local sporting competitions this year in compliance with COVID-19 restrictions. Birrong Sports Football Club was one of many sporting clubs across the local area to have been severely impacted by the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, which forced the widespread temporary shutdown of sporting clubs. Birrong Sports Football Club warmly welcomed the recent easing of social distancing restrictions, which permitted the resumption of their local competition, and the many health and social benefits that sport provides for individuals and the community at large. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Birrong Sports Football Club President Mr Tyrone Wait, Secretary Ms Michelle Davis, Treasurer Ms Ann Wait, and Ms Mel Clare. I commend them for steering the club through the COVID-19 pandemic, and ensuring it was prepared to resume its activities as soon as possible. I am proud to offer my support for Birrong Sports Football Club and wish them well as they continue their wonderful service to our local community.

MARK HUTCHINGS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I would like to congratulate St Clair resident Mark Hutchings on being named the 2020 NSW Volunteer of the Year for the Sydney Outer West Region and the Adult Volunteer of the Year. Mark has been serving the local community for over 29 years and devoted thousands of hours to the first aid provider St John Ambulance NSW. Mark's passion and love for serving the community has provided him with many wonderful opportunities to try new things and has proven that you can care for other members of society

without needing to be paid. Mark is now encouraging others to consider volunteering in any capacity. His example has shown that even a few hours every month can make a world of difference to organisations, community members or businesses. Congratulations Mark on receiving this prestigious award. Thank you for all the hours you have put into volunteering for the community and I wish you all the best as you continue to help those around you.

MAHASANGH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FORUM

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—I recently had the pleasure of joining the Mahasangh group for their free online training session for volunteers to support victims of domestic violence. This session was part of their ongoing "Making me Matter" program over Zoom and was co-hosted with the Cumberland Women's Health Centre (CWHC). CWHC Principal Ms Salwa Al Baz educated a well-attended audience about various aspects of domestic violence and answered participants queries related to different situations. Salwa discussed strategies to identify environments where violence can occur and explained the intergenerational cycles of abuse that flow from domestic violence. Mahasangh formed recently and is driven by a desire to serve the community. It is an entirely volunteer run organisation. I commend them for their efforts thus far and I especially commend them for working with CWHC to ensure volunteers are well trained to provide appropriate advice and referrals when dealing with domestic violence. It was an honour to be able to speak to attendees and to underline the importance of the work that Mahasangh is doing to educate their community about this insidious problem. On behalf of our community, I wish to say thanks to Mahasangh for their continued tireless efforts.

RESTORE CHURCH

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the work of the Restore Church within my electorate of Castle Hill. As well as holding religious services, the Church provides charitable assistance to the Castle Hill Community, operating an Op-Shop, Community Assistance and Food Relief. As well as this, their youth groups have assisted the homeless in Sydney giving out homemade care packages, as well as raising money to ensure access to clean drinking water for the underprivileged in Zimbabwe. It was recently my pleasure to assist them in upgrading their kitchen such that their community groups and charitable endeavours can be pursued with the safest and most up to date appliances. They received \$30,000 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 continued running of the church, including Adrian & Heather Jackson, Jakin and Hannah Mai, Natalie & Mark Turley, Tom and Chloë Lewis, Lauren Josiah and Caitlin Noble.

ROUSE HILL ANGLICAN CHURCH

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the work of the Rouse Hill Anglican Church within my electorate of Castle Hill. The Church is a stalwart of the Hills Community, providing not just worship services, but also pastoral care to parishioners, English Language Classes and youth groups. The Church also supports missionary work, primarily in the Northern Territory Town of Katherine. It was recently my pleasure to assist them in upgrading the floors within their facility at the historic Christ Church built in 1863, which is one of the oldest surviving buildings in Rouse Hill. The new flooring in both the Auditorium and Church Hall will ensure a greater level of accessibility for the church. They received \$15,613 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 continued running of the church, including Graeme Howells, Carla Matthews, Glenjamin Elsegood, Natalie Walker, Rick Mason, Mitchell Albert and Brian Rennie.

SURF LIFE SAVING NSW STATE OPERATION CENTRE BELROSE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—Surf Life Saving NSW (SLSNSW) will be better prepared for the upcoming season after the official opening of the new state-of-the-art State Operations Centre in my electorate of Belrose. The facility will support beach patrols and emergency management at 129 Surf Life Saving Clubs across the State. The construction of the \$550,000 centre was funded by the NSW Government as part of a \$16 million investment into Surf Life Saving NSW over four years. The State Operations Centre will help the 20,000 volunteer surf lifesavers in NSW respond to critical incidents and also to enforce COVID-19 social distancing requirements as they patrol our beaches this summer. With near record drownings last summer and a significant increase in boating fatalities, the technology in this modern facility in Belrose, fills a vital need and will help save lives on the water. This summer, Surf Lifesavers will also play a pivotal role in coordinating COVID-19 responses over the summer months and the new State Operations Centre will be crucial in monitoring beach attendance. The Surf Life Saving summer patrol season officially begins on Saturday 26 September. I commend all involved.

NORTHERN SUBURBS FOOTBALL

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)—Today I would like to acknowledge the amazing work of the Northern Suburbs Football Association to ensure they got a season of soccer in this year. The Association has 2,800 players across the Hornsby region with 6 clubs based in my electorate of Hornsby. Amongst those clubs are hundreds of volunteers. Committee Members, team managers and coaches, volunteer referees and BBQ hands – these clubs are run on the hard work and dedication of these amazing volunteers. I want to thank each and every volunteer big and small who has contributed to the soccer season this year. I would also like to thank Chief Executive Officer Edward Ferguson for all his hard work this season to ensure games went ahead COVID safe. Players may have faced a few more safety rules but the important thing was they got to play. Playing soccer allows kids and adults a chance to improve their health and fitness as well as connecting with their team mates. Congratulations Northern Suburbs Football on a short but sweet 2020 season and I look forward to seeing you on the pitch in 2021.

ASQUITH VIEW CLUB

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)—Asquith VIEW Club is one of many VIEW clubs across the country celebrating 60 years of this wonderful organisation in Australia. VIEW stands for Voice, Interests and Education of Women and they aim to help women of any age to make long lasting friendships while also helping disadvantaged children. Our local VIEW Club in Asquith was formed in 1988 and it currently has 37 members and they meet on the third Wednesday of every month at Asquith Golf Club. The group currently sponsors four disadvantaged children in our community and they have an ongoing commitment to providing financial support for a child's mental health, school supplies and ongoing wellbeing. The Asquith VIEW Club is a wonderful organisation and I thank all of their members for the support they have given to help disadvantaged children in our community.

KHAWLAH ASMAA ALBAF

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I would like to thank Khawlah Asmaa Albaf, a student at Young High School who was selected as one of 18 representatives for the NSW Regional Taskforce for her dedication to the role. Khawlah was also recognised as the Rural and Regional Champion of the Year at the Innate Power of Women forum hosted by the Community Migrant Resource Centre at Parramatta on March 2. Khawlah was recognised for her skills and dedication to eradicate stereotypes and improve life opportunities and outcomes for young people. Khawlah has also attended the UN Youth State Conference 2020 where participants debated world issues including maternal health. Thank you Khawlah, you are an inspirational young lady and have set a shining example for youth not only in the Cootamundra Electorate but state wide.

GRENFELL PANTHERS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Grenfell Panthers, the local Rugby team have finished their season with a win against defending premiers the Cootamundra Tricolours. Congratulations to the team who played a tight game but ultimately came out with a win. The team were awarded the Sprocket Challenge Cup. Congratulations to those who were awarded best players – Frazer Ryder, Jeremy Montgomery and Charlie Mitton. Congratulations also to Jeremy Montgomery on being awarded Players' Player and the Bill Eastaway medal. With COVID-19 posing some difficult challenges for local sport this year, it is wonderful to see some of our local teams kicking goals.

QUINN AND LUKE

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—I would like to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate Quinn Darragh and Luke Stewart, two fantastic locals who have raised over \$130,000 for Running for Premature Babies. Quinn and Luke both challenged themselves to swim across the English Channel in support of this wonderful charity, a 36km swim in very cold water from England to France. They set themselves this challenge to support a cause close to their hearts. Quinn's son Ryder was born prematurely at 27 weeks at The Royal, and he survived thanks to state of the art lifesaving equipment donated by Running for Premature Babies. Quinn and Luke both took on a truly incredible challenge, and the money they raised will enable the charity to purchase neonatal equipment that will make a difference to the lives of so many families, including those in some of Australia's most vulnerable communities. I would like to again congratulate Quinn and Luke for their tremendous efforts, and for their contribution to our community. In addition to raising funds and awareness Quinn swam the channel in 9hr 36m, the fastest time of the season! Congratulations Quinn what an effort!

MARGARET SKAGIAS AND CARINGKIDS

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—Today I highlight the work of an inspiring local woman, Margaret Skagia and congratulate her on nomination for a Westfield Local Hero award. Margaret founded and runs a charity

called CaringKids, who provide Toy Boxes to young people caring for a family member with a disability or chronic illness, to provide the tools for them to learn, play and read. In her previous role as a social worker, Margaret recognised the unique contribution that many Australian children make in caring for their parents and siblings. These unsung heroes pick up many domestic duties like housework, shopping, cooking, personal hygiene care as well as liaising with health professionals and managing sometimes very complex financial matters. In 2014, Margaret founded volunteer-run CaringKids and she and her team continue to make up toy boxes for young carers so they can feel their contribution and role is honoured and recognised. Margaret and CaringKids are ensuring that generations of kids are able to be provided care as well as enjoy school, socialising with friends, playing sports and just be kids! People can donate their pre-loved toys at the Coogee Electorate Office. Congratulations Margaret and best of luck.

JOANNA BAILEY

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, I put out the call for community volunteers to help some of our local residents who were in the high risk categories who needed assistance with things like groceries or paying bills. One of the dozens of people who answered that call was Joanna Bailey, a Maryland local. Joanna is a mother of five children, works full time and studies at Newcastle University. Joanna and her family live by the motto always looking out for other people when you can, not just yourself. She just wanted to help out where she could. Joanna helped out one of Wallsend's elderly citizens, Dorothy. She did the shopping for Dorothy, collecting groceries, paying her bills and making sure she was okay throughout her period of isolation. Joanna and Dorothy formed a great friendship and I know Dorothy was very appreciative of Joanna's assistance. Thank you Joanna for all your efforts in caring for our community.

NEW FM 105.3 RUOK DAY

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Not everything in life goes the way we planned and when it doesn't, it's good to have close friends and family that you can talk to. Whether it's about something serious or something not so serious, it's just good to have those conversations. 2020 has been a challenging year. Possibly the most challenging in our lifetime and it's important that we support one another by reaching out and checking with our friends, family, colleagues and team mates, asking "R U OK?" That single question could change someone's life! R U OK? is an Australian suicide prevention charity with a mission to inspire and empower everyone to meaningfully connect with the people around them and to support anyone struggling with life. On 10 September 105.3 NEWFM practically became R U OK? FM, dedicating the whole day to people sharing personal stories, messages of support and information on how to get, and how to give help to people around us. Congratulations to all the staff at 105.3 NEWFM for delivering this important message to Newcastle and the Hunter. Special thanks Luke Hetherington, the Novos aka Jade, Matty and Krivo for all their efforts.

RONALD CALMAN EMERGENCY SERVICES MEDAL

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—I rise to honour the contributions of Mr Ronald Calman to the local community and congratulate him on being awarded the Emergency Services Medal, as part of the 2020 Queens Birthday Honours. Mr Calman has served the community for more than six decades, saving lives on the water. Over this time, he has served as the Captain of the Toowoong Bay Surf Life Saving Club; the founding Commander of the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association Swansea flotilla; the Division Commander of the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol at Lake Macquarie; an officer in the NSW Police Marine Area Command; and most recently, as the Unit Commander of Marine Rescue Newcastle. Mr Calman was Master of the Marine Rescue NSW vessel tasked with retrieving two people who tragically died when their catamaran capsized off the coast of Stockton. I thank Mr Calman for his dedication in serving our local community.

CHRISTOPHER BROWN

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—I rise to recognise the work and dedication of Mr Christopher Brown to the Swansea community. Mr Brown has served as the Centre Coordinator – Communications, Services and Resources at Belmont Neighbourhood Centre, for the last nine years. Belmont Neighbourhood Centre is a valued community institution that provides services including a community pantry, legal aid, gambling help and the Habitat in Harmony Community Garden. Over the last nine years Mr Brown has been a driving force behind many of the Centre's initiatives. I thank Mr Brown for his service and dedication to the community and Belmont Neighbourhood Centre.

RURAL YOUTH AMBASSADOR PILOT PROGRAM

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise students from the Northern Tablelands who have been nominated as delegates for the NSW Government's Inaugural Rural Youth Ambassador Pilot Program. The Program will immerse 28 Year 11 students from across the State in six months of leadership development, advocacy and learning, providing them with the

opportunity to share ideas and become a voice for their schools, communities and areas where they live. I commend Jordan Briggs and Natalija Stanjovcic of Moree High School, Abigail Cheetham and Lily King of Macintyre High School, Rachel Coulton, Cassidy Hobday and Jackie Woodward of Warialda High School, Lachlan Hampton of Inverell High School and Cordelia Lloyd of Guyra High School on their nominations. I wish each of these students all the best for the commencement of the Program which will see them emerge as more confident, well-connected and inspired leaders helping to shape the futures of their rural and regional communities.

ST GEORGE & SUTHERLAND SHIRE BRANCH OF THE COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the St George and Sutherland Shire Branch of the Country Women's Association, who consistently donate generously to the Share the Dignity, Dignity Drives. The March drive was hugely successful this year, in which my electorate office in Mortdale is a collection point for donations, and has been for the past few years. Share the Dignity is a not for profit organisation which provides sanitary products for women and girls in crises, including homelessness, domestic violence shelters and other female shelters. The organisation collects thousands of sanitary products each year through its bi-annual Dignity Drives for women in need. I want to thank the women of the St George and Sutherland Shire Branch of the Country Women's Association for their generous donation to this important cause, and in particular the Association's current President Ms Marilyn Mar, for her continued support. I am sure their contribution will be received generously by the women and girls most vulnerable in our community.

LEARNING LINKS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge and congratulate Learning Links on their unwavering dedication to improving the educational opportunities of our young people. Learning Links was established in 1972 by a group of parents who were concerned about the lack of appropriate education and support services to meet their children's needs. Today, Learning Links assists almost 4,000 children to reach their learning goals, taking a holistic approach that focuses on ongoing collaboration, empowerment, integrity and excellence. Their innovative work has meant many local children are now able to realise their full potential and lead lives unencumbered by learning difficulties and disabilities. Speaker, organisations like Learning Links are essential for our community. They ensure our future generations are confident in their abilities and develop a life-long love of learning. On behalf of my community, I would like to thank Learning Links' Chair Greg Wallace, CEO Birgitte Maibom, and the rest of the Learning Links team for their commitment to creating a future generation that is ready to take on the world.

CAMPBELLTOWN HARLEQUINS

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—One thing the Campbelltown community is famous for is its passion for all sports. Rugby league, netball, cricket, soccer, baseball, swimming – there isn't a code we don't love. But one of the biggest and most anticipated days on the local sporting calendar has to be the cross-town derby between the Campbelltown Harlequins Rugby Club and Camden Rugby. Both the Campbelltown and Camden fixtures are events that really should not be missed. While COVID-19 brought a halt to community sport for a matter of months, it was great to see it back recently – and it was even better to see the Harlequins host Camden at Campbelltown Showground. The passion of the players and supporters on both sides is always obvious for all to see. While it's great to have a win on others' home turf, there is nothing worse than losing when at your home ground. Thankfully that didn't happen, with the mighty Quinnies coming away convincing winners, 31-17. The victory was even sweeter given the hiatus of local sport. Well done to the mighty Quinnies on a great victory – here's to another one home ground win in 2021.

ST HELENS PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—The Campbelltown community takes so much pride in our locals schools. The teachers, staff, students, parents, carers and volunteers all make tremendous contributions to ensure our schools run efficiently and look great. It's a devastating blow when something happens – like a fire – that undoes that hard work. Well a couple of weeks ago, that's exactly what happened at St Helens Park Primary School. A fire ripped through the school, badly damaging two classrooms occupied by kindergarten and Year One classes. Despite the destruction, it was heartening to see our community once again rise to the occasion and help those in need. Since the fire the Campbelltown and wider Macarthur community has stepped up to the plate to assist the school, its staff and students. Firstly, staff got together to buy gifts for the school's students. Then students from Elderslie Public School – located in the neighbouring electorate of Camden – sent 500 paper hearts to the school. Students from Yandelora School in Narellan also provided books and games for the students. On behalf of the Campbelltown community, thank you to everyone who has helped out school during the past couple of weeks.

HEALTHWISE NSW AND FRESH AT 110

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise the commitment staff of HealthWISE NSW and Fresh at 110 have shown in starting a conversation around mental health on R U OK? Day on Thursday 10 September 2020. HealthWISE provided free coffee in coffee shops throughout the region including Armidale based Fresh at 110 in an effort to work with local country businesses and give customers a well-deserved break. The free coffee came with a reminder to check in with friends and family as part of R U OK? Day and World Suicide Prevention Day. Customers were also offered resources on how to start a conversation on mental health and information on a free Hunter New England Central Coast PHN counselling service called Mind Health. I commend the staff members of Fresh at 110, David Lawson, Rachel Goodwin, Ebony Platford and Murray Challacombe as well as the entire team of HealthWISE for this incredibly important initiative that encourages every Australian to start a conversation that could ultimately save a life and make a positive difference to the health and wellbeing of our communities.

BAULKHAM HILLS FIRE STATION VISIT

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—I rise to speak on the great investments in emergency services for the Seven Hills Electorate. As all Australians know, New South Wales communities were faced with catastrophic fires over the 2019 to 2020 summer. For many, the New South Wales Rural Fire Service, alongside New South Wales Fire and Rescue, was the only thing between their homes and devastation. Earlier this month, I visited the 067 Baulkham Hills Fire and Rescue Station to celebrate the arrival of a new pumper truck with Minister for Police and Emergency Services, David Elliot, alongside the Commissioner for Fire and Rescue New South Wales, Paul Baxter. The pumper truck is able to supply up to 4000 litres of water per minute, featuring a compressed air foam system. This truck will directly benefit constituents of the Seven Hills Electorate situated close to Toongabbie Creek, Quarry Branch Creek and Darling Mills Creek who were on alert for bushfires last December. These suburbs include Northmead, North Rocks, Old Toongabbie, and Winston Hills. I thank our local firefighters for their on-going, courageous work to keep my community safe.

WAVES AQUATIC CENTRE

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—Today, I seek to acknowledge the commencement of the Parramatta Waves Aquatic Centre project. This August, myself, alongside The Hills Shire Mayor Dr Michelle Byrne were given the great honour of turning the sod on this key piece of local infrastructure being delivered for the electorates of Baulkham Hills, Castle Hill and Seven Hills. The new facility will feature a FINA Standard Olympic sized swimming pool with 10 lanes, an outdoor 25 metre pool for those learning to swim, indoor leisure pools and a fitness centre. The centre will be equipped with activities for all ages, with shallow splash pads for infants and a café for those who want to relax. This project is designed to be more accessible and inclusive than ever. This project is one of the many being delivered with the goal of supporting and improving the lives of Seven Hills electorate residents of Baulkham Hills. Thank you to The Hills Shire Mayor and all those who have worked so hard to get this project underway.

OLIVER HOARE

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—I congratulate Oliver Hoare who recently ran the fastest 1500 metres in the US state of Tennessee's history at a time of 3:34:63. Oliver achieved this at the 2020 Music City Distance Carnival in Nashville. This achievement is the result of years of training, hard work and commitment. Oliver began his sporting career as a swimmer but realised he was more suited for athletics. Oliver has rotated training between Sydney and Wisconsin USA depending on seasons. Oliver is no stranger to success; he has been recognised as an 11 time All-American, 9 time Big Ten Champion and a 3 time NCAA Great Lakes All-Region Performer. Oliver also exhibits strong discipline as he juggled between his academic and athletic commitments. Now finished his degree, Oliver has joined the newly formed On Athletics Club to pursue a professional athletics career. Oliver is working towards the Olympics and I wish him all the best in pursuing this goal.

NSW RFS LAKE CATHIE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I rise to welcome the new recruitments of the Lake Cathie NSW Rural Fire Service in my electorate for pledging to serve our community as frontline volunteers for the upcoming bushfire season. As we reflect on the utter devastation caused by the 2019/2020 bushfires that ravaged so much of our regional and rural communities, we remember our courageous volunteer firefighters who tirelessly protected our communities from harm through some of the worst bushfires recorded in living memory. Today, I acknowledge seven new volunteers who will join the ranks of the Lake Cathie Rural Fire Brigade after completing their bush firefighter assessment on 15 August 2020. I applaud the following recruits; Nathaniel Latham, Andrew Brown, Eleese Aitken, Kylie Brown, Paige Colby, Angus Cameron and Ethan Brown for

officially joining the Brigade to play a pivotal role in ensuring our communities are protected in times of danger and distress. During the 2019 bushfire crisis, , Kylie Brown volunteered to undertake the mammoth task of managing the community hub after fires burnt through parts of Lake Innes Nature Reserve. Congratulations again to the seven new recruits who will provide a vital service to our emergency response team.

STEVEN MONAGHAN – SURF LIFE SAVING COACH OF THE YEAR

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I rise to recognise Steven Monaghan from the Wauchope-Bonny Hills Surf Life Saving Club for taking out the highly acclaimed Coach of the Year award at the annual Surf Life Saving NSW presentation on Saturday 29 August. Steve Monaghan is recognised as a stalwart of the Club and is accredited for the way he leads and mentors the members to perform at their absolute best. His training and guidance is clearly achieving positive results as the team has ended the 2019-2020 season strongly in the Mid North Coast Branch and locally within the Wauchope-Bonny Hills Surf Life Saving Club. Chosen from a field of 180 finalists from across the State, Steve was overjoyed to accept the coveted accolade for his dedication and commitment to surf life saving. Steve's passion and vision for Wauchope-Bonny Hills Surf Life Saving Club has largely attributed to the organisations nomination for a series of Surf Life Saving NSW awards including; Surf Sports Team of the Year, Surf Boat Crew The Full Cassowaries and the Community Education Program of the Year accolade. I congratulate Steven for his service and commitment to surf lifesaving in our community.

PAIGE SEATON

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation)—I congratulate 16 year old Tamworth gymnast Paige Seaton who represented NSW at the 2019 Gymnastics Border Challenge. I had the honour of presenting Paige with a NSW Government State Representative Award for this achievement. Paige has also competed at the Australian Gymnastics Championships as a New South Wales representative in 2018. A highlight of Paige's gymnastics career to date was placing second overall in the Women's Gymnastics event at the 2018 Prime International Gymnastics competition in Singapore. In January 2020 Paige travelled to the United States of America to attend the Texas Stars Gymnastics competition where she placed tenth overall. Paige works extremely hard and reaps the benefits of her hard work in her results. Her favourite event is the beam but she competes in all events including vault, bars, beam and floor. Paige is an enthusiastic member of the Tamworth Gymnastics Club and coached by Jan and Steve McGinnity. Jan and Steve also coach over 1000 school children each week and 100 two to five year old children in their kinder gym classes as well as their recreation classes. I commend Paige on her gymnastic achievements and wish her good luck in her future competitions.

AMBER DOWNES

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation)—I congratulate 15-year-old Tamworth gymnast Amber Downes who represented NSW at the 2019 Australian Gymnastics Championships for the second time. I recently presented Amber with a NSW Government State Representative Award for this achievement. Amber also competed at the 2018 Australian Gymnastics Championships and the 2017 Border Challenge as a New South Wales representative. In January 2020 Amber travelled with other gymnasts from Tamworth to the United States of America to attend the Texas Stars Gymnastics competition. Amber came first overall at this international competition which is run by America Olympic gymnasts. Amber puts in a fantastic effort in her training and as a senior member of the Tamworth Gymnastics Club. Her favourite event is the floor and bars but she competes in all events including vault, bars, beam and floor. Amber is coached by Jan and Steve McGinnity at Tamworth Gymnastics Club along with 60 other gymnasts who compete in gymnastics from local, regional and state levels. Well done Amber on your accomplishments in gymnastic and I wish you all the best in your future competitions.

ARTS NORTHERN RIVERS

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—I congratulate Arts Northern Rivers for developing the Auslan Creative program to include the local deaf community in collaborations with artists in music, film, performing arts and dance. The project co-ordinates several Northern Rivers arts enterprises to provide opportunities for the hearing-impaired to create art and explore making music. Among them is Ballina-based Screenworks, which has delivered a series of film-writing workshops facilitated by award-winning filmmaker Karenza Abejer. Participants were given the opportunity to explore creative storytelling ideas with a view to producing a concept document, script and teaser for a short film. The Access and Deaf Awareness professional development session will be delivered by MCA artist educators focusing on the development of accessible gallery programming within the region. The Auslan Tour of the Lismore Regional Gallery is aimed to give deaf adults and their families opportunities to engage with artworks in the Gallery and experience contemporary practices in an art-making session. Deaf contemporary dancer and choreographer Anna Seymour is set to deliver performing arts programme Ritual, Re-Route, Re-Connect, as part of this ground-breaking programme.

SUSAN PERROW

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—I congratulate Susan Perrow on the publication and success of her story *The Little Gnome Who Had to Stay Home*, which is aimed at helping three-to-seven-year-olds understand social distancing and counter some of the fears about COVID-19. Susan, author, teacher trainer, parent educator and therapeutic storyteller, wrote the book in response to hearing people talk about how awful it was to be forced to stay at home, and the constant, potentially terrifying news of a deadly disease threatening the world. Her book embodies a more healthy message for children – that staying home is great, with Little Gnome seen enjoying a range of fun home-based activities, and offers reassurance from nature in the form of "Mother Tree" and ants, birds and rabbits. Susan's free on-line story was downloaded 43,000 times in less than 48 hours. Now it has been translated into 25 languages and made into Waldorf puppet plays, light-box installation and an animated film. It is a timely work, a refreshingly imaginative response to the global health crisis, and of immeasurable usefulness to families all over the world.

BOWRAL LIBRARY

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—Mr Speaker, I would like to recognise the great work of the Bowral Library in this COVID-19 time. Obtaining a library book is about to become even easier for Highland residents with the launch of the Council's new 'Click and Collect' service. Starting on September 17 Council will temporarily roll-out this new service which will follow the pre-existing Mobile Library route and schedule. The new 'Click and Collect' service would allow more patrons to access the library's collection. Current COVID-19 restrictions mean that browsing of the collections in the Mobile Library is not permissible. Council is also aware that not all patrons are physically able to make it into the Bowral branch library. This service provides access to those library customers who still want to catch up on their favourite reads without having to make the trip to the Central Library. All library services including Click and Collect deliveries will be carried out as per NSW Public Health Safety Guidelines.

BRIAN MARTIN

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—Mr Speaker I would like to recognise Mr. Brian Martin affectionately in the Southern Highlands "Mr Cricket". He is widely respected figure and has been rewarded with a wonderful honour. The local community have gone to bat for him and has been given the green light in the renaming of Centennial Park to Brian Martin Oval. Brian is a very humble man who always put the needs of others before his. He's all about unselfishly raising up and working for the cricket community without seeking praise or reward. Brian was instrumental in leading the charge for the redevelopment of the oval 12 years ago he loves the oval and enjoys knowing his beloved Bowral Blues Cricket Club have a place to call home for years to come. The Highlands District Cricket Association (HDCA) weren't going to let the Bowral Blues compete in the competition unless they had an oval. So Brian put all of his energy into this project. Congratulations Brian, this honour is well deserved.

DANIEL VAN KEIMPEMA

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—Mister Speaker, I am proud that the Central Coast has one of the highest rates of volunteering in Australia. This is certainly evident at annual events like the Rotary Districts of NSW Emergency Services Community Awards, where many Finalists are also Central Coast residents. On 24 August, the NSW Government announced that 28 Finalists have been selected for these Awards, and I am delighted that 3 are from the Central Coast. Today, I want to particularly acknowledge Daniel van Keimpema, the Captain of the Central Coast Volunteer Rescue Association at Warnervale, who has been recognised as a Finalist in this year's Awards. I have visited the Volunteer Rescue Association's base at Warnervale a number of times, and I admire how hard they work in sometimes difficult circumstances, particularly when providing vital support during floods and other weather events. Mister Speaker, what these Awards special is that every single award is community-nominated, so I want to again congratulate Daniel for being recognised by his fellow volunteers.

THOMAS KENNEDY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—Mister Speaker, I am proud that the Central Coast has one of the highest rates of volunteering in Australia. This is certainly evident at the Rotary Districts of NSW Emergency Services Community Awards, where many Finalists are also Central Coast residents. On 24 August, the NSW Government announced that 28 Finalists have been selected for these Awards, and it is just fantastic that 3 names out of the 28 names listed are from the Central Coast region. Today, I want to particularly acknowledge Thomas Kennedy, a volunteer at Wamberal Surf Life Saving Club, who has been recognised as a Finalist for the Dot Hennessy OAM Youth Scholarship. The Scholarship of \$1,000 is provided to allow for further career development opportunities or further training, and I want to acknowledge the honour it is for Thomas to be recognised in this way. Mister Speaker, what makes the Rotary Districts of NSW Emergency Services Community

Awards unique is that every single award is community-nominated, so I want to again congratulate Thomas for being recognised by his fellow volunteer lifesavers.

JERSEY DAY IN CAMDEN

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—Jersey Day is a wonderful initiative that is all about promoting awareness of The Organ and Tissue Authority and beginning the conversation between friends and families about Organ Donation. This day has always been embraced by the Camden community and this year was no different. It was an honour to have been able to, along with the rest of my office, take part in donning a jersey and spreading awareness on this important cause. Elsewhere in Camden schools, businesses and individuals all were getting on board and I particularly note Camden High School who through their efforts raised \$900 to donate to this worthy cause. This is a wonderful testament to the community's response to this initiative and I was pleased to have been able to take part in the Jersey Day awareness campaign in Camden.

SANDRA KUBECKA

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—Mr Speaker, for the past 40 years, Sandra Kubecka has been kicking goals in the local government arena. Having been with Camden Council for the past 6 years, she has contributed much to what is one of the fastest growing local government areas in the state. It was for this reason that I could not think of anybody more deserving to have won the Alternative Pathways Award in the 2020 NSW Ministers' Awards for Women in Local Government than Sandra. Right across the Camden Local Government Area, you see the fruits of her work in the projects she has helped come to life. These include included Kirkham BMX park and playing fields, Narellan Sports Hub, Curry Reserve Water Play Space, among many others. Our local community is made better thanks to the exceptionally talented women in our local council and Sandra has been a constant source of inspiration and leadership within Camden Council. The NSW Ministers' Awards for Women in Local Government provide a great opportunity for the community to publicly acknowledge these women and all that they do and I again congratulate Sandra this wonderful achievement.

PYRMONT ULTIMO LANDCARE

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—Yet another inspiring volunteer community group in the Sydney electorate is Pyrmont Ultimo Landcare, which has been clearing weeds and replanting with indigenous plants, recreating wildlife habitat, greening the area and building great community connections in the Pyrmont peninsula. Since 2006 the group has been revegetating the light rail corridor in Pyrmont alongside Saunders Street, the Fish Market Light Rail Stop and the walkways leading to the Wentworth Park Light Rail stop. The latest greening project has added plants to the Maybanke Park upgrade. The revival of these sites shows in the diversity of plants, animals and insects, and it is well worth a wander around the area to enjoy the results of these efforts. Pyrmont Ultimo Landcare is open to residents, students and corporate groups, to learn about local ecology and connect to the local area, along with meeting others with similar values. These activities always rely on people behind the scenes making things happen. On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I thank the committed residents who help make Ultimo and Pyrmont a great place for the community and environment. I encourage others to get involved.

NORTH CRONULLA SLSC AND ELOUERA SLSC – GOTCHA4LIFE ROWING EVENT

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—I congratulate North Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club and Elouera Surf Life Saving Club on their recent fundraising of \$17,800 and \$6,795 respectively for Gotcha4Life mental fitness. From 12 noon 22 August to 12 noon 23 August, North Cronulla SLSC and Elouera SLSC were two of the numerous surf clubs across NSW hosting 24 hour rowing events. Suicide is the leading cause of death for Australians between the ages of 15 and 44. Gotcha4Life is a suicide awareness and prevention charity that champions the idea of mental fitness. Gotcha4Life funds educational workshops, training programmes and products that build mental fitness in communities across Australia. Events such as the 24 hour row provide the opportunity for the community to get involved in a fun day of fitness and conversation for an important cause.

GREG GIBSON

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—Charlestown local Greg Gibson is in the midst of a 2500-kilometre cycling marathon to raise money for the Mark Hughes Foundation. Greg originally planned to ride clear across the continent from Perth to Newcastle, but like many of us had to adjust his plans due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, he's set his sights on crossing New South Wales and raising money for brain cancer research, awareness and support for patients and their families. Greg spoke to the Newcastle Herald from Moree, where he recounted some of his adventures while travelling. Friendly locals across the State have offered their support, with one woman in Glen Innes even offering him a place to stay for the night. He has encountered animals, too—he told the Herald he saw an emu with ten chicks, a tortoise on the road and a six-foot brown snake. Greg, who is 65, was born in South Africa and moved to Australia in the 1980s. He is semi-retired and grew up riding

in the bush in a small town. I congratulate Greg on this extraordinary undertaking and thank him for his tenacity and generosity of spirit.

KEVIN AND BERYL AURELIUS, PLATINUM WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—Today I congratulate Kevin and Beryl Aurelius of Garden Suburb, who celebrated their platinum wedding anniversary on Wednesday 19 August. That's seventy years of marriage, an extraordinary achievement. Unfortunately, they couldn't spend their special day with family due to COVID restrictions. Kevin and Beryl were married in 1950. Kevin was out of work and Beryl lost her job because married women were actively discouraged from working at the time. Despite these challenges, they built a home and a family together, raising three sons. They told the Newcastle Herald that one of the highlights of their marriage was welcoming their first granddaughter. They were excited to have a baby girl into the family after the travails of raising three sons! Now they have six granddaughters and eight great-grandchildren. Now aged 91 and 89, respectively, they still live in their own home. Kevin, a former firefighter, maintains their property and leads an active lifestyle, and Beryl has been exercising her craft skills by making face masks during the COVID-19 pandemic. They are avid rugby league fans, and were involved in Charlestown Junior Rugby League while their boys played for the club in the 1960s.

THE INFANTS' HOME – JOHNSON HOUSE PLAYGROUND

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Kids at the Infants' Home, Ashfield, are loving their newly resurfaced playground at Johnson House, proudly funded through a 2019 Summer Hill CBP grant. Since 1874, The Infants' Home has supported little inner westies from birth through to school, with a particular focus on supporting kids and families with special needs. In addition to their centre based childcare and family day care, the Infants' Home offers postnatal care, hosts community playgroups and runs parent education events. Every Monday, the Infants' Home assists Indigenous women and their kids through their Aboriginal Outreach Service.

The Infants' Home recently celebrated National Early Child Educator Day, recognising the staff's hard work with a well-earned morning tea and goodie bag. The revamped playground means kids from all walks of life are now able to run, jump and play on their newly turfed ground without fear of scraped knees or elbows. Certainly the Covid-19 pandemic has given us a new appreciation of quality open and green spaces, making this new playground an even more significant project for the inner west. I congratulate the staff and community at the Infants' Home on their new playground.

SUE BISHOP

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—I acknowledge the sad passing of local environmentalist Sue Bishop, the founding member of Friends of Ewen Park. For decades, Sue campaigned to preserve precious green spaces in the inner west. She loved the Cooks River and made an immeasurable contribution to improving its health and vitality. Sue fought to save and upgrade picnic areas in Ewen Park, and in 2009, with funding from Canterbury Council, successfully established the Ewen Park Revegetation site. Rain, hail or shine, Sue would be at monthly working bees, rolling up her sleeves, weeding, planting indigenous plants and pulling rubbish from the River, even during her cancer treatments.

Sue's countless Spring picnics brought environmental conscious inner westies of all ages together for a day of fun at the park. Her fight to preserve green space in the inner west and protect the Cooks River lives on through her legacy – our river is slowly but surely returning to health. All of us who enjoy the Cooks River owe Sue a debt of thanks. Sue will be sorely missed and I send my deepest condolences to her beloved family, all those in the Cooks River community, and all those at Friends of Ewen Park.

PATROL CAPTAIN OF THE YEAR, DAVID WINNER

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—I wish to congratulate David Winner from Coalcliff Surf Life Saving Club who was awarded Patrol Captain of the Year 2020 at the annual Surf Life Saving NSW Awards of Excellence on Saturday 29th August. It is an amazing achievement and I would like to thank Mr Winner for his contribution to the community. The Awards of Excellence event celebrates the outstanding achievements of volunteer surf lifesavers and over 180 finalists, joined by their friends, family and the wider Surf Life Saving community, attended the virtual awards ceremony.

SEALING OF THE SILVER CITY HIGHWAY

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—On 1 July 2020, the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads headed out to the North Western corner of New South Wales to commemorate the sealing of the Silver City Highway between Broken Hill and Tibooburra. The people of Tibooburra were certainly pleased with the works and many had thought it would never happen. Works of this nature happen over many years and involve changes of political representations and strong community advocates. I want to acknowledge the drive and determination of the

Pastoralists' Association of West Darling, in particular Mr Peter Beven who was always pushing to get roads fixed and running surfaces bettered, Mr John Elliott who took every opportunity whether in the bush or in Sydney to have the Silver City and the Cobb Highways sealed, Mr Peter Black MP and Mr John Williams MP for their support to achieve this upgrade. It will be a game changer for this area.

MAITLAND'S MOTOR RACING SUCCESS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—I rise to send the best wishes of our community to Christian Mansell, a young man from Bolwarra Heights in Maitland, who recently relocated to the United Kingdom to race in the British Formula 4. Fifteen-year-old Christian is one of the youngest racers to ever take the British F4 grid in its five-year history. Christian is already being hailed as the latest Australian rising star. He claimed his maiden victory on the circuit in August and appears on track to realise his dream of becoming a professional driver. Christian sports number 21, his colours are navy and orange, and he races under the banner of reigning champion team Carlin. A former go-karter, Christian earned this prestigious opportunity after notable performances locally, statewide, nationally and throughout Europe. He has the staunch support of his biggest fans, father Anthony and mum Megan, who have relocated to the UK to be by his side. I look forward to seeing you continue to fly the chequered flag for Maitland, Christian. Good luck!

MAITLAND MIDWIFE NOMINATED FOR STATE AWARD

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—Congratulations Neisha Manning on your nomination for the 2020 NSW Health Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards! Neisha is one of just three nurses and midwives from the Hunter New England Local Health District to receive a nomination. She is a finalist in the Aboriginal Nurse/Midwife of the Year category for "consistently maintaining the highest standards for all mothers and babies in the provision of quality, safe, compassionate and culturally appropriate healthcare". Neisha's family are originally from Armidale and are recognised in the Anaiwan Nation and the Awabakal community in Newcastle. A registered midwife, Neisha divides her time between work as a team leader of the birthing unit at Maitland Hospital and at with the Naae-Wanni Aboriginal Maternal Infant Health Service. Although she works full-time shift work, Neisha is also completing her Masters degree and teaches on a casual basis at the University of Newcastle. Winners of the 2020 NSW Health Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards will be announced during a virtual ceremony on November 26. I'm sure that those families touched by Neisha in her varied roles join me in wishing her every success during the awards, and throughout her career ahead.

PATRICIAN BROTHERS' COLLEGE, FAIRFIELD

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—On behalf of the Fairfield Electorate I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Year 12 from Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield 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 sincere gratitude to Principal Mr Peter Wade, 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.

PAL BUDDHIST SCHOOL

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—On behalf of the Fairfield Electorate I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Year 12 from Pal Buddhist 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 sincere gratitude to Principal Mr Panha Pal, 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.

PRINCIPAL IAN BOWSHER

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces)—I pay tribute to the extraordinary contribution of Principal Ian Bowsher to Barrenjoey High School. After 13 years, Ian leaves Barrenjoey at the end of this month – bound for a new role closer to home as Principal at Sydney Secondary College Balmain Campus. During his stewardship of Barrenjoey, Ian has overseen the introduction of significant

educational, student welfare and infrastructure initiatives, and earned the respect and admiration of the school community. One of his many lasting legacies is the architecturally designed Barrenjoey Community Performance Space – an enclosed multipurpose amphitheatre unveiled in 2019 – which simply would not have happened without Ian's vision and perseverance. Ian – you are an innovator extraordinaire. You have transformed the lives of countless students and exemplify the multifaceted role of a modern high school principal. You have positioned Barrenjoey well to continue providing high quality educational and student support opportunities into the future. These are some very big shoes to fill! We will miss you – but we wish you every success in your new role.

THOMAS (TOM) MODICA

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—I am privileged to recognise Tom Modica, who lives in Gol Gol, within the Wentworth Shire. Tom is a down to earth gentleman, generous in his time, skills and knowledge to assist others and positive a role model for all ages. He is a former grape grower, has been an active dedicated member of the Buronga Gol Gol Lions Club for 46 years and held many position as he fund raised, supported and lead major projects for the community such as funding special equipment for children with a disability, drought relief, donations for health research, yearly awards for schools, local Eisteddfod and numerous projects for the older aged persons. His community spirit is captured by his friendly smile and can do attitude as he volunteers himself in support of many community activities and events within schools, senior citizens and fencing around the Australia Inland Botanic Gardens. The community has fond memories of the wonderful contributions Tom had made and continues to make and I acknowledge and thank Tom for being an outstanding community contributor.

COL AND ROS NEAL 60TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields)—On 10 September 1960, one of the world's greatest athletes, Abebe Bikila, won the gold medal in the marathon at the Rome Olympics Games in record time. He did so in bare feet. While one marathon began and ended on that day, on the other side of the world, another marathon began. And that marathon is still running today. For it was on that day, Colin Neal, blacksmith, married Rosealind McGinty, ladies hairdresser. One of the joys of public life is meeting wonderful people who enrich your life. Ros and Col Neal are such people. I have known Ros and Col for years. I have shared many cups of tea and chats around their dinner table. The Neals are among the most genuine people one could ever meet. Ros and Col ended up making their home in Macquarie Fields where they raised their children and now enjoy their retirement. I offer Ros and Col my sincerest congratulations on their Diamond anniversary. May their marathon marriage, begun all those years ago, continue to go from strength to strength.

OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL MIRANDA

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the wonderful community at Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School Miranda. Those at Our Lady Star of the Sea have taken the challenges of COVID-19 in their stride and adapted to continue providing opportunities and activities for students to learn and grow. Both staff and students have embraced technology, demonstrating innovation in delivering lessons and remaining connected. Teachers created a number of fun videos to boost morale during remote learning, students have participated in masses via livestream and the leadership team is conducting weekly online assemblies, which parents are also invited to attend. On Grandparents' Day, students also dressed in mufti and provided a gold coin donation to purchase items for residents of local nursing homes, who they have been writing and delivering letters to throughout the pandemic. I acknowledge the exceptional leadership of Principal Rosemary Andre, her committed staff and student leaders Laila Nicholson, Christian Di Noia, Kate Henniker, Xavier Manciamelli, Karina Poblete, Selena Contarino, Mitchell Regan and Cameron Burgess for their ongoing dedication to their school. I commend the entire community at Our Lady Star of the Sea for their outstanding efforts.

ILLAWONG PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I bring to the House's attention the wonderful community at Illawong Public School. When COVID-19 disrupted typical school routines, Illawong Public School was quick to adapt to and support students with online learning. The dedicated teachers ensured engaging online content and feedback was available to students, whilst laptops and essential equipment were provided to those that needed them. Principal Jennifer Birch assured her school community that any student who attended in person would be welcomed and cared for. Jennifer also invited parents and carers to formally evaluate the effectiveness of the remote learning program, working diligently with teachers to implement feedback and improve the delivery of learning. I commend Jennifer, her staff and student leaders for keeping the school spirit strong during a difficult time. In particular I recognise School Captains, Luke Glenday and Hayley Adioski, for helping out with the online Father's Day stall and working with the SRC to organise a school mufti day. I acknowledge the whole school effort behind the continued delivery of outstanding education and remaining connected throughout the pandemic.

TRIBUTE TO LYNNE CZINNER

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces)—Today I pay tribute to former Pittwater Council Deputy Mayor and passionate community advocate Lynne Czinner. Lynne passed away last week after a long health battle and will be fondly remembered. Lynne was widely respected throughout our community for her determination, friendly approach, and availability. There are countless local causes and initiatives which Lynne supported and championed over many years, and her contribution has unquestionably made our community an even better place to live. I particularly appreciated Lynne's straightforward yet courteous approach, her brilliant knowledge of local matters, and her involvement in lesser publicised, yet very important, community issues. On behalf of the Pittwater community I offer our condolences to Lynne's family, as well as our deep appreciation for her service.

BREAKTHROUGH HOUSES

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—Breakthrough Houses was brought into existence by Rick and Kerry-Ann Mapperson with the aim of providing support and assistance to entire families who are in crisis due to homelessness, abuse neglect, illness or unemployment. By working with every member of a family as a group Breakthrough is able to teach life and employment skills that allow families to stay and recover together. Residents of Breakthrough House have not just transformed their own lives, but have also assisted others who were suffering in similar circumstances. They continue to give back to the community that helped them through the toughest times in their lives. I would like to give my thanks to Rick and Kerry-Ann for the work that they continue to do in our community. It is people like them, working tirelessly and with no expectation of reward that ensures that those who fall through the cracks of our society are given a second chance.

GREYSTANES DEVILS

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—The Greystanes Devils JRLFC is home to some of the best players and most dedicated volunteers in NSW Rugby League. The club is an integral part of our local community, providing opportunities for recreation and socialisation for our children and their parents. On Saturday the 12th of September the Greystanes Devils unveiled their new scoreboard, which was made possible by the kind contributions of local businesses. They also unveiled the renamed "Carl 'The Colonel' Albrecht Dugout", recognising the enormous contribution that The Colonel has made to the Devils over many years, helping to ensure that it became the powerhouse of junior rugby league that it is today. I would like to congratulate the Greystanes Devils on their new facilities. Thank you to all the volunteers that have contributed to building this fantastic local club. I would particularly like to thank the committee members for their continued dedication to the club and to our children. As The Colonel would say, "It's great at Greystanes."

**The House adjourned pursuant to standing and sessional orders at 17:01 until
Tuesday 22 September 2020 at 12:00.**