



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Tuesday, 22 September 2020**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Bills .....	3741
Adoption Legislation Amendment (Integrated Birth Certificates) Bill 2020 .....	3741
Police Amendment (Promotions) Bill 2020 .....	3741
Returned.....	3741
Notices .....	3741
Presentation.....	3741
Bills .....	3741
Superannuation Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 .....	3741
Second Reading Debate .....	3741
Third Reading .....	3747
Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Courts and Civil) Bill 2020 .....	3747
Second Reading Debate .....	3747
Members .....	3750
Member for Epping.....	3750
Governor .....	3750
Administration of the Government .....	3750
Question Time .....	3750
The Hon. John Barilaro.....	3750
Member for Port Macquarie .....	3750
Stronger Communities Fund.....	3751
Daryl Maguire, Former Member for Wagga Wagga .....	3751
Social Housing .....	3751
Committees .....	3752
Legislation Review Committee .....	3752
Petitions .....	3752
Petitions Received .....	3752
Business of the House.....	3753
Business Lapsed.....	3753
Bills.....	3753
Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Courts and Civil) Bill 2020 .....	3753
Second Reading Debate .....	3753
Third Reading .....	3758
Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Crimes) Bill 2020 .....	3758
Second Reading Debate .....	3758
Third Reading .....	3767
Private Members' Statements.....	3767
Tribute to Ken Shadie, OAM.....	3767
Manufacturing Industry .....	3768
Queensland Hard Border Closure .....	3769
Member for Riverstone and Blacktown City .....	3769

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Lane Cove Electorate World War II Veterans .....	3770
Nundle Community .....	3771
Ku-ring-gai Electorate Transport Infrastructure .....	3772
World Suicide Prevention Day .....	3773
Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital .....	3774
Tabulam Bridge .....	3775
Covid Safe Summer Plan.....	3775
Public Interest Debate.....	3776
COVID-19 and NSW Police Force.....	3776
Private Members' Statements.....	3782
M5 East Toll .....	3782
Tribute to Colonel John Hutcheson, AO .....	3783
Wombeyan Caves .....	3784
Beirut Explosion .....	3785
Oxley Electorate Coastline Trek.....	3786
Win Secombe .....	3786
Port Macquarie Dementia Friendly Community Alliance.....	3787
Western Sydney Jobs Growth.....	3787
Batlow Recovery Forum.....	3788
TAFE NSW .....	3789
Mascot Qantas Headquarters .....	3790
Cootamundra Electorate Higher School Certificate Students.....	3791
Domestic Violence.....	3791
University of Newcastle .....	3792
Defence Budget .....	3792
Community Recognition Statements .....	3794
Jordan Springs Public School .....	3794
Marilyn Rabinowitz .....	3794
Bill Mcnamara .....	3794
Lawrance Ryan .....	3794
Fern Bay Public School .....	3794
Pauline Knowler .....	3795
Renata Roberts .....	3795
Ruby Pade .....	3795
Joshua and Noah Levin.....	3795
East Hills Baseball Club .....	3795
Newtown Breakaways .....	3796
Tribute to Flora O'Dea .....	3796
Caitlin Roodenrys .....	3796
Carmelo Pesce .....	3796
Justices of the Peace .....	3797
Terry Rae .....	3797

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Member for Shellharbour .....	3797
Michelle Ebbin.....	3797
Grenfell Public School.....	3797
Inner West Indigenous Artworks.....	3798
Sheree Jones.....	3798
Central West Rugby Union Grand Final 2020.....	3798
Suzie Brodie.....	3798
Get Ready Weekend .....	3798
New South Wales Schoolteachers .....	3799
Sylvania Heights Public School.....	3799
Moree St Vincent De Paul Society .....	3799
Peter James .....	3799
Rotary Nature Play Park .....	3799
Skillz4me .....	3800
Central Coast Tenants' Advice & Advocacy Service .....	3800
Swansea Community Cottage.....	3800
Amy Munns .....	3800
Outgoing Richmond Police District Commander Superintendent Toby Lindsay .....	3800
Tenterfield Shire Council Kicking Goals on Bridge Replacement, Sealing Roads.....	3801
Bankstown Legacy.....	3801
Ms Rachel Thompson.....	3801
Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation.....	3801
Campbelltown-Airds Historical Society.....	3802
Jacob Carson.....	3802
Swathy Raveendra .....	3802
Salvador Allende Monument in Sydney Inc. and the Pablo Neruda Association .....	3802
Year 12 2020 – Canley Vale High School.....	3803
Year 12 2020 – Verona School.....	3803
The Greek Herald Re-Launch Party .....	3803
St George Meals on Wheels .....	3803
Ahepa New Year's Blessing.....	3803
Chris Bailey .....	3804
Curry Reserve Elderslie .....	3804
2020 Local Government Week Awards .....	3804
Ruby Wiffen .....	3804
Ray Agostino .....	3804
Katelyn Cleary .....	3805
Castle Hill United .....	3805
Hills Hornets Touch Football .....	3805
Como West Public School.....	3805
Victory in the Pacific Day .....	3805
Thomas and Ashlea Coupland .....	3806

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Cootamundra High School .....	3806
Ganmain Grong Grong Matong Lions Football Netball Club, U17s Netball Premiers .....	3806
Mr and Mrs Wood 60th Wedding Anniversary .....	3806
Valerie Williams and the Moree Gift Barrel .....	3806
Good Luck to the Class of 2020 .....	3806
Ben Crafoord Recipient of Flyas Award .....	3807
Sergeant David Bramble .....	3807
Care 4 Kids .....	3807
Kelle Broadhead, Oakdale Workers Club.....	3807
Oakdale Workers Rlfc Group 6 Teams.....	3807
Jesse Blackadder, Author and Adventurer.....	3808
Looking for Theo Hayez Search Team.....	3808
Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre Koori Floor .....	3808
Blacktown Girls High School.....	3808
Shelley Public School .....	3808
Nedd Brockmann .....	3809
Newtown Breakaways FC .....	3809
Sunshine Sugar .....	3809
Leanne Sanders, Visual Dreaming.....	3809
Tamworth Textiles Triennial .....	3809
Steven Fordham .....	3810
"reporting to Your Community" Awards.....	3810
Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre .....	3810
Fergus Fricke .....	3810
Marine Rescue Port Macquarie Service Awards .....	3811
Run Against Violence.....	3811
Local Government Youth Council.....	3811

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Tuesday, 22 September 2020**

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

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

### *Bills*

#### **ADOPTION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (INTEGRATED BIRTH CERTIFICATES) BILL 2020 POLICE AMENDMENT (PROMOTIONS) BILL 2020**

#### **Returned**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of messages from the Legislative Council returning the bills without amendment.

### *Notices*

#### **PRESENTATION**

*[During the giving of notices of motions]*

**The SPEAKER:** I note that members on both sides gave notices of motions that exceeded 40 seconds. I remind members of the standing order, which states that notices of motions must not exceed 30 seconds.

### *Bills*

#### **SUPERANNUATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2020**

#### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 16 September 2020.**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (12:17:51):** I lead for Labor in debate in the Legislative Assembly on the Superannuation Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 and, in doing so, represent my colleague the Hon. Walt Secord in the other place. From the outset, we will not be opposing the bill. On 16 September the Treasurer introduced the Superannuation Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. The object of this bill is to amend certain superannuation legislation to prevent superannuation pensions and allowances being reduced because of a fall in consumer prices. Public service retirees' pension payments are linked to movements in the Sydney consumer price index [CPI]. The Treasurer claims that this will affect 67,000 pensioners on the State's defined benefit superannuation scheme. Generally, CPI provisions provide that if the All Groups CPI for Sydney falls by less than 1 per cent, then no adjustment will be made. However, if the fall is 1 per cent or more, the amount of the pension or allowance must be reduced by that percentage. While it does not say so explicitly, this obviously is due to the impact of the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the index is expected to result in a fall of slightly more than 1.04 per cent to the Sydney consumer price index of 0.04 per cent below the threshold. An annual fall in the Sydney consumer price index is almost unprecedented, having only ever happened twice on record: once in 1962 and again in 1997. It is incredible that we are seeing this, but it shows the magnitude of the economic crisis our communities, families within our local communities, individuals and small businesses are experiencing. The effects of COVID-19 on the Sydney consumer price index do not align with the original intention of the superannuation legislation. The Government will claim that it does not want the fee-free child care to negatively impact on former Government employees who are now retirees. To respond to the circumstances, the legislation will amend the negative 1.00 per cent to 1.4 per cent.

The bill will require the amendment of seven superannuation Acts and three regulations, as outlined in schedules 1.2, 1.3, 1.6 and 1.10 to the bill. Most of those Acts and regulations already include provisions that dictate that pensions are only adjusted downwards if the Sydney consumer price index—and this is critical—falls below 1 per cent, in which case the amendment will require replacing 1 per cent with 1.10 per cent. This is the case for the following schemes: the NSW Retirement Benefits Act 1972, the Police Regulation (Superannuation) Act 1906, the State Authorities Superannuation (Ex-Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Authority Superannuation Fund Transfer) Regulation 2003, the State Authorities Superannuation (Government Railways Superannuation Scheme Transfer) Regulation 2003, the State Authorities Superannuation (Transitional Provisions) Regulation 1998, the Superannuation Act 1916 and the Transport Employees Retirement Benefits Act 1967.

Two other pieces of superannuation legislation—the Local Government and Other Authorities (Superannuation) Act 1927 and the Public Authorities Superannuation Act 1985—require different treatment because they do not provide for a 1 per cent threshold. Under each of those Acts any fall in the Sydney consumer price index is required to be passed on to pensions, with no minimum consumer price index threshold. Schedules 1.1 and 1.4 to the bill amend the Local Government consumer price index provisions to provide for no adjustment to be made to superannuation pensions if the fall in Sydney consumer price index is less than 1.1 per cent or any other percentage prescribed by the regulation. Schedule 1.5 to the bill provides that further amendments can be made to the regulations associated with the State Authorities Superannuation Act to increase or decrease the consumer price index thresholds that would trigger a reduction in pension payments.

In conclusion, Labor will not oppose the bill. This is another example of the Labor Opposition working closely with the Government to ensure there is a legislative framework in place to support communities, members, residents and small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. I take this opportunity to acknowledge my friend and colleague the shadow Treasurer, the Hon. Walt Secord, for his work to support and advocate for small businesses, families and industries right across the board during COVID-19. I know that he has had a number of discussions with the Treasurer and the Treasurer's office, and I thank him for his contribution during what is a very difficult time for our communities.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (12:22:56):** I support the New South Wales Government's Superannuation Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. I acknowledge that Labor is not contesting this bill in this Chamber. The purpose of the bill is to protect the pensions of New South Wales public service retirees from the impacts of COVID-19. As their pension payments are linked to changes in the Sydney consumer price index [CPI] any changes to the CPI as a consequence of COVID-19 will mean lower pension payments for them. It has a very real impact. We all know that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected our community in so many ways, including their physical and mental health, and economic wellbeing, which are particularly important for seniors and young people in our community.

I refer to comments made by the member for Dubbo when he acknowledged the impact of COVID-19 on the sense of wellbeing among young people in our communities. Gratifyingly, with COVID-19 there has been an unprecedented fiscal response from both State and Federal governments supporting our community on all of those fronts. The New South Wales Government's response has been strong. It has been represented by a commitment of just under \$14 billion to our community. It has taken many forms: \$2.4 billion for health services, including support for health workers; just under \$3 billion for businesses, including payroll tax relief, \$5 billion as an investment in our State's infrastructure; and \$250 million for households, including land tax discounts, rent waivers and support for first home buyers. I could go on. It all adds up to a significant investment to help our communities in the many ways in which they have been affected.

That said, this bill is about a specific impact that is an unintended consequence of COVID-19. It is about ensuring that our public service retirees, who have done this State proud in their service of the community, are not victims of an unintended consequence of COVID-19. Specifically, the bill will prevent that happening by ensuring that pensions do not have to be adjusted downwards unless the Sydney CPI falls by 1.1 per cent or more and by allowing the Government to modify that percentage subsequently through regulation in the case that a further change is warranted in the future. That is a sensible provision to ensure a good social consequence while avoiding the need for legislation to again come before the House.

To give some background, the SAS Trustee Corporation [STC] has a legislative requirement to index defined benefit pensions paid to members in the State Superannuation Scheme, the Police Superannuation Scheme and the State Authorities Superannuation Scheme by the annual change in the Sydney all groups CPI. From June 2019 to June 2020 the Sydney CPI fell by 1.04 per cent. That fall was primarily due, ironically, to the Federal Government's decision to offer free child care. That decision by the Federal Government was really welcome during the lockdown period. It was a welcome relief for families doing their best to stay safe and keep working where possible. It was an important measure to support our families, but it did have an unintended consequence, which I will go into in a moment.

Last week, knowing how important child care is to local communities, I was gratified to attend my local preschool. An investment by the State Government of just under \$750,000 will go to provide places for the children of 40 additional families beginning next term. That was a great announcement to be a part of. That said, the Federal Government's decision to offer free child care meant the cost of child care fell by 95 per cent in the 2020 June quarter. Removing that cost for households placed significant downward pressure on the Sydney CPI. In fact, it caused a negative change to the Sydney CPI of almost 1.4 per cent. Without that effect, the 1.04 per cent fall in the Sydney CPI would have been a 0.4 per cent increase.

In other words, if the Federal Government had not made child care free, the CPI would have been 1.4 per cent higher than it was for the 2020 financial year and the unintended anomaly we are dealing with here

would not have arisen. Understandably, the New South Wales Government is responding to that anomaly. We do not want a change in the cost of living for STC members and we want to maintain the pensions at their current level. If we were to not pass this bill—which has been introduced on an urgent basis—our 67,000 pensioners with an average pension of approximately \$48,000 per annum would average a 1 per cent reduction in their pensions. This would cost them nearly \$500. To make sure that does not happen, we need to pass the bill in this House.

I will give some background on the importance of the CPI, which underlies the discussion of this bill. The CPI is designed to provide a general measure of price inflation for all Australian households. It only measures the changes in prices faced by private households living in the capital cities of the six States and two Territories. It is designed to measure the percentage change in the price of a basket of goods and services consumed by households. It is calculated and published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics once a quarter. The Sydney CPI is the relevant index used to link the defined benefit pensions of New South Wales public service retirees to movements in the cost of living. The Sydney CPI is constructed in exactly the same way as the national CPI, except that only Sydney prices go into the calculation.

The Sydney CPI is constructed in exactly the same way as the national CPI, except that only Sydney prices go into the calculation. The Sydney CPI is used in the superannuation indexation calculations because it is a better measure of price movements in New South Wales than is the national CPI measure. The total basket is divided into 11 major groups each representing a specific set of commodities, including beverages, alcohol, tobacco, clothing and footwear, housing, furnishings, health, transport, communications, education, recreation, insurance and financial services. The basket of goods does not represent any particular individual consumer or group of consumers. Huge changes in the prices of certain goods and services, while part of the overall CPI calculation, are not goods and services that represent the consumption or cost of living of our retirees.

That brings us back to the need for the bill. The annual fall in the Sydney CPI is almost unprecedented, which is of course because of COVID. It has only ever happened twice on record, in 1962 and 1997. That negative movement of CPI over the year to June 2020 is an anomaly. The child care component of the index is not that significant; it only really represented 1.25 per cent of the total. However, that component had decreased by an extraordinary 95 per cent over the year to June 2020 because of the Federal Government's announcement. The budget impacts of the changes proposed in the bill are not material. They amount to just over \$300,000, with the funds coming from the STC's reserves. It will cost the STC approximately \$32 million but there will be no incremental increase to contributions to the STC from the Government to gradually reinstate that \$32 million.

I reiterate that there is some urgency to passing the bill because the annual adjustment takes effect from the first pension payment in October. Prior to that, the STC must write to its members to advise them of the indexation adjustment that will be applied to pensions for the coming year. I also reiterate that the bill provides additional flexibility for the future by including amendments for the Government to modify the threshold percentage subsequently through regulation, rather than by law, in the very unlikely case that a further change is required in the future.

The State is facing extraordinary circumstances through the COVID pandemic. That is why it is important we have the bill before the House now, and members need to pass it urgently so that the negative unintended consequences of the COVID impact and a Federal Government childcare measure that have impacted the Sydney CPI do not negatively impact the pensions of our 67,000 New South Wales public service retirees. It is another way that the New South Wales Government is rapidly responding to the challenges of COVID-19 to help make sure that all of us, including our retirees, are on track to recover as a community together. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (12:32:24):** I contribute to debate on the Superannuation Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. I echo the points made by member for Keira and shadow health Minister, who led for the Opposition in debate in this Chamber earlier today. I acknowledge that the object of the bill is to amend certain superannuation legislation to prevent superannuation pensions and allowances being reduced because of a fall in consumer prices. That is certainly a worthy objective of the bill. The State Superannuation Scheme was established by the New South Wales Government in 1919 under a Labor Government, through the introduction of the Superannuation Act 1916. Even back in 1919, some 101 years ago, Labor cared about working people and what became of them when their working lives were over. This scheme closed to new members in 1985.

Today there are still 67,000 people in New South Wales living in retirement under the pensions paid out by this scheme. These individuals made contributions to the scheme throughout their working lives as they undertook employment within the public service sector. The State Superannuation Scheme was set up to ensure that transport and railway workers, police officers, council workers, workers on the Snowy Mountains Scheme and other public servants could retire from their service to the community with the financial security that the State's defined superannuation benefits scheme offered. Unlike modern superannuation schemes, which are based

on investment returns, the New South Wales State Superannuation Scheme was pegged to the consumer price index for Sydney.

Under the rules of some schemes, if the Sydney consumer price index falls by more than 1 per cent, as it is expected to do in the coming months, pension payments will drop by the same amount. Under the rules of other schemes covered under the legislation, any drop in the Sydney consumer price index—no matter its size—is passed on through a reduction in pension payments, which is equivalent to any drop in the index. The Treasurer has said that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the index is expected to result in a fall of slightly more than 1.04 per cent, bringing it to 0.04 per cent above the threshold that would trigger a matched drop in some pension payments. The Treasurer has attributed the expected fall of the Sydney consumer price index in part to the Government's adoption of free child care.

I acknowledge that the Government adopted Labor's fee-free preschool policy, which, as shadow Minister for Early Childhood Learning, I commend the Government for adopting. Just as fee-free preschool and early childhood education and care protects the very youngest in our community by allowing continued access to quality early learning experiences in the years before school, Labor recognises that the superannuation legislation amendments currently before the House will protect the pensions of 67,000 elders in our community. The economic impact of COVID-19 on many people across the State has been devastating, with job losses and business closures, uncertainty and fear. Yet for people of working age there is always the prospect of financial recovery in the coming years as they return to employment or rebuild their businesses.

For the working people who have retired and who rely on pensions from the scheme, there is no prospect of financial recovery down the track. There is no working life ahead of them and, therefore, there is no chance to regain any financial losses that are incurred during the current economic recession. The amendments before the House deal with the design of the superannuation scheme in light of the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, with particular regard to the Sydney consumer price index. The amendments will ensure that the working people who contributed their earnings to the scheme are protected. Seven superannuation Acts and three regulations require amendment to protect these retired workers and their pensions. Labor has always stood up for working people, Labor has always stood up for fairness for working people and that is why Labor does not oppose the passage of the bill.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (12:36:51):** I contribute to debate on the Superannuation Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. The need for the Government to introduce the bill is another reminder of the wide-reaching impacts of COVID on our citizens. I echo the Treasurer's words about the importance of the bill in protecting the income of our retirees. As the Treasurer has highlighted, in these unprecedented times it has never been more important to ensure that our citizens are provided with protection from the unpredictable impacts of the pandemic. The bill recognises that the recent fall of more than 1 per cent in the Sydney consumer price index [CPI] over the 2020 financial year is a consequence of the impact of COVID. But the fall in the CPI was not caused by cheaper food, cheaper clothes or cheaper prescriptions; it was a one-off impact of the Federal Government's support of everyday families in the form of free child care.

While that particular relief initiative has been immensely valuable to young families, it provides no real benefit to the 67,000 New South Wales retirees who are caught under the legislation. The bill seeks to amend this. Without the changes, those retirees will suffer a fall in their pensions but they will get no relief at the supermarket, nor will clothes or prescriptions become cheaper. I am sure everyone would agree that this is not fair, and nor is it the intent of the pension scheme legislation, which is why Government has introduced the bill. The bill will ensure that the intention of the legislation is achieved so that retirees are treated fairly. All members need to ensure that the amendments are enacted as quickly as possible. The SAS Trustee Corporation [STC] must inform its members of the change to their pensions in the current month by letter, before implementing the changes in early October. That is why the Government has chosen a very simple but effective mechanism to amend the existing legislation. The change is designed to be as simple as possible to ensure that there are no unforeseen consequences from the amendment.

In most of the legislation listed in schedule 1 to the bill the reference to 1 per cent can be changed simply to 1.1 per cent. Where the reference is not present, the Government will introduce the mechanism that is already present in existing legislation and states the 1 per cent threshold. The Government also has taken the opportunity to include an additional layer of protection to be ready in case a fall in consumer prices occurs again. The amendments to allow the percentage threshold to be increased or decreased by regulations will enable the Government to be ready in the very unlikely event that this effect on superannuation should ever happen again. I also commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (12:40:04):** The Superannuation Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 is very important legislation—probably one of the most important bills that members have seen at this stage of the parliamentary year. Superannuation is something that all the men and women of my electorate love to talk about.

This legislation has a legislative requirement to index the defined benefit pensions paid to members in the State Superannuation Scheme [SSS], the Police Superannuation Scheme [PSS] and the State Authorities Superannuation Scheme [SASS] by the annual change in the Sydney All Groups consumer price index [CPI]. From June 2019 to June 2020 the Sydney CPI fell by 1.04 per cent. As a result, under the current legislation, pension payments must be reduced by 1 per cent.

The fall in the Sydney CPI was driven primarily by the Federal Government's decision to offer free child care. Without this effect, the minus 1.04 per cent fall in the Sydney CPI would have been a 0.4 per cent increase. It has been determined that the fall in the Sydney CPI is not representative of changes to the cost of living of State Authorities Superannuation Trustee Corporation [STC] members—an important point—and, as such, it is appropriate to maintain pensions at their current level. Nearly 67,000 pensioners, with an average pension of approximately \$48,000 per annum each, will be affected if the legislation is not changed. On average, the 1 per cent reduction in pensions would cost the average pensioner nearly \$500. That is a significant cost burden for superannuant pensioners. I am thinking particularly of the pensioners in my electorate of Oatley.

The budget impact of these changes is not material—less than \$500,000 in the coming year—as the funds will come from the STC's reserves. However, it will cost the STC approximately \$32 million, which will be gradually contributed to the STC over a period of many years. Given the importance of the consumer price index in debate on this bill, I will refer to some relevant historical data to provide context. The Australian CPI is designed to provide a general measure of price inflation for all Australian households. In practice, the index is constrained to measure only the changes in prices faced by private households living in the capital cities of the six States and two Territories of Australia. It is designed to measure the percentage change in the price of a basket of goods and services consumed by households, and it is calculated and published each quarter by the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS].

The Sydney CPI is the relevant index used to link the defined benefit pensions of New South Wales public service retirees to movements in the cost of living. The Sydney CPI is constructed in exactly the same way as is the national CPI, except that for obvious reasons only Sydney prices go into the calculation. The Sydney CPI is used in the superannuation indexation calculations because it is expected to be a better measure of movements in prices in New South Wales than is the national CPI measure for equally obvious reasons. So, as we have heard from previous speakers both today and previously, the total basket is divided into 11 major groups: food and non-alcoholic beverages, alcohol and tobacco, clothing, housing, furnishings, health, transport, communication, recreation and culture, insurance and financial services, and education.

In deciding which goods and services to include in the CPI basket and what their weights should be, the ABS has information about how much and what households in Australia spend their income on. Of course, these baskets of goods and services do not represent any particular individual consumer or group of consumers. That is what has brought about the need for this bill. The huge changes in the prices of certain goods and services, while part of the overall CPI calculation, are not goods and services that are representative of the consumption of retirees. The House has heard of the importance of this from previous speakers.

It is important to note that a negative annual CPI movement in Australia is very rare. In previous years, inflation in Australia averaged around 9.9 per cent in the 1970s, 8.5 per cent in the 1980s, 2.7 per cent in the 1990s, and 2.2 per cent in the 2010s. Since the CPI data started to be collected immediately after World War II and prior to 2020, there were only two occasions when the annual CPI movement was negative. Those occasions were in 1962 and 1997. The negative movement of 1.04 per cent in the CPI over the year to June 2020 is clearly an exceptional case—we are in the middle of a pandemic. It is particularly exceptional because it was driven by a handful of individual goods and services that experienced massive falls rather than a general fall in many goods and services, most notably in the offer of free child care.

For those in the Chamber who are members of working families, it is interesting that the childcare component of the index is not that significant, only representing 1.52 per cent of the total. However, it is what it is. It is because of these exceptional circumstances that we are introducing this amending bill, so that these unique movements in the CPI do not have an unintended impact on the pensioners of New South Wales. To the joy of the House, this is something that I could talk about in great detail for many hours. However, I understand that the Government Whip also wants to make a couple of important points, and I do not want to steal his thunder.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** We are going to be deprived.

**Mr MARK COURE:** Has the member for Cessnock said something in this debate?

**Mr Clayton Barr:** No.

**Mr MARK COURE:** No, he is just interjecting. I thank the Treasurer for bringing this to the House's attention. [*Extension of time*]

I thank the three members who are listening in the House. As I said, the bill will ensure that the recent fall in the Sydney CPI does not adversely impact the defined benefit pensions of New South Wales public service retirees, many of whom live in my electorate of Oatley. Some of them have only recently retired, but those on the defined benefit scheme who are part of the old scheme are looking at retiring over the months and years ahead. I thank the Treasurer for bringing this important piece of legislation to the House. I have quite a few more important points to raise that I will leave to the Government Whip to take up with the House as the next speaker.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:49:19):** I was deeply enthralled by the speech given by the member for Oatley just moments ago. I acknowledge the member for Keira, who spoke on behalf of the Opposition and noted that the Opposition will support the fantastic Superannuation Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. This is a very good piece of legislation. I acknowledge the excellent contributions to this debate made by the members for Vacluse and Manly, and the Churchillian effort by the member for Oatley, who absolutely deserved the extension of time.

Given the importance of the consumer price index [CPI] in the discussion of this bill it is important to provide some context and historical data relevant to this debate. The member for Vacluse, the member for Manly, the member for Oatley and the member for Keira have all said the same thing. I will repeat those important points. The Australian CPI is designed to provide a general measure of price inflation for all Australian households. In practice, the index is constrained to measure only the changes in prices faced by private households living in the capital cities of the six States and two Territories. It is designed to measure the percentage change in the price of a basket of goods and services consumed by households, and it is calculated and published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] once a quarter. That is an important outline, an overview, of how the CPI works.

I note the Treasurer is present in the Chamber. I will try not to take too long as he is an important and busy man. The Sydney CPI is the relevant index used to link the defined benefit pensions of New South Wales public service retirees to movements in cost of living, as was outlined by the member for Oatley. The Sydney CPI is constructed in exactly the same way as the national CPI, except that only Sydney prices go into the calculation. The Sydney CPI is used in the superannuation indexation calculations because it is expected to be a better measure of movements in prices in New South Wales than is the national CPI measure.

The member for Oatley outlined the basket of goods that I spoke of previously. I will repeat it for the House. Insurance and financial services is just under 6 per cent of the index. Education is 4.3 per cent of that index. Recreation and culture make up almost 13 per cent of that index. Communication is only 2 per cent. Transport is a healthy 10 per cent. Health is 5.8 per cent. Housing is 24 per cent of the index. Furnishings and household equipment are 8.8 per cent of the index. Alcohol and tobacco are 6.9 per cent, and food and non-alcoholic beverages are about 15.68 per cent. That basket is varied and gives a broad view of the cost of living.

In deciding which goods and services to include in the CPI basket and what their weights should be, the ABS uses information about how much—and on what—households in Australia spend their income. If households spend more of their income on one item, that item will have a larger weight in the CPI. But this basket of goods does not represent any particular individual consumer, or group of consumers. And that is why we need this bill. The huge changes in the prices of certain goods and services, while part of the overall CPI calculation, are not goods and services that are representative of the consumption of retirees. On the Central Coast we have a large number of retirees. It is important to so many people across the Central Coast. I congratulate the Treasurer on bringing this bill to the House. It is important to note that a negative annual CPI movement is very rare in this country. Inflation in Australia averaged around 9 per cent in the 1970s, 8.5 per cent in the 1980s, it dropped to as low as 2.7 per cent in the 1990s, it was around 3 per cent at the turn of the century, and it was 2.2 per cent around 2010.

Since CPI data started being collected in 1948, the annual CPI movement was negative on only two occasions prior to 2020—in 1962 and 1997. The negative movement of CPI of 1.04 per cent over the year to June 2020 is clearly an exceptional case. It is particularly exceptional because it was driven by a handful of individual goods and services that experienced massive falls, rather than a general fall in many goods and services—most notably by the offer of fee-free child care, which had a massive uptake, especially on the Central Coast, where there are many young families. The Central Coast has an interesting combination of population, very much like your electorate, Mr Temporary Speaker; it has a large number of self-funded retirees and many young families have moved to the Central Coast because of the lifestyle it offers. There is a very high need for child care on the Central Coast and this has been an important part of what has been happening there. However, this component has decreased by an extraordinary 95 per cent over the year to June 2020, an annual movement that may well be unprecedented for a given component of CPI.

The 95 per cent fall in the 1.52 per cent childcare component had the effect of pulling down the CPI by 1.4 per cent compared to where the CPI would have been if childcare prices had remained stable. Such a sharp

fall in a CPI component realistically can only be caused by interventions such as the ones carried out by the Federal Government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which is playing out across the nation. I congratulate the Treasurer, Minister Dominello and the Premier on working together to ensure that every economic leader in New South Wales is endeavouring to keep people safe from one end of the borders to the other. On behalf of the Central Coast I assure the Treasurer that these economic stimuli have been a huge benefit for local businesses: More than 13 small businesses on the Central Coast have taken up the \$10,000 business grant—that is \$13 million going back into the local economy on the coast. But extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures and that is exactly what is happening. I congratulate not only the Treasurer but also Chris Ashton, who has been sitting in the Chamber the entire morning listening to this debate, on their work and diligence in putting this legislation together. This is an excellent piece of legislation and I commend it to the House.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (12:56:50):** In reply: New South Wales has almost 67,000 retired public servants with defined benefit pensions. These pensions are indexed in October each year to changes in the Sydney CPI. The intention of this is to match changes in pensioners' income to changes in their cost of living. But from June 2019 to June 2020 there was a temporary breakdown in this relationship. The Sydney CPI fell while retirees' cost of living rose. The Sydney CPI fell by 1.04 per cent from June 2019 to June 2020, driven primarily by the impact of Federal Government initiatives such as fee-free child care, which drove down the Sydney CPI but had no corresponding impact on retirees' cost of living.

Most of the defined benefit superannuation legislation in New South Wales already has a mechanism to allow pensions to be held constant if the Sydney CPI falls by less than 1 per cent. This bill simply changes the 1 per cent threshold to 1.1 per cent and therefore avoids the need to lower pensions. A few pieces of superannuation legislation do not already have this mechanism. In those cases the mechanism and the 1.1 per cent threshold will be added to the legislation. This will serve to bring consistency to the treatment of different New South Wales superannuation schemes. An amendment will also be added to the legislation to allow the threshold percentage to be changed in the future via regulation.

The bill will result in State Super increasing its pension payments in the 2021 financial year by approximately \$32 million. State Super will recoup this money gradually from the Crown by way of an incremental increase in Crown contributions annually until the full funding target date specified in the Fiscal Responsibility Act 2012. There will be virtually no budget impact from this bill, although an accounting impact will be a one-off increase to the Crown's superannuation expense of just over \$300,000. I thank the member for Vacluse, the member for Oatley, the member for Manly, the member for Keira—who indicated Labor will not oppose the bill—the member for Terrigal and the member for Charlestown for their contributions to this debate. I also acknowledge the shadow Treasurer, who received a briefing on this matter earlier on. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## STRONGER COMMUNITIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (COURTS AND CIVIL) BILL 2020

### Second Reading Debate

**Debate resumed from 16 September 2020.**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (12:59:33):** I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Courts and Civil) Bill 2020. The Opposition does not oppose the bill, the object of which is to amend various Acts and regulations relating to the courts and to other matters in the Communities and Justice portfolio areas. It is presented as part of the Government's legislative review and monitoring process. It is a bill of miscellaneous matters that is usually called a justice legislation amendment bill or statute law miscellaneous provisions bill—or something of that nature. The innovation here is the slightly Orwellian title "Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment Bill". I note the Government threatens four of this type of bill this year.

Probably the provisions that will attract the greatest use, such as that the Government has elected to attempt to promote in the media, are those that relate to arrangements like the witnessing of signatures and the attestation of documents. Remote witnessing of documents was allowed by regulations which were proclaimed as a result of

COVID emergency legislation in April this year. That regulation is to expire on 23 October this year. Those emergency provisions, which the Opposition was happy not to oppose, very sensibly and properly had a sunset provision. The bill takes those provisions and places them in the Electronic Transactions Act. Those provisions will continue to be time limited and will operate until the end of 2021. The Attorney General indicated in his second reading speech that this was done to allow sufficient time for a departmental assessment of the effectiveness of the arrangement and a consultation with the legal profession and with other stakeholders in relation to long-term reform. From where I am sitting, that strikes me as a proportionate and reasonable approach.

The expanded categories in the regulation of people who can witness statutory declarations are transferred to the Electronic Transactions Act in a new section. The categories of those who can witness a declaration are again expanded to include Federal judicial officers. There are a range of other provisions. The Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act is amended with retrospective impact to avoid challenge to actions or decisions of registrars as manager of costs assessments between 2016 and 2020 in the Supreme Court. The Courts Legislation Amendment Act is repealed. That really only impacts upon schedule 5, which is now irrelevant having been superseded by other technology.

Provisions concerning the chain of representation for executors concerning the administration of estates are transferred from the Imperial Acts Application Act to the Probate and Administration Act. Other changes include allowing certain procedural functions of the conduct division of the Judicial Commission of New South Wales to be exercised by the chairperson alone rather than by all three members. It also allows for the suspension of a judicial officer whose ability to perform the functions of office is impaired when there is a formal request made by the relevant head of jurisdiction.

Changes allow the NSW Trustee to meet liabilities incurred in existing official functions for either money appropriated from the consolidated fund or from the NSW Trustee & Guardian Reserve Fund. There is also a provision to provide for appeals and reviews arising from the decisions of former judges to be assigned to the Court of Appeal. There are also proposals relating to trusts. Power is given to a court to approve the revocation or variation of a trust where it is in the interests of the beneficiaries and it fulfils the purpose of the trust. This is said to make the State consistent with other jurisdictions. Additionally, a trustee will be able to apply income or property held in trust for an adult beneficiary towards the beneficiary's maintenance, education or benefit.

The bill also provides that someone who seeks a job with the Office of the Sheriff of New South Wales must disclose their spent convictions. This is consistent with the approach for the Police Force and Corrective Services. The Court Security Act is amended to create an offence of transmitting or distributing a recording of court proceedings unless it is done for the purposes of transcribing court proceedings or is otherwise permitted by a judicial officer or the regulations. This is similarly structured to the existing offence to make and transmit an unauthorised recording and seems to fill a gap in the current regulatory scheme.

The functions and powers of the Office of the Children's Guardian that currently exist under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act and the Adoption Act are transferred to the Children's Guardian Act. There are also important provisions clarifying that a third party that is providing services to children on behalf of bodies that are already subject to reporting obligations about conduct is itself now subject to such obligations. There are some other items with which I will not trouble the House. The Opposition does not oppose the bill.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (13:04:13):** I make a contribution to the debate on the Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Courts and Civil) Bill 2020. I will focus on the remote witnessing pilot scheme. With us all living through the COVID-19 restrictions, we understand the difficulties facing our wider community. All of us in this place are aware of the impact it is having on everyone's lives. I compliment the Government on its programs and Dr Kerry Chant on her ongoing commitment to the people of New South Wales and her fact-based approach.

My electorate faces particular difficulties because its northern boundary borders the state of Queensland, which has implemented a totally different regime. We are locked out of Queensland at the moment. Tweed Heads is in the bubble and free movement is confined to within the bubble. I thank the Queensland Government and Annastacia Palaszczuk for extending the bubble further south, taking it past Byron Bay to Lennox Head and Ballina. Since the restrictions, about \$170 million of building projects south of the border could not get workers to their sites or building supplies because all the structural steel, roofing steel, glass, nails, doors, staircases and everything else come from Brisbane. There have been cases of builders self-harming, which is a very sad thing indeed.

Annastacia, to her credit, rang Premier Gladys Berejiklian and a short time ago announced that the bubble will be moved further south. It is a great relief because people will be able to get back to work. There were also concerns about the border crossing with the HSC approaching where, for example, a large cohort of students sitting the English exam could be impacted if we had a COVID-19 outbreak. We have not had an outbreak since

a returned traveller back in April this year. My electorate is one of the few in New South Wales where 30 per cent of residents are over 65, so we are dealing with the continued threat of COVID-19.

Like many members of the lower House, all my staff are registered justices of the peace and on a daily basis, Monday to Friday, there is a steady stream of people wanting documents authorised, notarised or certified. It is great that we provide this service but COVID-19 has made this task challenging. Schedules 1.5 and 1.6 of the bill amend the Electronic Transaction Act 2000 to extend the operation of provisions enabling the witnessing and attestation of documents to be conducted remotely through audiovisual links until the end of 2021. That is an important provision.

I support this extension of remote witnessing arrangements as it will allow sufficient time for the Government to assess the effectiveness of those arrangements and to consult with the legal profession about the need for long-term reform. Remote witnessing was initially facilitated by the Electronic Transactions Amendment (COVID-19 Witnessing of Documents) Regulation 2020, which was passed in April 2020 as part of the Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The regulation was one of many initiatives of the New South Wales Government to support businesses and ensure that important transactions could continue to occur while people complied with public health orders.

One of our Federal Government's good initiatives is telehealth. I had reason to get a script from my local GP. Before telehealth I would have to make an appointment and sit in the waiting room. I must admit I love doctors dearly but at times they can be extremely time poor, so after spending time sitting and waiting I would then spend five minutes in the surgery. But in recent times with telehealth, the doctor rings at the set time and sends the script to the local pharmacy, which delivers. It is a great initiative, particularly for elderly people who find it difficult to get to the doctor and the pharmacy.

Other initiatives include the establishment of the Service NSW 24-hour COVID-19 hotline to assist businesses and individuals to understand the available assistance and public health requirements, and the amendment of the Local Government Act 1993 to allow councils to continue to meet and members of the public to observe the meetings in a way that does not expose participants and attendees to the risk of transmission of the COVID-19 virus. I note the Minister for Local Government is present in the Chamber. At certain times certain people in my electorate would probably choose for their council not to meet but this was an important way forward.

Other initiatives also include amendment of the Interpretation Act 1987 to enable regulations to be made altering arrangements for physically attending places and calling or holding meetings, including regulations that allow meetings to be held using communication technology. There was significant support among stakeholders consulted on the regulation for remote witnessing to be authorised on a continuing basis. Schedules 1.5 and 1.6 to the bill provide the Government with an opportunity to assess the merits of extending remote witnessing beyond the immediate circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. Allowing remote witnessing on a continuing basis could provide ongoing efficiencies in the execution of documents, in light of the widespread availability of videoconferencing technology.

Second, the proposed arrangements retain existing safeguards associated with witnessing. This means that under the provisions facilitating remote witnessing, witnesses must satisfy themselves of all the same things as they would have to if they were witnessing a document in person. For example, a witness to an enduring power of attorney document must certify that the signatory appeared to understand the effect of the document. Furthermore, remote witnessing is not mandatory and does not do away with the ability to witness documents in person. A witness may refuse to witness a document remotely if they form the view that they cannot fulfil relevant witnessing requirements.

Finally, the extension of remote witnessing addresses ongoing COVID-related restrictions and the risk of further restrictions. The uncertainty that COVID-19 presents makes it more urgent than ever that a person can make legally effective estate planning decisions, make appropriate arrangements for someone to make personal, and financial decisions on their behalf if they become unable to do so, or execute a range of other important legal documents. Extending the operation of provisions enabling remote witnessing until the end of 2021 allows the Government to assess the effectiveness of those arrangements and consider and consult on whether longer term reform is required. In addition, the provisions enabling remote witnessing do not remove existing safeguards associated with witnessing or do away with the ability to witness documents in person. For these reasons, I support schedules 1.5 and 1.6 to the bill.

The Government should be applauded, as should Service NSW. We all have Service NSW centres within our electorates and they do an amazing job. I received nothing but positive feedback from the people working there and I take my hat off to them. They deal with something like 40 different agencies—a lot of agencies. I can go there and renew my jetski licence, my boat licence—I was going to say marriage certificate but I have recently

just done that—any registration and so on. I take my hat off to them particularly in my area because we have a lot of cross-border transfers with registrations coming out of Queensland and even Victoria. It has been an ongoing saga. This amendment is the way to go for the future. We have seen it with telehealth, as I have said. We have seen it with a lot of other things that we do. I look forward to one day sitting in the lovely Tweed and voting in Parliament within this Chamber. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate interrupted.**

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

*Members*

**MEMBER FOR EPPING**

**The SPEAKER:** I wish the Treasurer a belated happy birthday for yesterday.

*Governor*

**ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of messages regarding the administration of the Government.

*Question Time*

**THE HON. JOHN BARILARO**

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:19:22):** My question is directed to the Premier. Premier, last week your Deputy Premier, the Hon. John Barilaro, took extended leave for personal reasons. Have you picked up the phone and spoken to him?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:19:38):** The Deputy Premier and I were in constant communication last Friday.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The Deputy Premier very kindly expressed himself in the most personal way possible and I responded by reiterating full support to him and his family during this time. I was grateful to also receive important communication from him today.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I assure the House that I have extended not only my personal support to the Deputy Premier but also that of my department in relation to anything that he and his family might need during this difficult time.

**MEMBER FOR PORT MACQUARIE**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (14:20:53):** My question is directed to the Premier. The Port Macquarie community elected a National Party representative at the last three elections. On what date did the Premier first speak to the member for Port Macquarie about her defection to the Liberal Party?

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. I call the member for Bankstown to order for the first time. I call the Minister for Health and Medical Research, the member for Wakehurst, to order for the first time.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:21:22):** The reason New South Wales has been able to deal with the pandemic in the way it has is because the Liberal-Nationals Government is a strong government. I have had the opportunity to be a member in this place for 17 years and prior to entering Parliament I also had the opportunity to work in this place. One thing I know is that the National Party and the Liberal Party are strongest in coalition and are the strongest in providing good government to the people of this State.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. What date did the Premier first speak to the member for Port Macquarie about her defecting to the Liberal Party?

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The Premier will continue.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** It is very telling that in all the time this Parliament has sat since the COVID pandemic I have not been asked a single question on the pandemic.

**STRONGER COMMUNITIES FUND**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (14:22:46):** My question is directed to the Premier. In an email dated 25 June 2018 a senior policy adviser in her office said, "The Premier has signed the updated guidelines." Why did the Premier personally change the rules of a quarter of a billion dollar grant program to allow 95 per cent of those funds to go to Coalition seats?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:23:26):** I thank the member for Campbelltown for his question because it gives me the opportunity to thank the members for the electorates of Heffron, Maroubra and Rockdale, who proudly posed for a photo with a cheque in hand from the New South Wales Government Stronger Communities Fund at The Deli Women & Children's Centre.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I also acknowledge the member for Granville, who also proudly posted on Facebook the fantastic news that the Granville Centre had finally opened, thanks to a New South Wales Government grant.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The question relates to why the Premier personally changed the rules of the program—this email is dated 25 June—which allowed her to rort this grant program. Why did the Premier change the rules? The Premier is so far in this.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** In his absence—although he may be in the building somewhere—I acknowledge the member for Balmain, who also noted that the Village Church Sydney, at Annandale, received funding to create an open village garden. I also thank—

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** I presume it is a different point of order?

**Mr Greg Warren:** My point of order is under Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** The member will resume his seat. I ruled on that standing order literally 10 seconds ago.

**Mr Greg Warren:** It is in relation to the 95 per cent of the funds and why the Premier changed the guidelines to enable that.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier is being generally relevant.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I note also that Burwood Council received funding to deliver upgrades to Henley Park. I refer the Opposition to page 7 of the submission by Commissioner Peter Hall, QC, on the inquiry into the integrity, efficacy and value for money of New South Wales Government grant programs.

**DARYL MAGUIRE, FORMER MEMBER FOR WAGGA WAGGA**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:25:25):** My question is directed to the Premier. Did the Premier host a function in her boardroom or office for former MP Daryl Maguire and his business associates?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:25:44):** All of my public engagements and official functions are on the record through the diaries. I wish the Opposition would also publish their diaries as we publish ours.

**Mr Ryan Park:** It is a yes or no, did you or not? It is unbelievable.

**The SPEAKER:** Has the Premier completed her answer.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Yes.

**SOCIAL HOUSING**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (14:26:11):** My question is directed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing. Given that Lake Macquarie and other electorate offices are reporting a seeming increase in public housing maintenance complaints, including mould, mildew and sewerage, will the Minister assure the House that action will be taken to address that trend, noting the upcoming maintenance contract renewals?

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (14:26:41):** I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for his question. I assure the member that we are absolutely committed to ensuring that we fix the properties that need maintenance work across the State. We spend more than \$1 million a day doing that. We have responsibility for 125,000 properties across our asset portfolio. In 2019-20 an estimated

\$453 million was spent on our maintenance program, with about 2,000 maintenance requests received and actioned every day. Social housing tenants can report any concerns they have to our hotline. We are in constant contact with a lot of electorate offices where issues have been raised that need special and urgent attention.

Importantly, with the support of the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer, the Government's \$2.3 billion COVID-19 stimulus package enabled us to spend an extra \$47 million on urgent maintenance work across our property network. As well as backing jobs, the stimulus program has delivered important capital upgrades to support people and families living in social housing properties throughout New South Wales. It is important to acknowledge that we work hard every day on this, which is why an annual tenant survey of works completed through our free-call service has seen a regularly high customer service satisfaction rating of around 90 per cent. With the stimulus money, within 12 weeks more than 2,400 new work orders were issued by the Land and Housing Corporation [LAHC]. That provided about \$4 million extra per week in maintenance spending to improve over 2,200 dwellings and another 200 buildings, grounds and complexes.

This work also included pausing plans on the redevelopment of the ageing Arncliffe estate in Sydney's south, which I had visited with the Treasurer. We refurbished 142 units to provide emergency accommodation for social housing tenants through the COVID crisis. When the LAHC builds more new housing it not only provides shelter and security for people and families in need but it also reduces ongoing maintenance costs. That is what we are working towards: Making our network of homes modern and fit for purpose for today's age. We need to balance the high cost of maintaining ageing properties in some locations against the value that is created by building new homes fit for purpose so we can get our elderly people into one- and two-bedroom units, instead of three-bedroom houses on quarter-acre blocks.

For example, last week we launched the official start of a redevelopment project with our construction partner Growthbuilt where three outdated housing blocks will be knocked down and replaced with 44 high-quality, new social housing units at St Marys. That project will generate \$16 million in construction activity and create an estimated 80 jobs during the project's 12-month building phase. This is exciting for western Sydney. The LAHC currently has 46 housing renewal projects underway—like the St Marys project—in the Penrith, Blacktown, Cumberland and Hawkesbury local government areas. These projects are in various stages of delivery with different construction partners. These important projects will ensure that we have a more modern social housing network, which will reduce maintenance costs. I am very aware that it is a challenge we face every day—every day 2,000 jobs are completed and more than \$1 million is spent. Where there is urgent need we will always address those requests. The member for Lake Macquarie should feel free to come to my office for support.

#### *Committees*

### **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

#### **Reports**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** On behalf of the chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 20/57*, dated 22 September 2020. I move:

That the report be printed.

#### **Motion agreed to.**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** I also table the minute extracts of the committee meeting regarding *Legislation Review Digest No. 19/57*, dated 15 September 2020.

#### *Petitions*

### **PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

#### **Erskineville Railway Station**

Petition noting the rapidly increasing population of Erskineville and the need for a further entrance to Erskineville train station in order to increase accessibility, improve overall journey times and encourage a greater switch to public transport and calling on the Government to recommend the building of a southern entrance to Erskineville train station, received from **Ms Jenny Leong**.

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

#### **COVID-19 and Schools**

Petition noting the consequences of coronavirus-related restrictions on New South Wales school students' mental health and important educational, social and formative experiences and calling on the Government to lift restrictions on New South Wales schools immediately, received from **Mr David Mehan**.

*Business of the House*

**BUSINESS LAPSED**

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 1190, 1192 and 1193 to 1242 have lapsed.

*Bills*

**STRONGER COMMUNITIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (COURTS AND CIVIL) BILL 2020**

**Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (14:32:40):** I welcome the opportunity to speak on the Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Courts and Civil) Bill 2020. In particular, I focus on schedule 1.1 to the bill, which deals with the Children's Guardian Act. All members agree there is nothing more important than the safety and welfare of our children. The bill makes important amendments to the Children's Guardian Act to ensure that the Children's Guardian can continue to exercise her powers, functions and responsibilities through clear legislation that accords with current drafting practices.

Existing powers and functions have been moved from the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012 and the Adoption Regulation 2015 into the Children's Guardian Act 2019. It is very important that relevant legislative provisions in a particular area are contained within one place so that those who are responsible for understanding and administering those provisions can easily do so without having to go to many different places to understand the specific provisions that apply to them. Specific amendments confer functions and powers on the Children's Guardian, which were previously conferred by regulation. Repositioning existing regulatory provisions within the Children's Guardian Act 2019 provides a stronger foundation for the Children's Guardian's role as the central, independent regulator of child-safe organisations and services.

Recently we have seen, with royal commissions and so on, that the regulation of organisations and services to children is a particular area that requires careful scrutiny and control. The amendments will support the consolidated Children's Guardian regulation, which is due to commence in 2021. The Children's Guardian regulation will streamline the regulatory environment by bringing the Children's Guardian's existing regulatory functions under the umbrella of one global regulation. The amendments will work to regulate organisations that provide services to children and the people who provide those services, thereby promoting the quality of those organisations and services and ensuring that children who are placed in out-of-home care or involved with adoption services are kept safe.

The bill addresses a gap in the regulatory space by enabling a designated agency to withdraw an application for accreditation or surrender its accreditation. This is an agency-initiated process; however, the Children's Guardian can set the date for surrender of an agency's accreditation in certain circumstances—for example, where time is required to transfer children and carers to new placements. The amendments centralise the Children's Guardian's registration functions and provide a clearer basis for the information prescribed in the regulations for each register that is established and maintained. The amendments clarify reportable conduct obligations. Currently, third parties are not required to report reportable conduct for their employees, as there is no link between the reporting obligations of the third party and the relevant entity.

By establishing a link between the third party and the relevant entity, the bill addresses this gap and achieves the original intention underpinning the extension of the reportable conduct scheme to contractors and subcontractors engaged by third parties on behalf of a relevant entity. There could be no more important gap to fill to ensure that everyone involved with children has those reporting obligations. It is a very important reform that this bill brings forward. The bill extends also mandatory reporting obligations to third-party employers. These amendments are designed to ensure that the Children's Guardian will be made aware of reportable allegations and reportable conduct where third parties are providing services to children on behalf of a relevant entity. These amendments will provide stronger protections for children.

I applaud the Attorney General for bringing forward these reforms. This is incredibly important legislation that will protect some of the most vulnerable people in our community—vulnerable by reason of their age as well as their circumstances. We are all, in this place, incredibly cognisant not only of the advantages that a loving family environment can provide but also of the disadvantages that can be placed upon children who do not have that

benefit. I am pleased to support the amendments in this bill, which will clarify and streamline the Children's Guardian's functions and thereby strengthen the role of the Children's Guardian as the central regulator of organisations and persons providing critical services to the children of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (14:38:44):** I join my parliamentary colleague and shadow Attorney General, Mr Paul Lynch, and the Opposition in not opposing the Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Courts and Civil) Bill 2020, which proposes miscellaneous amendments to numerous Acts. The bill proposes to clarify numerous provisions in the Children's Guardian Act 2019, to improve court processes and civil procedures, and to strengthen and protect vulnerable members in our community. I will first address the critical amendments to the Children's Guardian Act 2019 that are proposed in the bill.

The Children's Guardian Act 2019 introduced an independent authority—the Children's Guardian—to protect young people in New South Wales. The Act legislates the existing functions and responsibilities of the Children's Guardian for accrediting and monitoring adoption services, providers and out-of-home care agencies and for regulating children's employment. The Children's Guardian Act rightfully imposes strict penalties for anyone who fails to comply with the regulations established in the Act. The welfare, safety and wellbeing of children and young persons in New South Wales is paramount. Everyone in our State and community must work together to ensure children are appropriately protected and safeguarded.

Children and young persons are often the most vulnerable members of our society, and it is imperative that the services provided by agencies that are governed by the Children's Guardian provide adequate and effective care. The Children's Guardian Act has addressed existing loopholes and ensured that the framework for protecting children and young persons is as robust as possible. However, the following amendments intend to address the numerous gaps in the current legislation that are still present. The bill proposes a six-month time frame before a designated agency providing services to children can leave the industry. The six-month notice period proposed in the amendments provides adequate time for the Children's Guardian authority to designate alternative agencies to take on these placements. This is an important amendment. The six-month time frame ensures no child or young person is forgotten and ensures all placements are appropriately dealt with.

The bill further amends the Children's Guardian Act 2019 to more appropriately protect children and young persons in New South Wales. Currently, section 27 (2) of the Children's Guardian Act 2019 requires only employees—defined to include contractors—to report allegations to the relevant entities. The Children's Guardian Act does not require third-party employers to report allegations to the relevant entities, which severely affects the protection of children. Schedule 1.1 [1] to [7] to the bill imposes an express obligation on third-party employers to report reportable allegations where the third party is providing services to children on the relevant entity's behalf. This amendment ensures that all bodies working with children are responsible for protecting children, which will further ensure the safety and wellbeing of children in New South Wales.

Protecting children and young persons in New South Wales is not debatable. We must continue to approach this matter in a bipartisan manner and take a tough and necessary stance to protect our children and keep them safe. I support the amendments proposed in the Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Courts and Civil) Bill that will ensure our commitment to protecting children and young persons. The bill also deals with a range of other miscellaneous amendments to numerous New South Wales Acts. It proposes to amend the Criminal Records Act 1991 to require an applicant who is applying for employment within the Office of the Sheriff or within the Department of Communities and Justice to provide information on all individual prior spent convictions. This requirement is essential.

Employees of the Sheriff's office are some of the most trusted members of the government service. They are trusted with protecting the community and ensuring our safety and wellbeing; thus it is appropriate that an extensive background check is undertaken and all criminal offences are disclosed to the Sheriff's office. The vigorous screening process this amendment proposes will allow the NSW Police Force to continue the great work it does and ensure that the right individuals are appointed to and employed by the Sheriff's office to protect our community. The amendment proposed in schedule 1.13 makes minor yet fundamental changes to the Supreme Court Act 1970.

The amendment alters the definition of a judge or member of the bench to include former or retired judges from numerous courts, including the Supreme Court of New South Wales, the Federal Court of Australia and the High Court of Australia. This amendment will allow the court to undertake reviews and appeals against the decision of a former or retired justice in the Court of Appeal, which is currently prohibited. The amendment will ensure that courts in New South Wales can come to a decision that is correct and just, addressing matters even if a judge has retired. In April this year the New South Wales Government introduced section 17 of the Electronic Transactions Act as part of the emergency COVID-19 legislation. The Electronic Transactions Act condoned the witnessing and attestation of documents to be conducted remotely through audiovisual links. These measures were

implemented in order to deal with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions placed on members of our community.

The regulation implemented by the Government will last only until 23 October 2020 due to the six-month condition. However, under the proposed amendments, remote witnessing of documents via audiovisual links will be permitted until the end of 2021. This amendment is extremely important as society finds ways to adapt to a new way of life during these uncertain times. It is important we understand the difficulties that members of our community face, and support them during these challenging times. Hence, I support the amendments to extend the use of remote witnessing and attestation of documents. I join my parliamentary colleagues in not opposing the amendments proposed in the Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Courts and Civil) Bill 2020. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (14:45:51):** It is a pleasure to speak to the Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Courts and Civil) Bill 2020. I will refer to the bill's amendments to the Trustee Act. As the Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Justice, I commend the member for Prospect for his comments about the appointment of New South Wales sheriffs and the important role played by the NSW Police Force. I note that the Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections is nodding in agreement. The bill was introduced on 16 September 2020 by the Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, and I commend him for his good work. The Attorney General said:

The bill introduces a number of miscellaneous amendments to address developments in case law, support procedural improvements and close gaps in the law that have become apparent relating to courts and civil procedure. In particular these amendments will strengthen our community through improving court processes and integrity, improving civil procedure and the administration of trusts, and clarifying provisions of the Children's Guardian Act 2019 in relation to reportable conduct matters and the Children's Guardian's role as an independent regulator.

Members will be aware that miscellaneous amendment bills are typically introduced into Parliament each session as part of the Government's regular legislative program. However, disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic—which is continuing—meant that the legislation was unable to be debated until this date. So four miscellaneous bills are being introduced this session. In relation to the amendments to the Trustee Act 1925, schedule 1.14 to the bill makes a number of amendments to improve the administration of trusts. I support those amendments.

Schedule 1.14 [1] to the bill amends the Trustee Act 1925 to confer on the trustee the power to apply income of property held in trust for an adult beneficiary towards the adult beneficiary's maintenance, education or benefit. Where a trust does not provide for or prevent trust income from being used for the maintenance, education and benefit of a beneficiary, section 43 of the Trustee Act 1925 provides that trust income can be used for those purposes, but only for an infant—that is, a person under the age of 18 years. The amendment modernises this aspect of the Trustee Act, which is premised on the assumption that a person would attain financial independence by 18 years—which is often no longer the case. The amendment was proposed by the Law Society of New South Wales and will bring New South Wales law in line with other Australian jurisdictions, such as Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia, which enables trust income to be paid to an adult beneficiary for the duration of the trust.

Schedule 1.14 [3] to the bill amends section 44 of the Trustee Act 1925 to remove the limitations in this provision contained in section 44 (1A) and prevents trust capital from being paid for the maintenance or education of an infant where the trust property or the infant's share exceeds \$4,000. Importantly, this amendment was proposed by the Law Society of New South Wales. The authors of the leading textbook on the law of the trusts, *Jacob's Law of Trusts*, have said that there is no sensible explanation for the provisions of section 44 (1A). The amendment will remove the outdated limit of \$4,000, which was introduced in 1938 and is no longer an accurate reflection of the value of trust property. Given that, in practice, trust property usually is valued at more than \$4,000—in most cases, involving an infant beneficiary—the effect of subsection (1A) is to mean the trustee has no power to draw on trust capital for maintenance or education of an infant. The limitation under section 44 (1) of the Trustee Act 1925 would continue to apply, being that where an infant is entitled to the capital of the trust property or any share of it, a trustee may use up to half the value of the property or share for the infant's maintenance, education, advancement or benefit.

Schedule 1.14 [4] to the bill amends the Trustee Act 1925 to permit the court to approve arrangements to vary or revoke trusts. Settlers often create trusts without consideration of future circumstances and there may be a need to amend the trust to accommodate these. At present, the Trustee Act 1925 does not authorise the court to make orders for the variation of trusts that are not concerned with the management or administration of trust assets. The amendment will ensure that the court can approve arrangements to vary or revoke trusts where this is beneficial to the interests of the beneficiaries or to the fulfilment of the trust purpose. This amendment was also proposed by the Law Society of New South Wales and will bring New South Wales law into line with law in the United Kingdom and all other Australian jurisdictions, other than the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital

Territory. I commend the Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence for introducing the bill, and I commend it to the House.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (14:53:00):** I note that the Attorney General is in the Chamber. I also note that the member for Cootamundra will follow me in this debate. I acknowledge the excellent contributions from members representing the electorates of Tweed, Ku-ring-gai and Seven Hills. I congratulate the Minister and his team on bringing forward these amendments to the Stronger Communities Amendment (Courts and Civil) Bill 2020. I will focus on the remote witnessing of documents, which is an excellent scheme. That part of the bill was introduced on the Central Coast as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic regulations, and has proven to be incredibly beneficial. Schedules 1.5 and 1.6 to the bill amend the Electronic Transactions Act 2000 to extend the operation of provisions enabling the witnessing and attestation of documents to be conducted remotely through audiovisual link until the end of 2021.

I support the extension of remote witnessing arrangements. Especially in regional areas such as my Central Coast electorate and the electorate of Cootamundra, it is vital that both businesses and individuals alike have access to those remote witnessing arrangements. The extension of remote witnessing will allow sufficient time for the Government to assess the effectiveness of those arrangements and consult with the legal profession about whether longer term reforms are required moving forward. Remote witnessing was initially facilitated by the Electronic Transactions Amendment (COVID-19 Witnessing of Documents) Regulation 2020, which was passed in this Chamber in April 2020 as part of the Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The regulation was one of many initiatives of the New South Wales Government to support businesses and ensure that important transactions could continue to occur while people complied with very important public health orders.

In April, which seems so long ago, people were genuinely scared, especially in regional areas such as the Central Coast and, I suspect, Cootamundra and others. They were genuinely frightened. We did not know what to expect. However, we had to make sure that we were not isolated and had access to all of the required services that anybody in the city could have access to. Part of the regulation change was that Service NSW established a 24-hour COVID-19 hotline to assist businesses and individuals to understand available assistance and public health requirements. That 13 77 88 hotline is one of the greatest initiatives I have seen in recent times. It gave people the confidence to call up 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year and speak to somebody working for Service NSW who could give them the correct answers to the questions they might have.

The feedback members have had through our offices since the introduction of that hotline has been nothing short of staggering; I know the member for Lane Cove had similar feedback in his electorate. The Service NSW concept is one of the greatest initiatives that this Government has ever introduced. To then double down on that and provide that 24-hour COVID-19 hotline gave people comfort in a time of crisis that the Government was looking after them and could give them a one-stop shop for the best correct advice about what to do moving forward. We have wonderful organisations on the coast. I commend the incredible team at Service NSW. In my electorate I have Service NSW centres at Erina, Woy Woy and two at Tuggerah. They provide an incredible service to our community, which was assisted by the 24-hour hotline.

The amendment of the Local Government Act 1993 to allow councils to continue to meet and members of the public to observe their meetings in a way that does not expose participants and attendees to the risk of the transmission of COVID-19 was also important. Local government has played an important part in continuing to deliver on the Government's commitments, especially on the Central Coast. With financial support from the State Government we have got millions of dollars worth of infrastructure being rolled out from one end of the Central Coast to the other. Central Coast Council was able to continue to meet and keep the community informed as to what it was doing, working side by side with the State Government. I congratulate CEO Gary Murphy and his fantastic staff, who have continued to meet. I speak regularly with Mr Murphy and those lines of communication have always been open.

To allow the community to see firsthand that local, State and Federal governments were all working for the betterment of the community during this crisis was so important. It became an important aspect for our community to be able to see that our council was still getting on with the job of rolling out millions of dollars worth of infrastructure. We had to make sure we pulled every economic lever. The best way to do it on the Central Coast is to keep delivering the infrastructure. The corrections Minister has been to the Central Coast many times. He knows we are delivering roads, hospitals, school upgrades: You name it, it is getting done on the Central Coast. More importantly, every one of those projects provides jobs for local tradies. The Leagues Club Field that the Minister announced is providing literally 100-odd jobs and a \$10 million investment. All these projects that local government is delivering are well funded by this Government.

**Mr Anthony Roberts:** Thanks to the member for Terrigal.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** And thanks to you too, Minister. The Minister and I stood at Leagues Club Field to announce a \$10 million investment. These are the important levers that the Government has been able to pull, as well as keeping the community informed as to what is happening. They need to be brought along on the journey to know exactly what is going on. That allays any of their potential fears, because they are seeing the facts firsthand—whether it be at the local, State or Federal government level. An additional amendment was to the Interpretation Act 1987 to enable regulations to be made altering arrangements for physically attending places and calling or holding meetings, including regulations that allowed meetings to be held using communication technology. There was significant support among stakeholders consulted on the regulation for remote witnessing to be authorised on a continuing basis.

Schedules 1.5 and 1.6 to the bill provide the Government with an opportunity to assess the merits of extending remote witnessing beyond the immediate circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. Allowing remote witnessing on a continuing basis could provide ongoing efficiencies in the execution of documents in light of the widespread availability of videoconferencing technology. Again, on the Central Coast we have really pivoted the way in which we communicate. It is a very large region. Being able to hook up online with stakeholders and go through issues has transformed the way in which members communicate with the community. It is a lot more efficient in a lot of cases, but it also gives us an early touchpoint.

The proposed arrangements retain the existing safeguards associated with witnessing of documents. Under the provisions facilitating remote witnessing, the witness must satisfy themselves of all the same things as they would have if they were witnessing a document in person. For example, a witness to an enduring power of attorney document must certify that the signatory appeared to understand the effects of that document. Furthermore, remote witnessing is not mandatory and does not do away with the ability to witness documents in person. A witness may refuse to witness a document remotely if they form the view that they cannot fulfil relevant witnessing requirements. In addition, the extension of remote witnessing addresses ongoing COVID-19 related restrictions and the risk of further restrictions.

The uncertainty that COVID-19 presents makes it more urgent than ever that a person can make legally effective estate planning decisions, make appropriate arrangements for someone to make personal and financial decisions on their behalf if they become unable to do so, or execute a range of other important legal documents. Extending the operation of provisions enabling remote witnessing until the end of 2021 allows the Government to assess the effectiveness of these arrangements and consider and consult on whether longer term reform is required. In addition, and as I stated, the provisions enabling remote witnessing do not remove existing safeguards associated with witnessing or do away with the ability to witness documents in person.

In conclusion, I highlight the excellent stakeholder management by the Attorney General and his team with the drafting of this amendment. I note the engagement with the Local Court, District Court, Supreme Court, the Children's Court, the Law Society of New South Wales, the New South Wales Bar Association, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Legal Aid NSW, the Public Defenders Office, Victims Services, the NSW Police Force, the Aboriginal Legal Service, the Judicial Commission of New South Wales, Women's Legal Service NSW, and the NSW Justices Association. The Attorney General and his team have done wideranging stakeholder engagement, which brings together this excellent amendment bill to the existing Acts. I congratulate the Attorney General and his team and I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (15:03:02):** I make a contribution to debate on the Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Courts and Civil) Bill 2020. Specifically, I will talk to the amendments to the Children's Guardian Act 2019. I welcome the opportunity to speak on those amendments contained within this important piece of legislation. The safety of our children is paramount. Members know that when our children are safe, protected and loved they have every chance of reaching their full potential. As a member from the country, I know only too well that our children really are the future of the small towns and villages I travel around. Therefore, we have an obligation to ensure that we provide the strongest possible framework and foundation for the Children's Guardian to execute its important role.

The amendments will ensure that the Children's Guardian can continue exercising her powers, functions and responsibility through clear legislation that accords with current drafting practices. Existing powers and functions have been moved from the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012 and the Adoption Regulation 2015 into the Children's Guardian Act 2019. Specific amendments confer functions and powers of the Children's Guardian that were previously conferred by regulation. Repositioning existing regulatory provisions within the Children's Guardian Act 2019 provides a stronger foundation for the Children's Guardian's role as the central independent regulator for child safe organisations and services.

The amendments will support the consolidated Children's Guardian regulation, which is due to commence in 2021. The Children's Guardian regulation will streamline the regulatory environment by bringing the Children's Guardian's existing regulatory functions under the one umbrella. The amendments will work to regulate

organisations that provide services to children and the people who provide those services, thereby promoting the quality of these organisations and services, and ensuring that children who are placed in out-of-home care or who are involved with adoption services are kept safe. That is so important, particularly for young people who are the most vulnerable in our community owing to circumstances that are beyond their control and because they are so young.

The bill addresses a gap in the regulatory space by enabling a designated agency to withdraw an application for accreditation or surrender its accreditation. This is an agency-initiated process. However, the Children's Guardian can set the date for surrender of an agency's accreditation in certain circumstances—for example, when time is required to transfer children and carers to new placements. The amendments centralise the Children's Guardian's registration functions and provide a clearer basis for the information prescribed in the regulations for each register that is established and maintained. The amendments clarify reportable conduct obligations. Currently, third parties are not required to report reportable conduct for their employers as there is no link between the reporting obligations of the third party and the relevant entity. By establishing a link between the third party and the relevant entity the bill addresses this gap and achieves the original intention underpinning the extension of the reportable conduct scheme to contractors and subcontractors engaged by third parties on behalf of a relevant entity.

The bill extends mandatory reporting obligations to third-party employers. These amendments are designed to ensure that the Children's Guardian will be made aware of reportable allegations and reportable conduct where third parties are providing services to children on behalf of a relevant entity. These amendments will provide stronger protections for children. In conclusion, I state I am pleased to support the amendments in the bill because they will clarify and streamline the Children's Guardian's functions, thereby strengthening the Children's Guardian's role as the central regulator of organisations and persons providing critical services to the children of New South Wales. I thank the Attorney General and his team for the work that has been done in this space and for bringing these important amendments to the House through the Stronger Communities Legislation Amendments (Courts and Civil) Bill 2020. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (15:09:04):** In reply: I thank the members for Liverpool, Tweed, Ku-ring-gai, Prospect, Seven Hills, Terrigal and Cootamundra for their contributions to the debate. The New South Wales Department of Communities and Justice consulted with key interested stakeholders on the development of policy proposals within this bill. I thank stakeholders who participated in the consultation process. Consultation was undertaken with, among others, heads of jurisdiction, the Law Society of New South Wales, the New South Wales Bar Association, Legal Aid NSW, the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) and the Women's Legal Services NSW.

Specialised stakeholders were consulted on the amendments to the Trustee Act, including major law firms such as Allens, and King & Wood Mallesons. I thank the Australian Banking Association and the New South Wales Justices Association, which were consulted on the amendment relating to the remote witnessing of documents. The bill is an important part of the Government's regular legislative review and monitoring program. Many of the amendments in the bill are technical in nature and they are important steps towards further strengthening our justice system. They address emerging issues, support procedural improvements, clarify uncertainty and correct errors in legislation relating to courts and civil procedure. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## STRONGER COMMUNITIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CRIMES) BILL 2020

### Second Reading Debate

**Debate resumed from 16 September 2020.**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (15:11:30):** I lead for the Opposition on the Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Crimes) Bill 2020. The Opposition does not oppose the bill. The object of the bill is to amend various Acts relating to crimes and to other matters in the portfolio area of Communities and Justice. This is a bill of miscellaneous proposed amendments. The Attorney presents them as arising from the Government's

regular legislative reviews and monitoring program. The Government has threatened four of these bills before the end of the calendar year: This bill is the second. The novelty here is that the title of the bill has been changed from the traditional justice legislation amendment bill or something similar to the slightly Orwellian Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Crimes) Bill.

The most interesting item in this bill, and the one the Government has chosen to publicise, is the change to section 316 of the Crimes Act. I am pleased the Government has finally got with the program on this. Heaven knows it has been prodded a few times about it. Section 316 of the Crimes Act makes it an offence for a person to conceal information without a reasonable excuse about a serious indictable offence. Some time ago Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia [R&DVSA] expressed concern that this concealment offence was having an unintended effect on people impacted by sexual violence. In effect the provision appeared to obligate any person receiving a disclosure of sexual violence to report that to the police, even when that goes against the wishes of the person who experienced the sexual violence. R&DVSA said to me:

This is contrary to principles of trauma-informed practice, which provide that complainants should be empowered throughout the recovery process to regain a sense of control, choice and agency.

They also said:

R&DVSA is concerned that as a result of the concealment offence, numerous organisations have adopted a policy that every disclosure of sexual assault must be reported to police, even where this goes against the wishes of the complainant.

The obligation to report runs the risk of discouraging people who have experienced sexual assault from accessing support services or non-criminal disciplinary processes. It ran the risk, when non-consensual reports to police were made, that complainants would experience amplified harm due to further violation of their privacy and autonomy. Part of what sparked these concerns flowed from the campaign against sexual assault on campuses, the End Rape on Campus campaign. Very properly that campaign resulted in campuses reviewing and rewriting their policies in this area.

Inevitably, that was done by lawyers who, equally inevitably and properly, pointed to section 316 and required mandatory reporting to the police to relieve potential criminal liability on the part of the institution and its employees, regardless of the consent of the person who had experienced sexual violence. This certainly was the adopted policy of Universities Australia and was certainly adopted by a number of universities. I hasten to make clear that I am not being critical of universities as this was an inevitable consequence of their lawyers looking into what the law said. As an alternative, R&DVSA particularly pointed to the provisions of section 316A in which reasonable excuse was itemised in a non-exhaustive way. Labor raised this issue during estimates hearings in September last year, some time after an approach had been made to the Government. It was raised again at estimates in March this year and the questions were taken on notice. That has resulted in the bill before the House.

The bill amends section 316 by providing that a person will have a reasonable excuse where the information relates to a sexual and domestic violence offence, the alleged victim is an adult at the time the information is obtained and the person believes on reasonable grounds that the alleged victim does not want to have the information reported to authorities. I am not sure this is quite what Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia was seeking. I think it wanted a clearer structure in which this concealment provision did not apply to these type of assaults. However, using the mechanism of "reasonable excuse" is probably enough to deal with the institutional problem I mentioned earlier. Of course, the provision does not prohibit other issues being raised as a "reasonable excuse".

There are a range of other amendments in the bill. The time limit in which to commence a prosecution for contravening a non-publication or suppression order is extended from six months to two years. There is an alteration to section 24A of the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act so that the declaration applies to each location at which police officers are responding to an incident. Current drafting probably will not cover the situation where a terrorism offender is mobile. Power is now given to the Minister for the purposes of a statutory review of the Act to require information from the Commissioner of Police about declarations he has made under part 2AAA of the Act. Clarifications are provided about terms of parole orders and the like concerning the extraterritorial operation of some conditions. There are also clarifications about technical aspects of appeal proceedings.

The Criminal Records Act is amended so that an offence resulting in a non-conviction conditional release order is spent upon satisfactory completion of the order. LEPR is amended to allow police officers to enter premises where they reasonably believe that a person has died, not as the result of an offence, and is on the premises but there is no occupier present to consent to entry. Prior approval from senior officers is required. There are a number of consequential amendments flowing from the Mental Health Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act and a number of proposals around juvenile and detention centres. Corrective Services is enabled to transport juvenile detainees who are designated as being of national security interest. Persons aged 18 to 21 are

not to be detained in a Youth Justice detention centre if they have previously been detained in an adult correctional centre for more than four weeks or have been previously transferred from Youth Justice custody to adult custody.

There is an amendment to an existing but not commenced provision that will allow the Communities and Justice departmental secretary to share information with an Australian intelligence agency. There are also amendments to the Surveillance Devices Act, one of which will expand the bodies that can now use lawfully obtained surveillance device material. It will now be able to be used in State Parole Authority proceedings under parts 6 and 7 of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act, in applications under the Crimes (Forensic Procedure) Act and in NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal proceedings about appeals against a decision to issue a licence or other permit. It will also be able to be used in applications under the Crimes (Serious Crime Prevention Orders) Act.

There is also an amendment to introduce a further exception to the delegation to law enforcement officers to apply for approval after using a surveillance device without warrant in an emergency. This is to apply to an optical surveillance device to observe activity only but not to record activity. The other requirements for emergency use of surveillance devices remain. The Attorney General explained in his second reading speech that examples that were meant to be caught by this provision include telescopic sights on firearms, binoculars and infrared equipment. There is also an amendment to allow for remote applications for the emergency use of a surveillance device, where the relevant judge so requests. The Opposition does not oppose the bill.

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (15:18:25):** I lend my support to the Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Crimes) Bill 2020, which proposes amendments to the Crimes (Appeal and Review) Act 2001. In New South Wales the primary way to request that a conviction or sentence be reconsidered is to appeal. The Attorney General has no role in considering or determining appeals; they are heard and considered by the courts. However, the Crimes (Appeal and Review) Act 2001 provides alternative mechanisms to appeal in certain circumstances. If a person is convicted in the Local Court, section 5 of the Crimes (Appeal and Review) Act allows applications for annulment of a conviction or sentence made or imposed by the Local Court to be made to the Minister. The Minister, if satisfied that a question or doubt exists as to the defendant's guilt or as to the defendant's liability for a penalty, may refer the application to the Local Court. In addition, section 77 of the Crimes (Appeal and Review) Act enables the Minister to deal with petitions for a review of a conviction or sentence.

These functions are currently exercised by the Attorney General as the Minister administering the Crimes (Appeal and Review) Act. However, because the provisions do not currently specifically confer these functions on the Attorney General, it prevents these functions being delegated to the Solicitor General. The Attorney General may delegate to the Solicitor General the exercise or discharge of such powers that may be exercised or discharged by the Attorney General. This includes any power, authority, duty or function of the Attorney General to intervene in any proceedings before a court or tribunal. The functions under sections 5 and 77 are not covered by the delegation power under the Solicitor General Act as they are not currently designated as functions of the Attorney General and they do not involve intervening in proceedings before a court or tribunal.

Schedule 1.7 to the bill will amend the Crimes (Appeal and Review) Act to provide that the functions of the Minister under sections 5 and 77 are functions of the Attorney General as first law officer. The amendments in this bill will enable this delegation and bring New South Wales into line with all other jurisdictions in Australia which specifically confer these functions or similar functions on the Attorney General or first law officer. Functions of the Attorney General derive from both Executive prerogative power at common law and from statute. Among the most significant prerogative powers are the power to advise on the grant of a pardon and the power to apply for judicial review. These are the functions under sections 5 and 77. It is necessary and appropriate that these functions are exercised by the Attorney General as the first law officer.

I am pleased to support the amendments in this bill. The bill will ensure that the functions under the Crimes (Appeal and Review) Act to advise on the grant of a pardon and apply for judicial review are exercised by the Attorney General and will allow the delegation of these powers to the Solicitor General, thereby improving the efficiency of these review processes. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:22:15):** I make a contribution to debate on the Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Crimes) Bill 2020. The amendments in the bill affect 16 Acts as part of the Government's general process of review of legislation. The majority of these amendments are minor and clarify the meaning of existing legislation. NSW Labor does not oppose the legislation. I will address a number of the 16 pieces of legislation that are impacted by the bill. The significant reforms include clarifying "reasonable excuse" for failing to report information relating to alleged sexual offences and alleged domestic violence offences under section 316 of the Crimes Act—a change demanded by advocates such as Karen Willis, OAM. I note that that has been the subject of questioning by the Labor Opposition at several estimates hearings. Further the amendments to the bill includes clarifying information and intelligence disclosures concerning detention centres,

providing a police officer with powers to enter premises where a deceased person is on the premises and providing power to the Minister to require information from the police commissioner about declarations of terrorist acts for the purpose of reviewing the Act. I will deal with four Acts: the Surveillance Devices Act 2007; the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002; the Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987; and the Court Suppression and Non-Publication Orders Act 2010.

The bill amends the Surveillance Devices Act 2007, in that it is sometimes necessary for law enforcement officers to conduct emergency electronic surveillance without first obtaining a warrant if there is a threat of serious injury or substantial property damage. In these circumstances, warrantless electronic surveillance is permissible under the reforms in the Act. This amendment removes the extraneous requirement that law enforcement officers apply to a judge for approval of their actions if they have used a device to observe and not record. The bill further amends the Surveillance Devices Act 2007 to allow surveillance obtained under this Act to be used in more relevant proceedings, including parole orders, forensic procedure orders or firearms prohibition orders.

This is surveillance that has already been lawfully obtained in relation to an investigation and may be useful for the decision-making process in another proceeding. This is a sensible reform that will improve the abilities of our courts to come to appropriate decisions. The bill also modernises the Surveillance Devices Act by allowing an application for surveillance device warrants to be made by telephone, email or other means of communication if it is impractical for the application to be made in person. These applications can be made at the discretion of the judge or magistrate hearing the application. This is an important change that will allow law enforcement officers to be able to more quickly start electronic surveillance of criminal targets.

The second major change that the bill makes is to the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002. Section 24A of this Act allows the police commissioner to make a declaration in regards to a terrorist act which enables part 2AAA of the Act to apply. This protects police from criminal liability when using force in reaction to a declared terrorist incident. Under the current Act this authorisation is limited to a specific geographic area. This is not fit for purpose. The recent experience of terrorist attacks around the world has seen an increased incidence of moving targets that attack in several geographic areas and move on to other attack sites. The bill will further amend the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002 to state that "a declaration made under this Part applies to each location at which police officers are responding to the incident". This will allow police to respond more effectively to terrorist issues in New South Wales. This Act will be further amended to increase the scrutiny of the police commissioner's action in making a declaration. The Minister will be able to require the police commissioner to provide information regarding declarations for review.

The third major set of reforms made by the bill is to the Children (Detention Centre) Act 1987. These reforms will allow Youth Justice NSW to request that Corrective Services NSW staff transport juvenile detainees who have been designated as a national security interest. These offenders have been detained for terrorism-related offences. These detainees pose a threat to our community and it is appropriate that appropriately trained Corrective Services NSW staff are used for their transport. We must ensure our community's safety by ensuring juvenile detainees who have been designated as a national security interest are monitored appropriately. The Children (Detention Centre) Act 1987 is also amended to ensure that persons aged 18 to 21 are not detained in a Youth Justice detention centre if they have served time in an adult correctional facility for more than four weeks or have been previously transferred from Youth Justice custody to adult custody.

The holding of detainees in youth facilities who have already served time in adult facilities creates operation challenges for Youth Justice NSW. These offenders are more appropriately held in adult facilities. The bill also makes an amendment to the Court Suppression and Non-Publication Orders Act 2010. This amendment will increase the time frame to commence proceedings in the Local Court from six months to two years. This will allow prosecutions for breaches that may have occurred on any number of distribution channels. I join with my New South Wales Opposition colleagues in not opposing the amendments in the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (15:29:13):** I speak to the amendments to the Surveillance Devices Act. The Act is an important piece of legislation that has laws to regulate the use of surveillance devices. It is an important Act because it protects the privacy of individuals, their conversations and how they go about their everyday lives, but there are circumstances where it is appropriate for those privacy protections to be removed. That is the subject of our amendments today. It is quite a serious matter when people are surveilled without their consent or without appropriate circumstance, including criminal offences under the Act. As I said, there are times where it is appropriate and what we are doing today is proposing an amendment, agreed to by the Opposition, to make the Act more contemporary and respond to gaps and inconsistencies. That is the nature of these miscellaneous bills before the House.

The Surveillance Devices Act was introduced in 2007 to replace and modernise the Listening Devices Act 1984. It implemented a national model that was developed by a joint working group of attorneys-general,

which was known at the time as the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, or SCAG for short, and the Australasian Police Ministers' Council on National Investigative Powers. At the time of its introduction to Parliament in 2007, the Surveillance Devices Act was described in the second reading speech as essential to:

... assist the operational needs of police by regulating new technology that is needed to track, monitor and investigate serious crime, and to match the increasingly sophisticated techniques used by criminals.

They are worthy policy objectives and examples of when the privacy of individuals may be incurred upon for a better public policy pursuit of people's safety. The 2007 Act regulates the installation, use, maintenance and retrieval of surveillance devices by law enforcement officers when they are investigating suspected criminal activity. The Act also provides for the use of surveillance devices in cross-border investigations as part of a national framework with similar regimes in place in most jurisdictions. It also permits body-worn video to be used by New South Wales police officers. All of us in the House know that the use of body-worn video has been important in bringing to light a number of family and domestic violence situations, in bringing evidence to court to protect victims and in bringing perpetrators to justice. As time has gone on there have been changes that we want to make to the Surveillance Devices Act to make it contemporary.

Section 40 of the Act creates a prohibition on the use, communication or publication of protected information, which is any information obtained through the use of a surveillance device under a warrant, emergency authorisation, corresponding warrant or corresponding emergency authorisation. However, the offence does not apply to protected information published or communicated if it is necessary for the purpose of what is defined as a "relevant proceeding". That definition is set out in section 4. There is currently a list of 18 proceedings, including the prosecution of a relevant offence or a hearing before the New South Wales Crime Commission, et cetera.

Amendments to section 4 will allow protected information to be used, published or communicated in additional proceedings, if it is necessary, including proceedings before the State Parole Authority under certain parts of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act, applications to a court under the Crimes (Serious Crime Prevention Orders) Act 2016, applications under the Crimes (Forensic Procedures) Act 2000, and proceedings before the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] under the Firearms Act. Those amendments to extend the scope of relevant proceedings are an important step. They will ensure that lawfully obtained surveillance device material can be used to help decision-makers in those respective forums in any of these proceedings. It is important. We want to make sure that our justice system, whether it is NCAT or the Supreme Court, has all the permissible evidence available to it to dispense the justice the community expects.

The optical surveillance devices exception is another feature of the bill before the House. The bill also provides an exception to the requirement for law enforcement officers to apply for approval after using a surveillance device without warrant in an emergency situation. This amendment removes the deterrent from police using the equipment they need to observe an evolving emergency situation. I will briefly describe why that is warranted. Section 4 of the Surveillance Devices Act 2007 defines an "optical surveillance device" as "any device capable of being used to record visually or observe an activity, but does not include spectacles, contact lenses or a similar device used by a person with impaired sight to overcome that impairment".

This definition may be interpreted as capturing operational aids including telescopic equipment on firearms, binoculars and infra-red equipment. These devices are often used by police to assist in operations, particularly in emergencies including hostage situations, sieges and other tactical operations. Some of these operational aids may be capable of visual recording and all may be used to "observe an activity" and therefore may be captured by the definition of "optical surveillance device". This means that requirements regarding surveillance device warrants and emergency authorisations could apply to the use of this type of equipment, including when police officers enter premises, such as a yard, to observe nearby activity as part of an emergency response.

This may deter police officers from using this equipment in emergency situations. I am sure that was not an intended consequence of any amendments and is definitely not a good policy outcome given the frame of the Act we are now amending. The amendment is that we insert an additional exception to the prohibition on the use of optical surveillance devices under section 8, being that these particular optical surveillance devices may be used by police officers in an emergency situation where these devices are being used to observe only but not to record. The amendment to the Act provides an exception to the requirement for law enforcement officers to apply for approval after the use of a surveillance device without a warrant, being where an optical surveillance device is required to be used by a law enforcement officer in an emergency. This amendment will provide certainty and clarity for law enforcement officers observing targets, hostages or a stronghold in an emergency situation. That is a good reason to provide that that warrant does not have to be sought after the event. Law enforcement officers will not be second-guessing what they are doing in the heat of the moment when they are in emergency situations.

The bill also makes amendments to modernise the remote application process for surveillance device warrants and emergency authorisations. Currently affidavits supporting remote applications for surveillance device warrants are required to be transmitted by facsimile. I am not sure whether facsimile machines are even technologies available in offices anymore, let alone whether they are used. I certainly have not used one in a number of years. The amendments in the bill will finally remove this requirement and enable affidavits to be transmitted by any other means. This is an important change—a contemporary and long overdue one, I am sure.

In short, these amendments make good sense. They make good sense in a policy framework. It is the evolution of a bill as new technologies come to the fore or as we see there are gaps in pieces of legislation that do not work operationally. Because, after all, these are exceptions to the regulation of incursions on people's privacy, so it is important that we consider them before the House. But in this case the amendments to the Surveillance Devices Act make sense and are practical. They will ensure that our law enforcement agencies and courts are empowered to do the important job they do in making sure we have justice delivered in our State. With that, I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (15:39:19):** I make a brief contribution to debate on to the Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Crimes) Bill 2020, mainly to address provisions in 1.4 that amend the definition of what constitutes a "reasonable excuse" for failing to report information on alleged sexual offences and domestic violence offences. This is an important reform which will mean counsellors, family members or friends of adult survivors of sexual or domestic abuse no longer risk being prosecuted if they do not report the crimes to authorities at the survivor's behest. Currently if someone knows of information that might lead to a serious indictable offence and choose not to report it to authorities without a "reasonable excuse" they can be jailed for up to five years.

While we need to strengthen the systems of reporting of sexual abuse and domestic violence, it is also critical that we respect the wishes of survivors. This bill clearly acknowledges that currently survivors may choose not to report crimes if they believe the person they are disclosing to risks being prosecuted themselves or may act against their wishes and report the crime to police without their consent. In its submission to the Australian Human Rights Commission's University Sexual Assault and Harassment Project the organisation End Rape on Campus explains the reasons why survivors may choose not to report as follows:

In our experience, there are many reasons why survivors may not want police involvement, including fear of perpetrator reprisals, concern for the perpetrator or their family, knowledge or experience of the ineffectual and traumatic nature of the criminal justice system, wanting to seek redress more locally, and a need to address their more immediate needs first.

The submission also notes:

Pressure to report to police, campus security, or any other group can exacerbate feelings of powerlessness and compound existing trauma.

While the current law seeks to ensure the protection of survivors it has in many ways had the perverse effect of contributing to the significant underreporting of crimes and keeping survivors from accessing the crisis, mental health and social support they need. I also note the concerns of Karen Willis, executive officer at Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia, that the current law could wrongly implicate staff, frontline workers or anyone who receives a disclosure, adding stress to what is already a deeply distressing situation for any frontline worker. This bill removes any perceived conflict between that worker's legal responsibilities and their responsibilities to the welfare of their client. More broadly, this bill ensures survivors can be in control of the response to their report, with the agency to determine how it is managed and thereby empowered to access the support they need.

The current laws can have a particularly perverse outcome on institutions such as universities informing their own reporting structures. This includes the fact that many universities insist they cannot act on reports of sexual assault unless police are notified, while other universities determine that they cannot act once police are notified. Reporting on university campuses is further complicated by the sensitivities around the presence of police on campus and the role that campus security can play in ensuring student welfare, as well as the fact that survivors and perpetrators can often continue to be in close proximity following a report being made. I note previous discussion in this House in relation to colleges and the responsibility this Parliament has over some of their governance arrangements.

It is important that student survivors of sexual assault or harassment have certainty around how their report is being managed. This bill will remove an important barrier to survivors reporting assaults and seeking the critical support they need. I commend the Attorney General for introducing this important legislation and acknowledge the critical work of community advocates including Karen Willis, OAM, and Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia. I also acknowledge the important work of campus advocates End Rape on Campus, the National Union of Students Women's Department, women's officers on university campuses across this State and the many survivors who have told their stories and fought for change. We have much more to do to ensure they are safe at

home, at work, on our campuses and in our streets, but I trust that this bill gives them some certainty that they will have greater control of their story. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:44:14):** I speak to the Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Crimes) Bill 2020. I acknowledge that the Opposition does not oppose nor seek to amend the bill. I acknowledge also the excellent contribution of the member for Camden and the member for Vaucluse. First, I focus upon the amendment to section 316 of the Crimes Act 1900. Under section 316 of the Crimes Act 1900, where a person knows or believes that a serious indictable offence has been committed by another person and knows or believes that they have information that might be of material assistance in securing the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of the offender, failure to report that information to New South Wales police or another appropriate authority is an offence. No offence will be committed where the person has a reasonable excuse for not reporting the information. However, section 316 does not currently specify any circumstances where a reasonable excuse will be established.

Schedule 1.5 to the bill will amend section 316 of the Crimes Act 1900 to provide such a reasonable excuse where a person does not report information relating to a sexual or domestic violence offence based on the wishes of the victim. That is important because it is based on the wishes of the victims themselves. A reasonable excuse for a failure to report will be established where a person obtains information relating to a sexual or domestic violence offence, the alleged victim is an adult at the time the information is obtained and the person believes on reasonable grounds that the alleged victim does not wish for the information to be reported to authorities. As the legislation does not currently specify what constitutes a reasonable excuse, it remains open to the courts to be satisfied that an excuse is made out in a wide range of situations.

Section 316 in its current form could be interpreted as forcing people who obtain information relating to domestic violence and sex offences, in circumstances where the victim does not wish to make a report, to make a choice between respecting the wishes of the victim and facing possible prosecution or reporting the information to authorities against the victim's wishes. This is incredibly complex. Reporting of potential offences should be encouraged so that potential offences can be properly investigated and offenders appropriately punished. Sexual and domestic violence offences are offences that can leave many victims feeling disempowered and it is important that the powers of victims to make important decisions, such as whether or not to report an incident to police, are not taken away from them.

The amendment will ensure that friends, family and professional support workers who the victim speaks to in confidence about a domestic violence or sex offence, do not face the risk of prosecution for acting in accordance with the victim's wishes. The amendment reflects a trauma-informed approach, where adult victims of offences are empowered to decide what action should be taken in response to the offending against them. As I said before, this is incredibly complex and very personal in many cases. The amendment is just one of a number of steps the New South Wales Government has recently introduced to better support victims of domestic violence and sex offences.

The Central Coast is no stranger to this: We have very high rates of domestic violence. I commend the Tuggerah Lakes and Brisbane Water Police districts for the work they do, along with all of the allied services that bolster the support to victims of domestic violence. People on the Central Coast take a very strong public position on how government agencies and the community deal with domestic violence. One of the reasons we have seen an increase in the reporting of domestic violence on the Central Coast is because of a change in community. When we were children when the neighbours were fighting next door that was their business. Now we have this incredible change in community—whether it be in the electorates of the Speaker, the member for Cootamundra or the member for Lane Cove. Members of the community now pick up their phones because they are worried about the welfare of their neighbours. No longer do they stay silent; they become an active voice. However, given the difficulty of the potential crimes being committed, the wishes of victims also need to be respected.

I turn now to some of the steps the New South Wales Government has taken to support victims of domestic and family violence. In August 2020 the hospital fee policy was changed to ensure that Medicare ineligible victims of domestic and family violence, such as those on temporary protection visas, will no longer be required to report the crime to police in order to access public hospitals at no cost. In May 2019 the Government announced additional funding for the State's community legal sector, including funding of \$6.7 million over three years targeting specialist domestic violence programs—these programs are being run on the Central Coast and they are having great results.

Further, in May 202 the New South Wales Government announced \$12.8 million in funding to help domestic violence victims seek support during the COVID-19 pandemic, with funding for additional support services such as frontline specialist domestic violence services to respond to incidents—the New South Wales Domestic Violence Line, Legal Aid NSW domestic violence line, the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services, the list goes on. This is a way in which the Government is financially supporting victims of

domestic violence right across New South Wales, not just on the Central Coast. The package also included funding to women's refuges, the Staying Home Leaving Violence program, including temporary accommodation for perpetrators to ensure that victims can remain safely at home—where they belong—and a digital campaign to support victims and encourage the community to report abuse, as well as a funding boost for men's behavioural change programs.

This comes back to the change in attitude on the Central Coast that I was speaking about earlier. Men are speaking up, neighbours are speaking up; they are also doing it in a respectful way with the victim's circumstances being taken into account. The amendment will ensure that people who provide support to victims of domestic violence and sex offences are able to respect the wishes of the victim not to report an incident to authorities, without fear of criminal prosecution. The amendment will also ensure that victims of these offences do not feel dissuaded from seeking support from loved ones or professionals out of a fear that they will be forced to report the information to authorities. I am pleased to support the amendments in the bill, which will provide greater certainty for victims seeking support for domestic violence, and sex offences and for those who provide such important support to these people.

I turn now to schedule 1.15 to the bill, which makes a number of amendments to the Surveillance Devices Act 2007. The member for Vacluse also touched on this in her speech. The amendments to section 4 will allow protected information to be used, published or communicated in the following additional proceedings, if necessary to do so: proceedings before the State Parole Authority under parts 6 and 7 of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999—which will interest the Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections who is in the Chamber; applications to an appropriate court under the Crimes (Serious Crime Prevention Orders) Act 2016; applications under the Crimes (Forensic Procedures) Act 2000; and, as the member for Vacluse mentioned, proceedings before the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal under section 75 (1) (a) and (f) of the Firearms Act 1996, being appeals against a decision to issue a licence or other permit and to make a firearms prohibition order. This will ensure that lawfully obtained surveillance device material could be used to inform decision-makers in any of these proceedings. The bill also provides an exception to the requirement for law enforcement officers to apply for approval after using a surveillance device without warrant in an emergency. [*Extension of time*]

As I said earlier, I congratulate the incredible team at Tuggerah Lakes and Brisbane Water Police districts: The men and women in blue who every day of the week put their lives on the line to our community safe. I have stood in the Chamber time and again, but "thank you" is just not enough for the great work that they do. They do an incredible job in the most difficult circumstances, especially with the COVID-19 pandemic where people's stress levels are rising to new heights because of the situation they inadvertently find themselves in. Tony Joice at Brisbane Water, John Gralton at Tuggerah Lakes and their teams are tireless: They protect their communities 24/7, 365 days a year.

I have also said in the Chamber that after I was first elected I had the privilege of doing a ride along with Paul Nicholls. I recommend it to all members, including the member for Oatley who has just walked in. Spending a night out with the men and women of our police force is an eye-opening experience for everybody. We cannot begin to imagine what they deal with every day until we actually experience it for ourselves. I congratulate them on the incredible work they do. These amendments will assist them in delivering on their duties to keep our communities safe. The bill provides much-needed certainty for law enforcement officers observing targets, hostages or a stronghold in an emergency situation. Again, we have seen them deal with those situations so professionally.

The bill also makes amendments to modernise the remote applications process for surveillance device warrants and emergency authorisations. Currently affidavits supporting remote applications for surveillance device warrants are required to be transmitted by fax, as we heard earlier from the member for Vacluse. Quite frankly, I am not sure if anybody has a fax any more, including the member for Lane Cove. I do not know what one looks like. This amendment brings the bill into line with the remote requirement to enable affidavits to be transmitted by any other means of communication. Especially during these times when digital technology is providing such a boon to the rest of the community. This is another step forward. Again, I thank members for their indulgence in granting me an extension of time. I again congratulate the Attorney General and his team on an outstanding amendment to a good piece of legislation, to make it even better. I thank all members for their contributions. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (15:56:47):** I make a brief contribution to the Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Crimes) Bill 2020, in particular with reference to amendments to the Surveillance Devices Act. I note that the member for Terrigal made a great contribution to these amendments. The bill makes amendments to section 4 of the Surveillance Devices Act and will allow protected information to be used, published or communicated in the following additional proceedings if necessary to do so: proceedings

before the State Parole Authority under part 6 and part 7 of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999, applications to an appropriate court under the Crimes (Serious Crime Prevention Orders) Act 2016, applications under the Crimes (Forensic Procedures) Act 2000, and proceedings before the New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal under sections 75 (1) (a) and (f) of the Firearms Act 1996, being appeals against a decision to issue a licence or other permit and to make a firearms prohibition order.

This amendment will ensure that lawfully obtained surveillance device material could be used to inform decision-makers in any of these proceedings. The bill also provides an exception to the requirement for law enforcement officers to apply for approval after using a surveillance device without warrant in an emergency. This amendment removes a deterrent from police using the equipment they need to observe an evolving emergency situation. It will provide much-needed certainty for law enforcement officers observing targets, hostages or a stronghold in an emergency situation.

I send a huge thank you to the four police district commanders and their teams who serve the very large electorate of Cootamundra: Superintendent Peter O'Brien of the Chifley Police District, Acting Superintendent Klepczarek of the Hume Police District, Superintendent Noble of the Riverina Police District and Superintendent Ireland of the Murrumbidgee Police District. I thank them and their teams for their service to our communities and for keeping them safe during what has been a very difficult year. Many of the officers from my electorate have had to attend to bushfires, particularly the Dunns Road bushfire, which took a lot out of our police at the time. A few officers had to be evacuated when their properties came under threat of the fire, but they kept turning up shift after shift.

And, of course, we have rolled straight into COVID where keeping our communities safe has relied on a strong police presence at times. In more recent weeks—certainly since 8 July—many of our officers have been serving on the Victorian border. Being rostered night after night in the heart of winter has definitely been a challenge over and above what I think they would have expected coming into 2020. I thank them for their service day in and day out to protect us, to keep our communities safe. More broadly I thank them for the contribution they make to our communities. Their partners are employed in our towns, their children go to our schools, and they participate in community sport and many other activities. They are valued members of small towns and communities.

The bill also makes amendments to modernise the remote application process for surveillance device warrants and emergency authorisations. We have heard today from members' contributions that affidavits supporting remote applications for surveillance device warrants are required to be transmitted by fax. I am not sure that I should be disclosing this, but certainly moving from three florist shops into Parliament I can say that we were still faxing our daily orders for flowers to the growers using a fax machine day in and day out. We are one of the few industries that has not quite modernised. I am very pleased that the bill will modernise this aspect—

**Mr Anthony Roberts:** How is that 5G going?

**Ms STEPH COOKE:** I do not think we are anywhere near 5G. I think we will just be grateful for one bar of 3G, and that will take care of a number of our issues. The amendments will remove this requirement and enable affidavits to be transmitted by any other means of communication. It is very exciting. The bill also introduces a new ground on which remote applications under the Surveillance Devices Act may be made where a relevant judge or magistrate who is determining the matter requests that the application be made that way. These amendments will ensure that affidavits are transmitted using best practice, and that the request for judges and magistrates can be lawfully facilitated while at the same time futureproofing the legislation against novel means of communication.

In conclusion, when the Surveillance Devices Act was introduced in 2007 it replaced and modernised the Listening Devices Act 1984. The Act implemented national model legislation that was developed by a joint working group of what was then known as the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General and the Australasian Police Ministers Council Joint Working Group on National Investigative Powers. At the time of its introduction to Parliament in 2007 the Surveillance Devices Act was described in the second reading speech as essential to assist the operational needs of police by regulating new technology that is needed to track, monitor and investigate crime, and to match the increasingly sophisticated techniques used by criminals. I am pleased to support the amendments in the bill, which will continue to bring the Surveillance Devices Act into line with technological advancements. It will also ensure that decision-makers in parole and other proceedings are better informed by evidence and enable police to respond effectively in emergencies. I strongly commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (16:05:01):** In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Liverpool, Camden, Prospect, Vacluse, Summer Hill, Terrigal and Cootamundra for their valuable contributions to debate on the Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Crimes) Bill 2020. I thank all the stakeholders and community

members with whom we have consulted and who provided feedback on the various amendments to criminal legislation contained in the bill. In particular, I thank Karen Willis, the executive officer of Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia. In March last year Karen wrote to me raising concerns about the unintended consequences of section 316 of the Crimes Act 1900. At that time the Government was in caretaker mode, just before the New South Wales election.

Further communication with Ms Willis culminated in a proposed reform being drafted and provided to Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia and to the New South Wales Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Council in February this year. I thank the council for its advice and consideration of the matter. The amendment was meant to progress earlier this year following consideration by the council but, as I explained during my second reading speech, the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the introduction of the budget session miscellaneous bill. This bill is an important part of the Government's regular legislative review and monitoring program. Many of the amendments in the bill are technical in nature and are important steps towards further strengthening our justice system. They address emerging issues, support procedural improvements, clarify uncertainty and correct errors in legislation relating to crimes. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Private Members' Statements*

#### **TRIBUTE TO KEN SHADIE, OAM**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (16:07:16):** Today I pay tribute to an Australian legend, a man who was a true great of Aussie show business, who gave up many years of service to the Royal Australian Air Force [RAAF] and who was dedicated to his local community. Ken Shadie was all those things and so much more. Ken was one of the kindest and most decent people I have ever met. I met Ken in 2011, when I was first elected as the member for Hornsby. I was 28 years old and a bit wet behind the ears. You meet a lot of wonderful people in this job but I have met none as wonderful as Ken Shadie. He was incredibly kind and became a father figure to me: always welcoming, always encouraging and always willing to share a quiet word of wisdom.

Those words of wisdom were always beautifully put together and often very funny because Ken was one of the greatest television writers Australia has ever produced. He wrote the first draft of the movie *The Phantom* and was a screenwriter for a number of iconic Australian TV shows, including *The Mavis Brampton Show*, *News Revue*, *Number 96* and *The Paul Hogan Show*. Ken would say that he and Paul Hogan just "clicked". After working together on *The Paul Hogan Show* they were keen to conquer the big screen. They did something amazing: They made a film about Australia, which we loved, based on a story about Australia, which we loved them telling the world. *Crocodile Dundee* was a smash hit and Ken and Paul Hogan were nominated for an Oscar for best screenplay written directly for the screen.

Ken could have followed Hogan to pursue the glamour of Hollywood and would surely have been a success but he chose to stay here to pursue domestic film projects. Hollywood's loss was Hornsby's gain. Before Ken Shadie was a living legend among Australian screenwriters, he served his country as a national serviceman with the RAAF. He completed six months of training before transferring to the RAAF Reserves, where he served a further six years. It was during this time that he met Pam Jameson—the love of his life, his soulmate and one of the most remarkable women it has ever been my pleasure to know. It was also during this time that his lifelong dedication to the welfare of Australia's service men and women was born.

Ken's commitment and dedication to the Brooklyn RSL sub-Branch as member and president, his service to the Northern Metropolitan District Council of the RSL as vice-president and his service to the National Servicemen's Association of Australia were simply immense. His love for his fellow service men and women and his love for his country shone through at every Anzac Day service. Ken ran those services with military precision, timed to the minute. Even the wilting flowers would stand to attention for Ken—as we all did, drawn by his will to create the perfect service in memory of the fallen.

Pam, his lifelong love, was always by his side. Their family table, where they often invited me for a meal, was a place of love and laughter. Brooklyn has lost a legend but the greatest loss is to his family, who have lost

a beloved father and grandfather. In 2015 I nominated Ken for an award in the Order of Australia honours system, our nation's foremost Order of Merit. It is a secret process, so Ken did not know it was underway. The greatest challenge was to condense this great man's life to just a few short pages because Ken had achieved so much in his life and had contributed so much to our community. He was pleased as punch to be awarded his OAM in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. The citation read "For service to the film and television industries as a writer, and to veterans". It was a well-deserved recognition because he loved his community and we loved him. With his passing, there is an enormous hole in all of our hearts. He was a leader, a legend, a wordsmith, a family man. Thank you, Ken, for a life well lived. Rest in peace.

### MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (16:11:10):** Governments are currently throwing money at job-generating infrastructure projects to fuel the post-COVID economic recovery, while fast-tracking planning approvals to help them get off the ground sooner. With all that spending to be done, now is the time not just to be putting brick to mortar but also to be putting plans into place for projects that will generate jobs in the future. Recently I received a briefing from the team behind the Newcastle offshore wind energy project, which is advocating for a wind farm between Stockton and the Central Coast, to be located between 20 kilometres and 25 kilometres from the shore. Wind power is common in Europe and a project off the Victorian coast is currently in the feasibility phase. That project, the Star of the South, is a proposed 2.2 gigawatts in size and could provide around 20 per cent of Victoria's required energy while creating thousands of jobs during construction and hundreds of ongoing positions. The development stages of these projects would also foster jobs in technology and environmental planning.

A little less long term is the investment in hydrogen technologies, with a University of Newcastle team pioneering a zero-emissions hydrogen fuel. Led by Professor Behdad Moghtaderi, the team has developed a system that harvests water from the air and then uses a solar-generated electrical current to split the water into hydrogen and oxygen, before storing the hydrogen as a gas. In a recent report by the NSW Chief Scientist, the Hunter has been identified as a potential location for a hydrogen export hub, due to the existing transport infrastructure, current industry gas users and availability of greenfield sites. When launching the report, the New South Wales environment Minister agreed that post-COVID was the time for governments to invest in low-carbon technologies. We are on the same page. To echo the Minister's words, it is good for the environment and it is the kind of economy our kids will prosper from. I could not agree more.

This position is supported by the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, which has released its own report into the creation of a post-COVID domestic manufacturing boom. It is wonderful to see this Government taking a similar position to the AMWU. A key priority raised was the establishment of a statutory body that would be charged with managing regional transitions to renewable energy. The report further argued that the development of a renewable energy hub in the Hunter not only would provide an opportunity for domestic manufacturing to rebuild, following its decimation by this offshoring-happy Government, but also would create an opportunity for partnerships between industry and TAFE to upskill or re-skill workers. The AMWU is right: Now is the time to rebuild Australian manufacturing, which is exactly what Labor wants to do with its NSW Jobs First Bill 2020.

We want contracts to support New South Wales jobs and industries. We want apprentices to be given a go. We want a proportion of jobs to go to Indigenous, disadvantaged and long-term unemployed community members. We want to change the law to make this happen. However, there is one thing the New South Wales Government can do that would allow a coal-reliant city to almost diversify and generate thousands of jobs immediately: Remove the illegal and anti-competitive cap on the ability of the Port of Newcastle to receive containers. My colleague from The Nationals is in the Chamber. I believe at The Nationals conference a motion was moved to support removing that cap and locating the container terminal at Newcastle. The people of Newcastle and the Hunter are very appreciative of the support of The Nationals for such a great project.

There is \$1.8 billion of private investment ready to go for this project, with a HoustonKemp study conducted this year estimating that over 15,000 direct and indirect jobs and \$2.5 billion of economic activity would be generated across the country as a result. COVID-19 is a one-in-100 years pandemic, but it has presented a one-in-100 year opportunity. The past 12 months have shown us that we cannot wait. Our horror summer of bushfires claimed property, valuable habitat and, tragically, lives. The effects of climate change were no longer knocking at the door, they had broken down and wreaked havoc on the joint. We cannot go back to "business as usual". "Business as usual" was destroying our environment and our manufacturing industry. If there were ever a time to take a meaningful leap towards a renewable future and renewed domestic manufacturing, it is now.

## QUEENSLAND HARD BORDER CLOSURE

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (16:16:28):** "Disruptive", "impractical", "cruel" and "heartless" are just some of the words that my constituents in the Northern Tablelands have used to describe the current hard border restrictions imposed by the Queensland Government for northern New South Wales communities. They are some of the less florid terms that I would use—insane, inane, but, more importantly, hypocritical. The fact is that the basic human needs of many people who live in border communities are still being denied, when there are no cases of COVID-19 in those local government areas in New South Wales that border with Queensland. The Northern Tablelands electorate has three local government areas that share a border with Queensland—Moree Plains Shire, Gwydir Shire and Inverell Shire.

Today, to add insult to injury, the Queensland Premier announced that at 1.00 a.m. on 1 October 2020 the Queensland-New South Wales border bubble, as it has been termed, will be extended to include Byron Bay, Ballina, Lismore, Richmond Valley and Glenn Innes Severn local government areas. I do not begrudge the people who live in those local government areas for an instant. I firmly believe there is no justification on health grounds or any other ground for the ridiculous hard border between our two States. I do not begrudge the access being granted to those communities. But what I do begrudge and what I cannot abide is the rank hypocrisy of a government to the north in Queensland that allows access to people from local government areas that do not even border Queensland but denies access to people in the Northern Tablelands, who live in local government areas that actually border Queensland.

How can the people of Byron Bay, who I am sure are very decent people, present less of a health risk for Queensland than people who live in Inverell, Wialda or Bingara. Mind you, they actually live closer to Queensland than the people of Byron Bay or Ballina. Why are they excluded but the people of Byron Bay are accepted? If it is really all about keeping Queensland safe for Queenslanders and making decisions based on the health interests of Queensland, I call on the Queensland Premier to explain why the people of Inverell, Wialda and Bingara present a health risk that somehow is not presented by the people who live in Byron Bay or Ballina. It does not stack up to any scrutiny on any level whatsoever. We then overlay that with the AFL grand final that will be played in Queensland. If you are rich or famous like Tom Hanks, you can go straight there as well.

**Mr Anthony Roberts:** If you don't have COVID.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** He did get COVID-19 when he was last in Queensland. Yet the people of northern New South Wales, who genuinely rely on travelling across that border for their everyday needs—whether it is schooling, shopping or, in the agricultural context in my electorate with the largest harvest in half a decade coming up, getting contractors and machinery from both sides of the border—are denied that entry. On what grounds do they present a health risk when we have had zero COVID-19 cases in Wialda and Bingara and the only two cases we have had in Inverell were people who, unfortunately, were allowed to disembark from cruise ships that docked in Sydney. They are the only cases across those communities—yet they present a health risk, when those from Byron Bay and Ballina do not.

My constituents are wonderful people who are fair-minded and just want a fair go. This is not a fair go. What we are seeing from Queensland is un-Australian. It is not only unfair; it is causing huge economic disruption as well as enormous social disruption. As if living in country New South Wales has not been tough enough in the past few years, we add this to pile to make it even tougher. I think it is absolutely disgraceful, disgusting and un-Australian. It has to stop.

## MEMBER FOR RIVERSTONE AND BLACKTOWN CITY

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (16:21:30):** No wonder this place is sometimes referred to as a "coward's castle", when people like the member for Riverstone make extraordinary, baseless accusations, as he did last week, about the mayor of Blacktown City and others whom he did not name for their audacity to lobby for more infrastructure or services to support the growth areas of the north-west. The member for Riverstone compared their views to the *Life of Brian* and that classic line, "What have the Romans ever done for us?" This issue is important to the people of my Blacktown electorate because the Blacktown City region is an interconnected community. The failure of this Government to deliver adequate infrastructure or services to one area has massive repercussions across the seven State electorates of Blacktown City.

The Blacktown city community will grow to at least 612,150 by 2041, according to the Department of Planning. That is in excess of 10,000 people each and every year for the next 21 years. I urge all members of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council to take note: Blacktown is the fastest growing region in New South Wales, if not Australia. The population of Blacktown City will surpass that of Tasmania by 2033. Seven State members currently represent the region—four Labor and three Liberal members. We need to ensure

we build a liveable and successful city that has connectivity and access to quality education and health so that our community has the opportunity to succeed. Blacktown mayor Tony Bleasdale, the President of the Riverstone and Schofields Chamber of Commerce, Sue Lawrence, many community agencies, property builders, residents and Federal and State parliamentarians are calling for more roads, schools, hospitals and services for this region.

The member for Riverstone seems to be the odd one out. Rather than referring to Monte Python, I would rather compare the member for Riverstone to one of the scenes from *The Naked Gun* in which Frank Drebin stands in front of a burning and exploding building and tells onlookers, "There's nothing to see here. Move along folks." The member for Riverstone seems to be out of step with local needs. The member for Riverstone referred to the Blacktown Hospital upgrade. I remind him that that hospital has had minimal additions to staffing, so we may have a shiny new hospital but we have no additional services.

Since the Liberal-Nationals Government has been in office, 70,000 people have moved into the city of Blacktown. In the 2015 and 2019 elections the Government announced a Rouse Hill hospital but it was cancelled later—there is nothing to see here. Richmond Road and Garfield Road are rated "fail" by Roads and Maritime Services every day of the week—yes, all seven days—but there is nothing to see here. According to the planning department, Bandon Road is to be built when the population reaches 25 per cent of its growth capacity. Growth today has exceeded 30 per cent and the Government says, "Trust us, we will look at it in eight years' time"—yet again, nothing to see here. There is no rail line location identified on any map between Marsden Park and St Marys that will connect to Badgerys Creek—definitely nothing to see here.

The member for Riverstone announced in the House last week \$45 million for some road projects but he did not mention that this is in lieu of cuts to section 7.11 contributions plans funding. Did the member for Riverstone know that the planning Minister visited the Mayor of Blacktown last month to remove \$121 million from CP21, the Local Infrastructure Contribution Plan? This plan caters for 53,000 residents moving in, with no playing fields, tennis courts, amenities buildings, car parks, landscaping or youth recreational centre—some 53,000 people moving into Marsden Park with no support.

Blacktown city is becoming a smouldering ruin under the failures of Premier Berejiklian and the member for Riverstone. The member for Riverstone is not becoming more like Frank Drebin, blinded by all the smoke. His antics are better described as being like those of Mr Magoo. All members of Blacktown city have to work together with council and with MPs across the political divide, connect with our Federal MPs and harness the energy of the NSW Business Chamber, community and residents so we can build a city we can be proud of, one that provides opportunities for all. I ask—no, I beg the member for Riverstone to join us in building a city of opportunity for the residents of Blacktown city.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections) (16:26:35):** I thank the member for Blacktown for his contribution. On behalf of the Government, I state once again that great things are happening in western and south-western Sydney. I commend the members who represent that area, particularly the member for Riverstone, who does absolutely phenomenal work in leading and guiding the delivery of government infrastructure in that area. He is a very strong advocate who I know works very well and harmoniously at Federal, State and local levels. I know the member for Blacktown did not have time to point out the massive amount of infrastructure that the State Government has put into his local area—and, of course, that will continue. I advise him to look to the leadership of the member for Riverstone and the work that he does within this Parliament and this Government, which assists him to continue to deliver on behalf of the people of western Sydney. [*Time expired.*]

#### LANE COVE ELECTORATE WORLD WAR II VETERANS

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections) (16:27:51):** In the wake of the seventy-fifth anniversary of Victory in the Pacific Day, or Victory over Japan Day, I share two very important stories of veterans in my Lane Cove electorate. The debt we owe to the almost one million Australian men and women who served in World War II is immense. Their service and sacrifice has allowed Australia not only to survive but also to prosper as a nation. I am lucky enough to have many veterans who call my constituency home. The first story I share with the House is that of William Tait. Mr Tait has been a Hunters Hill resident for over 53 years. He attended Drummoyne Public School in the time of the Great Depression. Mr Tait was a man of the harbour. He sailed and rowed, winning the Head of the River in 1940 for Sydney Grammar.

Unfortunately, his rowing career was interrupted by the outbreak of war in the Pacific, and in 1940 he enlisted in the 14th Field Regiment. Mr Tait saw service in Papua New Guinea. He took part in the artillery barrage at Owers' Corner at the bottom of the Kokoda Trail, then went on to Milne Bay, where the advancing Japanese army were turned back for the first time. William Tait celebrated his twenty-first birthday near Port Moresby in

Papua New Guinea. William returned to civilian life at the University of Sydney and enjoyed a 33-year career at IBM. He also raised five beautiful children with his wife, Annette.

I share the story of another veteran, Mr Peter Comino, a member of the No. 79 Spitfire Squadron of the Royal Australian Air Force and veteran of World War II. Mr Comino's family moved from Greece to the small town of Guyra, where he grew up helping run the family restaurant. Mr Comino has since resided in Lane Cove for the past 14 years. Recently we were lucky enough to present both Mr Comino and Mr Tait with a commemorative medallion to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of Victory in the Pacific Day, or Victory over Japan Day, when both shared some personal accounts of their experiences from the war—some of which still haunt them.

These veterans acted with selflessness and sacrifice. By sharing their stories with the House today, I hope to bring to light just a few of the countless accounts of such an important time—perhaps one of the most defining times in Australia's history. It is fitting that my electorate recently opened a new memorial to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of Victory in the Pacific Day. This memorial will act as a token of thanks from the people of our local electorate to our veterans and the veterans community. I am pleased that the New South Wales Government was able to provide a significant sum of money to this important project through the Community Building Partnership program. On behalf of this House and my constituency I cannot stress enough my gratitude, thanks and support for our veterans community. Australia is lucky to have such a high calibre of men and women who serve and fight to defend Australia and the principles we hold dear.

Finally, I pay gratitude to the living World War II veterans in my electorate: Robert Wade-Ferrel, William Bailey, Colin Campbell, Mervyn Cardelli, Michael Hickie and Kenneth Andrews. May those World War II veterans who are no longer with us rest in peace. We, as Australians, thank them all.

### NUNDLE COMMUNITY

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (16:31:23):** Regional New South Wales is still reeling from the effects of the worst drought and bushfires in living history. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the void of foreign tourists from our domestic tourism market certainly look bleak. The smell of smoke from the Goddos Road fire that burnt over 1,300 hectares of the State forest is still a recent memory. The fire burned as close as seven kilometres from the villages of Hanging Rock and Nundle. The countryside was charred and a dustbowl from the drought. With the taste of dirt in the air, it would surprise no-one if the Nundle community were desolate and broken—but they are not. Through the ashes they rise. The strength and resilience of the great Australian spirit is exemplified by what we see in the small community of Nundle.

The beautiful historic mining village of Nundle is just a short drive from Tamworth, nestled next to the Peel River and amongst the Great Dividing Range. Established in the 1850s when gold was discovered, Nundle grew to a bustling mining town filled with migrants from across Europe, America and China making their way to seek their fortunes and strike it lucky by finding gold. These days Nundle has a peaceful, easy feeling and you stake your fortune on the back of sheep, cattle, timber or tourism. The locals welcome you with open arms, whether you have come for a day or for the rest of your life. If you are looking to escape the rat race and visit your country cousins then Nundle is most definitely one of the places you should not miss.

There is a preschool and primary school for local children, a swimming pool to cool off during the summer months, and a golf course, bowling green and tennis courts for some leisurely activity. A number of quaint and quirky shops line the streets and, of course, there is the local post office to send home your postcards telling everyone what a great time you are having. The hustle and bustle of the gold rush days is long past, but one should not be fooled by the change of pace. Every Easter the roads leading to Nundle are filled with eager visitors who come to experience the thrill of the dancing dragons, wrap their tastebuds around local cuisine and try their hand at panning for that illusive gold nugget at the Nundle Go for Gold Chinese Easter Festival.

Then there is the story from over 40 years ago of two local cockies who decided to settle once and for all who owned the fastest dog in town, and so the Great Nundle Dog Race was born. Today over 1,000 people head to Nundle each October for the race that stops the nation—or Nundle, at least. The event features novelty dog races, a dog high jump and the doggy derby and what show would be complete without the best dressed dog in town. The feature event is the Great Nundle Dog Race for working dogs across the region. I can inform the House that it is a punter's dream; never look past the outsider. The event is run completely by volunteers and shows how much the locals love to show off their home town to visitors.

I urge members to come for a weekend and enjoy the picnic lunch, live music and preview of new season winter fashions with friends at the Nundle Country Picnic. Stay at one of the local establishments and wander down the street, browsing local produce, antiques, crafts and homewares. If the arts are your thing, the annual

Nundle Country Women's Association Art Show showcases local and Australian artists. Visitors can immerse themselves in country art and support the local community. All funds raised go to the Nundle CWA Preschool and health facilities.

Nundle is a real treat for Australian country music fans, with a number of well-known local country music artists performing and hosting singer-songwriter retreats for artists and buskers, especially in January and throughout the year. They all participate and gather at the DAG Sheep Station with country music star John Casula. If a slower pace is what you looking for, cast your line in the local waters and try to catch one of the stunning rainbow trouts in the Peel River or historical Sheba dams. Try your hand at fossicking in various sites around Nundle or Hanging Rock where you might find some gold or beautiful sapphires; or pitch your tent and camp under the thousand watt sky and watch the stars like you have never seen before. If you are a little bit more adventurous, you might like to try boating at Chaffey Dam, or you might like to try four-wheel-driving, motorbike riding and bushwalking through the State forest.

The COVID-19 pandemic has paused many of these events in Nundle but that is no reason not to visit. Nundle is included in Visit NSW's 15 iconic road trips and the Nundle community has experienced the highest tourist numbers in 20 years, with Sydneysiders discovering Nundle. What could have been a disastrous year has been saved, thanks to the city people coming to Nundle. While many people are thinking of heading to the beach as the weather warms up and school holidays descend upon us, think about the cool and clear flowing streams, the green pastures and patchwork agriculture, the wide open spaces, the fresh air and crisp evenings of Nundle. Take a country holiday and have a cool one at the Nundle pub. Make a difference. Come and see us. Come and say g'day to the locals and show regional New South Wales that you care. I love Nundle and I cannot wait for you all to visit because I know you will love it too.

#### **KU-RING-GAI ELECTORATE TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:36:25):** The New South Wales Liberal Government is committed to making public transport and road infrastructure more modern, safe and accessible. When I became the member for Ku-ring-gai in 2015, I received a lot of feedback about the undesirable bottlenecks on the Pacific Highway and about only two of the eight railway stations in my electorate being accessible by a lift. Many of my constituents were denied access to our convenient train services because they were less mobile, seniors or had young families.

In June 2018 funding was approved to provide a lift upgrade at the Wahroonga station and in January last year I was pleased to announce that Warrawee, Waitara, Pymble and Normanhurst stations would receive upgrades as part of the New South Wales Government's \$2 billion investment under the Transport Access Program. Access equals opportunity, which is why I am pleased to put on record that the Warrawee station is now fully accessible to all individuals. As part of the Transport Access Program this upgrade, which was an election promise and is operating three months ahead of schedule, is the first of the five local stations to have its upgrade completed. In addition to the installation of a lift for the first time, the works included accessible toilets, parking spaces and pathways throughout the station precinct.

To mark the official opening earlier this month, I was joined by two incredible young men from Knox Grammar School—year 12 student Alex Richter and year 9 student Chase Burch—their families, friends, Knox teachers and representatives from Transport for NSW. With this much-needed infrastructure people like Alex and Chase can now travel independently. It will also provide them greater opportunity to contribute to our local community, which emphasises the human dimension of these projects—something we should never lose sight of. With the Warrawee station now completed, next month construction will commence at the Wahroonga station to include an accessible lift, ramp, parking spaces and toilets, as well as an upgrade to the shelters, CCTV, lighting and bicycle stands and preliminary, but important, works to the pedestrian and vehicle bridge over the train line.

It should also be noted that the Wahroonga station is listed on the State Heritage Register and is one of the best preserved platforms in Sydney. Therefore, due to the complexities of the project, it is expected to be completed by the end of 2022. Yesterday, in welcome news, I was notified by the Minister for Transport and Roads that community consultation had commenced with regards to the improvements at Pymble and Waitara stations. Although the scope of works will vary across the two projects, the upgrades will ensure that transport customers can easily access train services via a lift. I encourage everyone in my electorate to review and provide their feedback on the early concept design plans for Waitara and Pymble stations online, which is now available until 7 October. Providing feedback is essential to the project's success as it allows Transport for NSW to tap into the local knowledge of the area.

In addition to the local transport upgrades I have mentioned, the New South Wales Government is improving the efficiency of the Pacific Highway between Turramurra and Wahroonga to ease congestion, reduce travel times and improve safety. This is part of the Pinch Point Program, which is a \$240 million joint Federal and

State Government venture and includes a recent upgrade to the intersection of Mona Vale Road and the Pacific Highway at Pymble. The project was announced in July this year and works have been accelerated, with construction set to begin next month. I thank Minister Constance for his personal support for these important works. Not only will this vital piece of road infrastructure benefit our local community and those travelling north to the Central Coast and beyond, but it is boosting much-needed jobs in the middle of a pandemic. I thank the staff at Transport for NSW for continuously providing updates not only to me but also to the residents of Ku-ring-gai.

The New South Wales Government is committed to improving the amenities in our communities, with the works I have spoken of today being just some examples of the local infrastructure in my electorate that are part of what the Government is delivering across the State. I also take this opportunity to thank the members of the community for their support and patience while work is taking place on these projects. Despite the current pandemic and the hardship it has brought upon all of us, I am proud to be part of a government that is working for everyone in New South Wales.

### **WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (16:41:18):** Thursday 10 September 2020 was World Suicide Prevention Day—a day when the community commits to action to prevent suicide. The day is marked by activities from organisations around the globe to raise awareness regarding the issue of suicide in the broader community. The Australian Man Cave [TAMC] Support Group acknowledged the day by hosting the inaugural parliamentary breakfast via Zoom. The breakfast was initially to be held in the New South Wales Parliament; however, owing to COVID restrictions in place, the breakfast was unable to be held in the precinct. As the patron and the co-host of the event I was joined by my parliamentary colleague and co-host Nathaniel Smith, MP, the member for Wollondilly, and the Speaker of the New South Wales Parliament, the Hon. Jonathan O'Dea, MP.

The breakfast was well attended by individuals and organisations that all work together to prevent and raise awareness of suicide. From the founding fathers of TAMC, Pastor Lou Greco and Pastor Agostino Gattellari were on hand to address the attendees regarding the history and work of TAMC's suicide prevention space. The event began with the acknowledgement of country by a member of the Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council, Mr Roy Ah-See. Roy is an expert storyteller and proud descendant of the Wiradjuri nation. His personal account of his life story is inspirational. Roy shared his story as a survivor of welfare dependency and the struggles he faced as an Indigenous man. Thanks, Roy.

The event was also attended by Miss Nieves Murray, the CEO of Suicide Prevention Australia [SPA], which is the body that represents the suicide prevention sector to key government stakeholders. Ms Murray highlighted SPA's work in establishing a national male suicide prevention strategy and the efforts undertaken in reducing the rate of male suicide in the country. I sincerely thank Nieves for giving her time during what was the busiest day for Suicide Prevention Australia. It was also great to have Professor Charlie Teo of the Charlie Teo Foundation address the gathering. Professor Teo spoke about the breakthrough technology is emerging in the detection of mental health disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, autism and dementia. Those conditions soon will be able to be detected through cutting-edge brain scan initiatives. I thank Professor Teo and his dedicated team who are working hard to reduce the rate of male suicide. TAMC and the community are all looking forward to it to seeking Professor Teo's technology approved by the respective health authorities.

An exciting new scholarship and partnership was announced during the breakfast by Mr Robert Gillespie from Westbourne College alongside TAMC. Mr Gillespie is a former police officer and has witnessed the devastating impacts of male suicide of former military, police and emergency service personnel. Westbourne College is a leading registered training organisation with a variety of nationally accredited courses, including project management, work health and safety, and risk and security. Mr Gillespie announced the offer of five scholarships to be awarded to The Australian Man Cave [TAMC] Support Group. Special thanks to Robert and to Westbourne College for this generous gesture. During the event The Australian Man Cave Support Group President Lou Greco, board members Mr Charlie Tees and Mr Peter Zangari, and Ryde TAMC member and Everester Mike Nicolaou announced the exciting annual suicide awareness prevention initiatives.

The initiatives include Automotive Woodstock, to be held on the third Sunday in March; backpack today, supporting the homeless with the provision of personal healthcare products; gelato appreciation day, to be held on the third Sunday in November; the big Aussie barbecue breakfast, to be held on World Suicide Prevention Day, 10 September each year; and the Everesting bike ride, to be held the weekend immediately following World Suicide Prevention Day. Suicide prevention is everyone's business and should not be a taboo subject to discuss in the community. Starting conversations and supporting men during their dark days should be a priority. Working towards a national male suicide prevention strategy is a must for all governments—hashtag it is not weak to speak.

### SHOALHAVEN DISTRICT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (16:45:54):** As a Shoalhaven resident, Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital is my local hospital. I have sat in the emergency department with a dislocated shoulder, I have visited sick family and friends, and I know many of the staff personally. I take this opportunity to thank all our hardworking and dedicated local hospital and medical staff for the wonderful work they all do. Our community is incredibly proud of each of them. As members of the House would be aware, the member for South Coast and I have secured \$434 million to upgrade Shoalhaven hospital. In the previous parliamentary term, I hosted the health Minister, together with local doctors and staff, to discuss the medical needs of a growing region. Medical experts agree that an upgrade of our hospital is needed and I strongly support these calls.

I have long campaigned for and delivered better services at Shoalhaven hospital, including improved sub-acute mental health services and improved paediatric care as well as upgrades to the emergency department. Both as a councillor and a State member of Parliament, I have fought for and delivered improved car parking at Shoalhaven hospital. The member for South Coast and I have very personal stories about the need to expand services at our local hospital. As members of the House would be aware, my mum has been diagnosed with breast cancer on three separate occasions.

The first time was before I entered Parliament. I saw firsthand the pressure and stress placed on her as she continued to hold down a job whilst receiving chemotherapy treatment in Wollongong. So many people in our community have a story to tell about cancer treatment and cancer care. Our community united in a campaign to secure funding for a new cancer centre. The story of my family was but one example of so many local families that needed this care and I am pleased that we now have an outstanding local cancer care centre, supported by the Government, that provides first-class cancer care to locals. I am also pleased that this Government cancelled fees associated with cancer care so that people can be focused on their recovery rather than their hip pocket.

The \$434 million Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital redevelopment is in the planning stage and I am proud to report that work will commence in this term of Government as promised. Community and stakeholder engagement is currently taking place to ensure that the analysis is comprehensive and informed by the best possible analysis of current and future need. Planning such a large development requires evidence, data and time, as well as consultation with staff and the community to do the best possible job. There has been commentary recently about the potential for a new greenfields site for Shoalhaven hospital. I note this matter was recently raised by Shoalhaven Greens political party councillors at a recent meeting of council.

I need to advise the House that neither The Greens political party mayor, nor any Greens political party councillor has contacted NSW Health, the health Minister, me or the member for South Coast to seek information or advice on the viability of a greenfields site. The department, the Minister, the member for South Coast or I have had no requests for meetings, no letters, no phone calls or text messages before this proposal was put forward to dump millions of dollars in investment and delay the upgrade. The Greens political party councillors have undertaken no assessment of possible sites and given the size of land required for a potential new development the only possible options for a hospital site would likely be those in a flood or fire zone.

I also note that The Greens political party did not raise this as an issue in the recent State election campaign and made no commitment at all to upgrade the hospital. Let me be clear: The Greens political party made absolutely no commitment during a campaign when these matters were actually relevant. When the member for South Coast and I were campaigning for better hospital car parking, we made it clear that the new multistorey car park would not just service the hospital's needs today, but for years to come. The Greens political party councillors were well aware of the changes and implications of the update to the hospital site master plan and they were well aware that the multistorey car park investment was about meeting the future needs of the current hospital campus. If you had a concern about the current site would you not raise it then?

While I can understand people asking questions about how best to provide better healthcare services for the future of our region, it is difficult to take these calls seriously when no meetings have been sought, no evidence or even options have been proffered and little serious consideration has been given to the outcome. Hospitals need to be close to the centre of populations and any attempt to move the hospital south of Nowra would move it further away from residents in Nowra and the northern Shoalhaven, particularly in emergency circumstances when minutes can be the difference between life and death. I thank the Minister for Police and Emergency Services for acknowledging that.

Staff do not want to live long distances away from the hospital. In fact, the staff I talked to are excited about the prospect of almost half a billion dollars being spent to upgrade our local hospital, not to mention the investments into Shellharbour hospital that will take pressure off Shoalhaven hospital. Let me be frank, calls for a new site risk delaying upgrades of important local hospital services. At best these calls are without evidence and

misinformed, at worst they are desperate calls prior to a council election to distract from The Greens appalling performance and lack of investment in local cycleways, roads and parks, and their failure to develop key opportunities such as the Shoalhaven River waterfront, which would generate jobs in our local community.

### TABULAM BRIDGE

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (16:51:07):** I will speak once again in this House about the emotional issue of the retention of the old Tabulam Bridge. I know that the Minister knows of it and has driven over it, as have many of us in this place. It is an emotional issue for the community and I have an obligation to continue to raise the matter in an effort to find a resolution that will preserve its heritage and cultural value for the community. We need more time to work through our concerns. I have sought a meeting, together with community representatives, with the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. I have spoken with his advisers today and they are putting that request to the Minister. I have said that we need to canvass all opportunities and options before the bridge is demolished. Many people have written about the bridge. John Ibbotson wrote:

In 1976 it was one of the few bridges included in the Register of the National Estate ... It was transferred to state Heritage authorities in 2007. One of the conditions of transfer was that these items could not be removed from the state Heritage listings, except under exceptional circumstances.

I am not persuaded there were exceptional circumstances to remove it from the State Heritage list. I am advised that for a heritage item to be delisted, one of the required documents is an environmental report. I am advised that was not done, but I stand to be corrected. I have talked with the Minister's adviser and sought further and better particulars on that. The local community tells me, both Aboriginal and non-Indigenous, that they were not consulted about it. Given its history you would think it is something that would be consulted on. I have seen a table showing significant heritage listings, including 16 bridges of national significance, of which Tabulam Bridge was number six. It has quite a history.

I have said this before, but it is important to say it again: A major consideration is that the area under the bridge was used as a safe, dry birthing area for Aboriginal mothers, which explains the deep spiritual connections to this specific crossing of the Clarence River. For example, Aboriginal Queen Ponjam Derry, also known as Teresa Agnes Ponjam, was born in 1872 and lived under Tabulam Bridge. She was the great-grandmother of champion boxer Tony Mundine, OAM. Another important historical link, and one of national and international significance, is that of General Sir Harry Chauvel, GCMG, KCB, who was born in Tabulam in 1865 and started his distinguished military career as the second lieutenant in the Upper Clarence Light Horse. He went on to achieve global fame as commander of the Anzac Mounted Division and later the Desert Mounted Corps, becoming the first Australian to command such a corps. I quote:

At Beersheba in October 1917 his light horse captured the town and its vital water supply in one of history's last great cavalry charges—

**Mr David Elliott:** It certainly was.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** It certainly was, Minister. Many of those soldiers would have been involved with the construction of the bridge, itself a monumental exercise for the early twentieth century. I continue the quote:

The light horsemen's original training path and triumphant post-war parades crossed this bridge, so it would be almost sacrilege to tear it down—

and that is how the community feels, for a whole lot of reasons—

From an engineering point of view the bridge, built from wood and steel by men and horses and sitting 60 feet above the water—out of flood level—is the longest single-span wooden bridge in the Southern Hemisphere.

I have some confidence that we will secure the meeting with the Minister and will be able to continue the talks to see what we can do to try to save this wonderful piece of heritage that we have in our midst.

### COVID SAFE SUMMER PLAN

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:56:27):** Yesterday I was proud to welcome the Premier, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and the Minister for Customer Service to Manly to launch the New South Wales Government's COVID Safe Summer Plan, which is our plan to ensure that we can all safely enjoy our great public spaces this summer. I thank the President of Queenscliff Surf Life Saving Club, Mr Garry Fox, for hosting us for the day. The summer plan outlines five initiatives the New South Wales Government will be implementing to help keep our public spaces open.

The first initiative is to mark out safe distancing in our parklands and popular open spaces. Of course, unless advised otherwise, State-owned parklands and public spaces will remain open during the summer period. The plan recognises that the health and safety of all those who attend our public spaces must be our highest

priority, and as such we will implement markings to aid physical distancing. Members may have seen the implementation of social or physical distancing circles in parks and public spaces around the world, such as in places as diverse as Domino Park in Brooklyn, New York, or in parks across San Francisco, California. A proposal is being considered by the Manly Tourism & Economic Recovery Taskforce to advocate for a similar implementation as a trial in some of Manly's high-traffic public spaces.

The second initiative of the COVID Safe Summer Plan is promoting the Keep A Towel Length Between You campaign, where we are asking beachgoers across the coast of New South Wales to heed public health orders, keep a towel length apart—approximately 1.5 metres—and listen to the directions of our volunteer surf lifesavers, professional lifeguards, council rangers and New South Wales police. They have a difficult job this summer of reinforcing physical distancing, and we ask for the community to work with them and obey their instructions. Beachgoers should keep in the mind the campaign's tagline to keep a towel length between you and the next person, which is the first step in ensuring our beaches remain COVID safe this summer.

The third initiative of the plan includes delivering a COVID-safe program of events in our public spaces. Members know that the events calendar for New South Wales plays a vital role in our local economies, and helps to maintain and engage our communities at a time when we need to be more connected than ever, albeit physically distant. The Government will be encouraging a range of events and initiatives including a series of activities across parks, gardens and public spaces throughout Sydney called The Festival of Place, which is a celebration and series of programs encouraging people to be active and outdoors; a ministerial task force on major events, which will support our major event organisers to ensure their events remain COVID safe; and the delivery of 1,000 COVID-safe gigs and performances across Sydney and regional New South Wales through the Great Southern Nights program. I acknowledge the work of the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, and his department in delivering that great live music program.

Our fourth initiative of the summer plan we announced in Manly includes supporting local businesses in the high streets, plazas and precincts across this great State. There is strong evidence to show that transmission rates of COVID-19 are greatly reduced when patrons are outdoors and socially distanced. We are encouraging local businesses and councils to take further advantage of the opportunities of outdoor and alfresco dining. The Government has made changes to allow mobile food trucks to operate on any land at any time—subject of course to landowners permission—and it is also investigating how it can make it easier to run outdoor markets.

I look forward to seeing the opportunities presented in my community, where the Northern Beaches Council has been awarded funding to deliver improvements to pedestrian access along Darley Road in the centre of Manly, alongside the implementation of a 30-kilometre-per-hour speed zone in the CBD. Finally, as noted, we will be working with councils to share our COVID-safe summer guidance, as well as promoting a New Local campaign, which raises the profile of alternative local public spaces to help spread out crowds this summer across the coast and across New South Wales. I acknowledge the ongoing work of our councils as they work with us to implement this plan.

#### *Public Interest Debate*

#### **COVID-19 AND NSW POLICE FORCE**

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (17:00:52):**

I move:

That this House acknowledge the ongoing efforts of the NSW Police Force throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

I acknowledge in moving this motion that in this very Chamber the members for the electorates of Seven Hills, Goulburn, Orange and Myall Lakes are former members of the NSW Police Force. I note the member for Myall Lakes and the member for Orange are now in the Chamber; it is appropriate for us to pause and reflect on the important work of our civilian constabulary and thank those members in the Chamber who came from the profession of policing for the service they provided to the people of New South Wales.

I think it is also important to acknowledge the fact that we are in unique times. Unique circumstances surround the profession of policing in this pandemic, on the back of the bushfire season and mixed in with floods and storms over the course of the past 12 months. Never before has a civilian society relied so much on its Police Force. These challenges are changing the way that we spend our leisure time, the way that we interact with each other, and the way that we manage a civilised society. While we are not through the pandemic yet, New South Wales has certainly been seen as a fantastic, if not the world's best, case study in managing the coronavirus. That is in no small part due to the stellar work of New South Wales police across all of the ranks from commissioner to probationary constable.

It is the first day in a long time where we have not had any new locally acquired cases, and we are very grateful for that. No-one could have predicted what this pandemic has offered. What we could predict with a great

degree of certainty is that the professionalism and diligence of our Police Force would assist the State in getting through this crisis and the ones preceding it. In travelling around the State, between the last sitting day and today, I heard firsthand from our officers about the challenges of policing with the COVID pandemic.

I acknowledge the member for Albury, who I was with only a few days ago at the joint military and police operation at the border of Albury and Wodonga. I was joined at Tweed police station by the member for Tweed in getting briefings from both Queensland and New South Wales police. I visited one-cop towns in recent weeks, like Delungra where I had to spend a couple of minutes convincing the constable there that I was the Minister. I also opened up the new police station at Wentworthville with the Parliamentary Secretary for Police, who was very grateful for that brand new asset to service his community. I was very humbled to spend time with officers, to hear about the challenges, talk about their triumphs and share with them the sacrifice that they and their families have to make. Whether it is on the border, in the hotels that are being used as quarantine stations, on the roads maintaining quarantine and restricted access or movement, or enforcing compliance of the health orders, our police have truly gone above and beyond the call of duty in the service of their State.

Touching on the border operation, we are all familiar with the fact that our officers on the border are huddled around the warmth of makeshift fires. As I said, the member for Albury and I chowed down with them a couple of days ago. As we were messing with the soldiers and the police, I was delighted that field rations have got a little bit better in the past 20 years since I last drew them out. The officers are certainly in the battle to prevent the spread of COVID-19—a unique battle that probably none of them ever thought would occur during their policing career when they marched off the academy parade ground as young graduates.

It was an opportunity for me to check on the welfare of our officers, and indeed ask them about how their family and friends are dealing with it. On an otherwise cold night two weeks ago in Albury I was warmed by the high spirits of the officers, many of whom said that after this operation they would return to regional policing because of the challenges and excitement that it offered. I was reminded of my time as a young officer, as I said, sitting around making sure that welfare was at the forefront of the commanders' minds. I thank Albury Acting Superintendent Paul Smith, the commander of the border operation, and his team and for their efforts in coordinating the work that has been done at the Wodonga Road checkpoint.

The border operation has been at a scale never before seen in the history of our State. Indeed, over the past 24 hours more than 43,000 vehicles have crossed the border and since the commencement of the operation there have been 2.3 million crossings in total. Maintaining the border has been a mammoth exercise, with 33,000 police shifts managing 30 checkpoints. Despite there being over 28,000 New South Wales issued penalty infringement notices, I am disappointed that 15 penalty infringement notices and four court attendance notices have been issued as part of the operation. It is proof positive that we needed to make sure this effort was extended to the nth degree. This operation has truly reflected the agility of our officers in being able to establish such a well-oiled operation, which they had never before been asked to do. There have been many exercises of course, but it was certainly unprecedented for the vast majority of our officers.

The quarantine operation has also gone extremely well. The quarantining of return travellers has proven to be a pivotal step in reducing the spread of COVID-19. Since its commencement, the operation has seen over 64,000 people quarantined in 34 facilities. The task has been possible through the effort of 300 officers working across the hotel quarantine operation on any given day. Indeed, the Victorian Government has finally come up and taken advice from our operational commanders. Enormous complexities have been involved in this operation—again, proof positive that New South Wales officers are agile members of the policing profession. I conclude by highlighting the fact that our New South Wales police are diligent. They are doing exceptionally good work. Their existing responsibilities have not suffered. I believe the often thankless task they have before them is a worthwhile reason for this House to congratulate them.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (17:08:05):** I join the Minister for Police and Emergency Services in thanking New South Wales police. I thank them on behalf of the New South Wales Opposition and the people of New South Wales for their hard work during 2020. It had already been a particularly trying year for police dealing with the horrendous bushfires, the heartache of drought and then the floods, but nobody foresaw the COVID-19 crisis and the way it has changed the way we live in 2020. It is members of the NSW Police Force who have had the unenviable task of administering laws—through public health orders—that were unprecedented, with stay-at-home orders, venues closed, community events cancelled, and beaches and playgrounds off limits. As one police officer put it to me, "I never thought I would be policing a fight over toilet paper at the local shopping centre when I started in the police."

Enforcement orders were there to save lives and, for police, it has been a very difficult time. The work of the NSW Police Force has seen the State of New South Wales avoid the avalanche of COVID-19 cases we have seen overseas. Police have had to learn a lot of new skills from scratch. The laws were not the result of drafted legislation, debated in the House and with time for adjustment. Suddenly new laws, in the form of public health

orders, appeared overnight and police needed to adjust quickly. More importantly, police were implementing orders originating from within NSW Health, whose methodical approach was to err on the side of caution. Thanks to the cooperation between the NSW Police Force and NSW Health, we have seen an outstanding outcome in keeping the numbers low.

But with the public often at a loss as to what was in a public health order, particularly in the early days of the crisis, and with mixed messaging a constant theme, it cannot have been easy for our police officers maintaining enforcement of the orders. During this crisis, however, many police officers have gone the extra mile to ensure the welfare of those in need. I personally know of police officers dropping off food to elderly residents who were too scared to leave their homes and who rang their local station for help. Officers also did tremendous pre-emptive work to decrease domestic violence incidents, regularly doorknocking houses to ensure that family members whom they perceived to be at risk were okay. Dealing with domestic violence is one of the most difficult tasks for police and carries a greater risk for assaults on police, particularly assaults resulting in injury. It is commendable that New South Wales police put this at the top of their list during the crisis.

While police infringement notices were issued by officers, the police commissioner personally undertook to review any fines that were issued. Given the fluid nature of public health orders, this gave the regime particular rigour—although it did not always result in fines being waived. However, for most people it provided a mechanism for review without having to take the matter to court. The COVID-19 crisis has proved a difficult situation for police officers to handle as the orders changed from day to day. While in the thick of it in metropolitan Sydney, there was an urgency to the crisis and the police responded with swift professionalism. But they also put in some hard yards in the bush. I particularly thank those police officers in towns like Wilcannia, Cobar, Hay and Nyngan who had to implement public health orders in some of our remotest regions. It is a tough ask in those country towns—which are far removed from the outbreaks—to implement public health orders that effectively close down a town.

The call on the NSW Police Force is now greater than it has ever been. Although today there were announcements of some border restrictions being lifted, a large contingent of the NSW Police Force is still patrolling the borders, through driving rain, sleet, snow or heat—sometimes all in one day. As well as policing the borders, a significant contingent of the NSW Police Force is implementing the New South Wales quarantine of returned travellers from overseas and Victoria. This has left many police districts and police areas down in strength, placing a heavier burden on those left in commands. I pass on my thanks to all the NSW Police Force officers who have been doing the heavy lifting.

It is unfortunate that the Berejiklian Government did not see fit to allow the Industrial Relations Commission the option to roll over the NSW Police Force award during 2020 while police were dealing with the crisis. Instead, the Government has decided to fight the dispute in the courts. For all the superlatives the Berejiklian Government throws out to police, perhaps its actions could speak louder than words. It is time to give New South Wales police their due and admit they deserve more than 0 per cent.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (17:12:56):** I welcome the opportunity to speak to the motion moved by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services acknowledging the ongoing efforts of our NSW Police Force throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. I focus on the words of the Minister, who said, "The men and women of the NSW Police Force have gone above and beyond the call of duty in the service of their State." That is the focus of today's debate. Our acknowledgement and thanks go to the police who serve our State. I acknowledge the Minister as well and thank him for his visit to Albury just a few weeks ago. In that sense, I note for the record that when I travel with the police Minister and visit local police he always shows genuine empathy and concern for their welfare. I thank him for that. I also thank the police commissioner, in particular, for his earlier visit to the border. I acknowledge in the House his leadership of our police service.

As the member for Auburn said, "Nobody foresaw the COVID crisis." The way our police have cooperated with Health and their agility and their responsiveness need to be recognised. As the member for Auburn also said, they put in the hard yards, particularly in the bush, to implement the public health orders. Last week when I spoke in the House on the Police Amendment (Promotions) Bill I referred to the role played by regional police during the bushfires, floods and COVID. I mentioned particular police officers and people in the upper Murray for whom I have high regard: Senior Constable Mick Jones, Michael Pomona and Peter Thompson. The Minister spoke about Superintendent Paul Smith and I would like to recognise the work of some police officers in my region, particularly during COVID. I bring to the House a story about Superintendent Bob Noble from the Riverina command. The Upper Murray region has been particularly impacted, initially by bushfires at the start of 2020 and now with COVID and the border closure. Superintendent Noble and his command have been responsible for the bridge and border closures in the Upper Murray.

Superintendent Noble reached out to me in respect to his plans for the bridge closures and to let me know that if anyone in our community had concerns about the closures and their impact on them I could give them his

direct mobile number. I did not think I would need to do that but only 20 or 30 minutes after that conversation a constituent in the Upper Murray reached out to me with concerns about the impending birth of their bub. I gave them Superintendent Noble's number and straightaway they contacted him. It just goes to show the service that our police, from the highest ranks, give to our community. As the Minister said, the border closure has been a significant program. On average, over 40,000 permits have been scanned daily. For me, a striking feature has been the way the police work with our community and the way our community has responded to police and the Australian Defence Force on the border. It has been a positive experience in what has been a challenging time.

As the police Minister mentioned, I also speak to the day-to-day business that police attend to as well. At this time with COVID, I mention Senior Constable Debra Milnes. Debra has been with the force for 13 years and for the majority of that time she has been with the domestic and family violence unit. She has been awarded the 2018 Domestic Violence Practitioner of the Year Award for her dedication to victim protection and support. This award recognises members of the NSW Police Force for their outstanding work responding to or working within the area of domestic violence. We know the perils of COVID for our community in respect of the increased risk and challenge of domestic violence. I make mention of people such as Debra Milnes who work in a challenging area of the police service. I recognise her work. Her commendation read, "Senior Constable Milnes for always putting service above self and leading the conversation around domestic violence." Again, she has shown service above self.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (17:18:01):** I join in this public interest debate, which has been brought forward by Minister David Elliott, about the efforts of the NSW Police Force. I support the comments made by our shadow Minister, Lynda Voltz, in her contribution on behalf of the New South Wales Labor Opposition. There is no doubt that this year has brought significant change to the way in which the NSW Police Force has attended to its duties with due diligence. Whether it was the fires that gripped us at the end of last year and the beginning of this year, the ensuing floods—I will mention a police officer in Fairfield who attended to a wonderful lady in our local area as the floodwaters rose—and COVID.

At the turn of the clock from 2019 to 2020, who could have predicted what was about to unfold with the pandemic? It has provided challenges to our hardworking officers who have gone above and beyond the call of duty attending to whatever is needed from them. Our fine men and women have attended to border control. Who would have thought nine months ago that we would be speaking about border control in the country? It is ridiculous. In saying that, our men and women of the police force have attended to it. They have done what was needed to be done in order to keep us safe in New South Wales. They have assisted in hotel quarantine—again, a phrase that we never thought would exist at the turn of the clock to 2020. How ridiculous is that? But our men and women did it.

Our men and women have placed themselves at significant risk. The former serving officers who are members in this Chamber can tell us about the risks that our fine men and women face when they put on their badge every day. For the sake of the community, they risk their own lives, particularly this year when they are fighting an enemy they cannot see and do not know. That is COVID. These officers have left their families for days and weeks on end, working night and day shifts, working hard for our community. As they have left, other men and women have had to step up into roles at the local police area commands [PAC] or districts.

I thank Fairfield Police Area Command Superintendent Brett McFadden and Acting Superintendent Karen Cook, who have done a marvellous job maintaining law and order. I also acknowledge the Cumberland PAC's Superintendent Darryl Jobson. He has also done a fantastic job. I have had the opportunity to speak to my local area commands over the last few weeks to pass on my thanks on behalf of the people that I represent in Fairfield. Previously in the Chamber I have given an example of an officer who has gone above and beyond. In a community recognition statement a couple of weeks ago I mentioned Leading Constable Andrew Marsh, who serves in the Fairfield Police Area Command and who risked his own life earlier this year to rescue an elderly resident from rising floodwaters in her home. His efforts received much local media attention, and rightly so, and included a wonderful photo of Andrew as he carried the elderly resident to safe, dry land. We thank Andrew for his great work.

That is just a small example of what the broader force does throughout New South Wales keeping us safe and keeping their fellow officers and colleagues safe every step of the way. I thank the Minister for bringing this important debate before the House. We must thank our officers at every opportunity. During these motions we are bipartisan in thanking our wonderful men and women of the NSW Police Force for the work they do day in and day out and on top of their COVID-19 duties in 2020.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:23:07):** I speak in support of this public interest debate thanking our NSW Police Force, particularly during COVID. In the regional areas and particularly in my area of Myall Lakes, the fires started in July last year, with significant fires in September and October which impacted on Tuncurry and Forster and then moved to Taree and other places in November and December. We had not just

weeks but months of thick smoke hanging over the area. It was not just the RFS and Fire and Rescue who went to those fires but all the first responders, in particular the police. For a period the fires were impacting the Pacific Highway, The Lakes Way, Bucketts Way and a number of other important roads in our area and it was the police who attended, putting themselves in danger during those fires. Police went into houses to try to find people and they assisted paramedics to get to people who had suffered heart attacks during the fires. No sooner had the caravan of fires moved on to the southern part of the State, we had the pandemic. Police and first responders never really got a chance to recover from the fires before going into the pandemic.

I congratulate police right across New South Wales. My local area is an idyllic location, with holidaymakers and people used to outdoor living. During lockdown people were not allowed to go to the beach and other places. Local police exercised great restraint, patience and tolerance in enforcing the restrictions. During these unprecedented times of pandemic and lockdowns, when normal civil liberties were being impacted by public health orders that directed people to stay at home and not visit parks and beaches, the police were on the streets enforcing the orders. Police have to go out and engage with the public, which may affect their safety and health, and they do the job extremely well. The people of New South Wales are lucky to have a police force that does that with tolerance and patience.

In my local area police were called a number of times to premises where more people were gathered than was allowed. They had to deal with those situations. During this time, for some unknown reason—I do not know what it was; maybe it was the pandemic, lockdowns or smoke in the air; I am sure there was alcohol in the mix—there were a number of assaults, some of them vicious, on police officers across the State. That is something we must examine as a community. Should police have to put up with that sort of violence when they are doing their job protecting us?

Is there something more we can do as a government and a society to help protect the police? Perhaps we should consider introducing more penalties to help them. Assaulting a police officer should be treated far differently from any other assault. Police head towards danger to protect us when we are looking to run the other way and not get involved or caught up in an incident. They put themselves in danger, whether it is from the pandemic or people who think it is okay to assault police. That is not okay—never has been, never will be. I thank the Minister for bringing this public interest debate before the House.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (17:28:14):** I support this public interest debate motion on the efforts of the New South Wales police. In July the Newcastle City Police District welcomed Detective Superintendent Wayne Humphrey as its acting commander, stepping into the role previously held by Superintendent Brett Greentree, who has moved to the same role with the Communications and Security Command. Superintendent Greentree left big shoes to fill, but I am very happy to say that Detective Superintendent Humphrey has hit the ground running and we have already developed a strong working relationship, as I did with his predecessor. In his first weeks on the job Detective Superintendent Humphrey and I sat down together and over a cup of tea shared our backgrounds, what is currently on our agendas and our respective visions moving forward.

Commencing work in a new leadership position during a global pandemic is certainly unusual, but it does not mean the usual work goes away. While most of us were bunkered down and working from home, our police were still out in the community doing foot patrols, monitoring our roads and attending incidents as the calls came in. Officers may have been gloved and masked, but their usual work did not disappear. Rather, their myriad duties multiplied. Suddenly, police were doing compliance checks on those in self-isolation, monitoring public gathering limits and even had to insert themselves into the great toilet paper tussle of 2020. They had to be responsive to changing public health orders and the changing needs of our community as everyone adjusted to a new way of life. They were learning how to police those rules as the rest of us were learning how to live with them.

It was not easy, but as a result of the work done to build strong relationships with other community leaders we were able to smooth the transition and support our communities. At the beginning of the pandemic Superintendent Greentree and Lake Macquarie Police District Commander Superintendent Danny Sullivan sat down with local MPs, local government representatives and health authorities to map out a plan of communication to make sure we were all consistent in our messaging and were sharing information from the correct sources. As the pandemic continued, I was able to pick up the phone at any time to ask questions. In one case, I was in touch with Superintendent Greentree at 9.00 p.m. on a Sunday to address a rumour causing panic in Newcastle that the *Ruby Princess* was going to dock in our port. The value of these strong relationships cannot be underestimated; nor can the commitment of our police to work collaboratively with their colleagues across the State as we try to keep this virus under control.

Fifteen Newcastle police officers, with colleagues from every other Hunter command, travelled to the Victorian border in July to assist at checkpoints in the early days of its closure, with further officers travelling to undertake duties in the following weeks. Back at home, officers were also acting on advice from commands across

the State to apprehend those who wilfully put our community at risk. This included tracking down a man who had snuck across the Victorian border, and apprehending another who absconded from hotel quarantine in Sydney and travelled to Newcastle. However, it has not all been about crime. As we now look to ways to get our local economy rejuvenated, our police have become involved in new initiatives, including holding a place at the table on the city's new committee for night-time jobs and investment.

The command's leadership has been supportive of our trial to boost patronage and job opportunities in the city's small bars and restaurants through increased opening hours and the easing of drink restrictions. I commend Minister Dominello for bringing this initiative to the city. Although the initiative will change what everyone has come to accept as the status quo of the Newcastle night, it is extremely heartening to see our vision for a vibrant nightlife shared by the police. I thank our Police Force, and in particular the Hunter Valley Police District, for their excellent work in keeping us safe during the worst pandemic in the past 100 years.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (17:32:50):** I speak on this important public interest debate motion brought by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Any opportunity to speak in support of our brave men and women in blue is always welcome. Our police, like many other emergency and frontline services, have been at the coalface during this once-in-a-lifetime pandemic we find ourselves in. Along with their other regular duties, police have been additionally tasked with conducting checks on persons who are confirmed COVID cases to ensure they are at home or in isolation, and making sure that they are complying with health orders. Let us think about that for a minute: Attending a confirmed COVID patient's address, knocking on their door, communicating with them to ensure they are home and complying with the orders, and potentially placing themselves and their families in harm's way with the possibility of infection.

That is something many people in our community would not want to do—and understandably so. But the men and women of the NSW Police Force know it is their duty and they do it in their typical diligent fashion. Police are asked and expected to go into situations, often at personal peril or risk, where most in our community would not want to go. That is the constant reality of policing. Another task that police have been requested to take on during these unprecedented times is attending State border communities and assisting in border control. I was speaking recently with some police in Orange who were being deployed to a Victorian border town to assist in border operations.

Those additional roles and responsibilities reflect the way in which policing has had to adapt to manage, control and mitigate the risks associated with COVID-19 and its potential spread. Using fairness and common sense and exercising discretion whilst applying health orders in this once-in-a-generation pandemic is not an easy task. Sometimes there will be mistakes or things that, in hindsight, could have been done better. But it is something the police do without question or fuss; such is their nature and disposition and their commitment to serve and protect us all. Police officers roll up their sleeves and get on with job for the betterment and safety of their communities.

However, we as MPs frequently ask for additional police resources on behalf of our communities—whether that be additional police officers, new police stations, equipment, police dogs or a regional enforcement squad, which is desperately needed in the Central West Police District. This re-engineered command covers an area from Orange to Lake Cargelligo—a distance of just on 300 kilometres. The electorates of Orange, Barwon and Murray—representing over 50 per cent of the land mass of New South Wales—are in need of more officers to combat the higher rates of domestic violence, drug and alcohol offences, the scourge of ice, and sexual and physical assaults, amongst other things. When balanced with the tyranny of distance, many smaller communities often do not have a visible police presence. I often hear from residents in those smaller communities, where there was once a one-man station that has since been centralised into a larger regional centre. Those communities feel particularly vulnerable and isolated. I am sure that many regional MPs will have heard similar stories. Similarly, rural crime such as stock theft and trespass is, unfortunately, a category of crime that is easy to commit but harder to detect because of that.

It would be remiss of me not to mention that next Tuesday is Police Remembrance Day. Each year 29 September holds a special significance for police throughout Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and the Solomon Islands. It is a day for police to pause and honour officers whose lives have been cut short while performing their duty as a police officer. Since 1803, 274 police men and women have died as a result of their duties. This important day is also a time to remember the police officers who have lost their lives through illness or other circumstances. Recently the annual Wall to Wall motorcycle ride took place, which my colleague the member for Barwon and his wife took part in. The annual ride provides an opportunity for current and former police officers, along with other interested and keen men and women, to come together to ride and remember their fallen colleagues whilst continuing the tradition, unity and close-knit bond that the police family is so well known for.

Finally, I thank all the men and women of the NSW Police Force for their commitment to their duty to protect and serve the residents of this State. I acknowledge the personal sacrifice and commitment they make each and every day, and especially during this time in our nation's history. I personally thank Superintendent Steve Kentwell, the Commander of the Central West Police District, and the other police in that command for the outstanding work they do. I thank the Minister for Police and Emergency Services for bringing this important issue to the attention of the House, and I command the motion to the House.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (17:37:40):**

In reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Orange, Myall Lakes, Albury, Auburn, Fairfield and Newcastle for contributing to this very important public recognition of the work that we do in the NSW Police Force. I note that in the course of the debate there was a comment about police resourcing. This is an opportune time for me to highlight that the Berejiklian Government has, in fact, given record funding to the NSW Police Force, on top of the record numbers—the 1,500 who will be appointed over the course of this parliamentary term. We have also committed to upgrading regional and remote police stations as well as the metropolitan ones, some of which have been mentioned.

Infrastructure is important but welfare, in my mind as Minister of police, will always be the most important thing for a government to look out for. That is why I always ring police officers who have been injured in the line of duty. It is a good way for me to get an appreciation of how high morale is amongst our 17,000 police officers in New South Wales. It is always great to hear from them and to hear them say that they are looking forward to getting back to work—if, indeed, they have not already gone back to work. We are also committed to a number of other things that make sure the NSW Police Force is reflective of our modern society. We are doing that through recruiting in Indigenous communities. Not long ago I was at a passing-out parade at the Goulburn academy, when a record number of Indigenous men and women joined the NSW Police Force. I love that we draw police officers in this State from a healthy number of demographics and cultural backgrounds. I also love the fact that many of them wore the Australian Defence Medal at their passing-out parade, which means that we have been able to draw on their experiences as members of the Australian Army, navy or air force.

The youth diversion programs that we are running at the moment have resulted in some significant drops. Not long ago I was in Dubbo, where something like 60 per cent of young people who have been involved in those diversion programs are now interacting with the police. Those numbers make me very proud. The member for Orange rightly acknowledged that next Tuesday is Police Remembrance Day. It will be a very sad day for a lot of police families. In my role as the vice patron of NSW Police Legacy, I get to speak to a number of those who have lost their loved ones in the line of duty. This will be the first Police Remembrance Day that my wife and I do not have her father, a retired police superintendent. Last week, when we were beginning the Wall to Wall ride, I was with the family of Inspector Bryson Anderson, who—as many members of this House will remember—tragically lost his life in the line of duty not far from my electorate. It is appropriate for us to pause and come together to highlight the fact that policing is not just a career; it is a calling. Police are not just public servants in uniform. They have a very special place in our hearts.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

*Private Members' Statements*

**M5 EAST TOLL**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (17:41:16):** Buy now, pay later, or BNPL, is a relatively new concept that has gained popularity in recent years: purchase the goods immediately and pay them off over time. You do not have to meet the full costs up-front. To compete with BNPL, this Liberal Government has come up with a new payment plan: Pay now, pay more, pay forever. Take the new M5 East toll, for example. If you travel on the new M5 East, you can be guaranteed one thing: This Liberal Government has its hands in your wallet and is taking out your hard-earned dollars, even though you have already paid for it in full. It is highway robbery—or, as the Premier herself said, toll mania. That is right—toll mania. Forget Freddy Krueger in *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. This horror show occurs on the M5 East every time you hear the beep.

The Premier knows it is unfair to introduce a new toll on an old road; to make people pay a toll of \$6.95 each way at the height of a pandemic that has put Australia in the grip of the worst economic downturn since World War II; and to expect people to pay more than \$3,300 a year on the M5 East toll, which will increase by at least 4 per cent every year for the next 40 years. Tell your grandkids to start saving. People are angry about being taxed for driving on a road that is paid for in full and has been free since 2001. Furthermore, they are being taxed and tolled for an old road, with no upgrade, as part of a corporate stitch-up. Every motorist in every electorate

along the M5's south-west corridor knows they are being taken for a ride. They know that the M5 East toll is completely unfair, unjustifiable and unnecessary, no matter how the Liberal Government tries to spin it.

The M5 East toll is a blatant cash grab that motorists can ill afford. There are no road upgrades and no cash back—just empty pockets. My Labor colleagues and I have collected more than 10,000 signatures on a petition calling for the M5 East toll to be scrapped. The community response has been overwhelming in a short period. They have made their voices heard loud and clear when it comes to this unfair new tax. Imagine how many more signatures we could have collected from members representing the electorates of East Hills, Oatley, Holsworthy and Camden—tens of thousands more and many more times to table the petition.

Since it was opened by a Labor government in 2001, the M5 East has always been free because its construction was paid for in full. But then the Liberals decided to slap a big new toll on the same old road. It is just unfair. So objectionable is the M5 East toll that even Liberal councillors support a toll-free period and oppose the new toll on the M5 East. It is a great shame that none of the Liberal MPs in the south-west could muster the strength to stand up for their communities against this unfair tax.

The Premier should read the warning signs on this hugely unpopular new tax. But will the Premier heed the warning? Will the Premier scrap the unfair M5 East toll and remove the financial burden she has imposed on thousands of Sydney motorists? Does the Premier want to be responsible for four of her south-west Sydney backbenchers hitting the wall at the next State election, that is, the members representing the electorates of Oatley, Holsworthy, East Hills and Camden. I am sure they are getting lots of feedback from their constituents about this new toll and new tax. Yet they fail to stand up for their community and against their Government on this new toll.

The Liberal-Nationals Government is a master of backflips. A few of its backflips spring to mind: the greyhound racing ban, the Powerhouse Museum, forced amalgamations and in my own electorate Hurlstone Agricultural High School. Surely it is not hard to put money back in the pockets of the hardworking folk of south-west Sydney and all the motorists who use this motorway. I will not hold my breath for the Government to scrap this unfair toll but I will not give up. The economic recovery post COVID-19 starts with putting cash in the pockets of people by scrapping this toll.

The fact that this Liberal-Nationals Government will not scrap this toll is symptomatic of a tired and out-of-touch, nearly 10-year-old government. It no longer thinks it needs to listen to the people it serves. It thinks it can inflict as much pain on the people as it can and get away with it through marketing spin. The Government thinks that, for all its stuff-ups and incompetence: the *Ruby Princess*, icare, the hacking of personal data of 186,000 people, 3.8 million documents being stolen, the overdevelopment of suburbs and now an unfair M5 East toll on an old road for the next 40 years. The Liberal-Nationals Government now has an ingrained entitlement mentality. It believes it does not need to be accountable and does not need to listen to the community. I suspect the people of south-west Sydney have a different view of democracy and will make their voices heard in due course.

#### TRIBUTE TO COLONEL JOHN HUTCHESON, AO

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (17:46:30):** I send my condolences to the family of Colonel John Hutcheson, MC, PhD, a soldier's soldier. His Military Cross earned during the Korean War and decorations from both the South Vietnamese and the Americans during the Vietnam War speak for themselves. He led by example, qualifying as a commando and leading a team of expert soldiers during the Malayan Emergency as well as demonstrating innovation and initiative as a military engineer. His service to our nation will be remembered. Born in Queensland in 1927, John grew up in Newcastle. His teen years were spent in the shadow of the Second World War, 1939-45. American Marines were wading across the sands of Iwo Jima and the Australian Imperial Force was fighting its way into the Torricelli Ranges in northern New Guinea when 18-year-old John Hutcheson marched into the Royal Military College, Duntroon, in February 1945.

After graduating into the Royal Australian Engineers, Lieutenant John Hutcheson was sent to join the British Commonwealth Occupation Force [BCOF] in Japan. Following his year-long tour of duty in Japan, he returned to Sydney and completed his bachelor's degree in engineering. The Korean War was at its height and Hutcheson, now a captain, was posted to the legendary 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment, to command the assault pioneer platoon. Never one to ask another to do something he would not do himself, Hutcheson was recognised with the award of the Military Cross for bravery in mapping minefields at night. His courage and skill saved the lives of many Australian infantry patrols into no-man's-land. The Korean War would have a profound effect on him for the rest of his life. Peace returned to the Korean peninsula in 1953 but not for John Hutcheson.

Through the 1950s and 1960s Hutcheson pursued a hectic schedule of postings with the British and the New Zealanders and the United States of America Army. He qualified as a commando and saw action in the Malayan Emergency with the British Special Air Service. During the Vietnam War he made several advisory and

inspection visits in the 1960s before serving a full tour in 1971-72 for which he was recognised and decorated by both the United States and South Vietnamese forces. A year after the Vietnam War Hutcheson, by this time a colonel, transferred to the Citizens Military Forces—today's Australian Army Reserve—and continued to serve part-time while following a professional and academic career in his chosen field, engineering.

Hutcheson attained an MBA, followed by a doctorate in engineering and became a highly respected visiting professor at the University of New South Wales. Ever the teacher, much of his spare time was dedicated to revisiting and recording past experiences. His publishing ranged from books and articles on his own service in the Korean War and that of his brother officers and fellow diggers to reflections and lessons learnt from some of the more obscure aspects of his military career. He wrote so that others could benefit from his hard-won practical knowledge. In Korea he had been one of the first Australian soldiers to use dogs on combat missions. Today dogs are an integral part of patrols by special forces but when John used them for sensing landmines and recovering casualties in Korea he was breaking new ground.

John Hutcheson eventually retired from military duties in 1982 but continued to serve the veteran community. He could be relied on to participate in and support others on ANZAC Day and at any other appropriate commemoration, proudly wearing his commando tie and beret. As an active volunteer, he generously contributed his time to the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies on Mondays and Wednesdays in the Ursula Davidson Library. His voice is still heard by visitors to the Anzac Memorial's permanent exhibition through the interview he gave sharing his experience as a veteran through almost 40 years in war and peace. I express my sympathy to his family during this difficult time.

### WOMBELYAN CAVES

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (17:51:11):** On Friday 21 August I had the pleasure of announcing \$9.6 million for a makeover of Wombelyan Caves from the New South Wales Government's Regional Growth—Environment and Tourism Fund. This huge investment will boost nature-based tourism in the local region. The Wombelyan Caves are approximately 190 kilometres south-west of Sydney and 90 minutes from Canberra, placing the venue within easy driving distance from both major metropolitan areas. Managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, access to the spectacular white marble caves is via a picturesque valley and there is camping and cabin accommodation.

The caves are ideally located for the short getaway market. Once upgraded, they will be promoted through a new tourism strategy targeting the Sydney-Canberra or Canberra-Sydney journey, including inbound domestic and international tourism markets. The strategy will link Wombelyan Caves day or overnight visitation to a two to three day tour of the Southern Highlands and Southern Tablelands, combining the heritage of the Southern Highlands, Taralga and Goulburn villages with iconic Australian rural countryside and a unique nature-based tourism experience featuring the 400 million-year-old marble caves.

This project is a game changer for my electorate and aligns with a number of key government priorities, including the NSW Premier's Priorities, the NSW State Infrastructure Strategy, the Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan 2030, the Southern Tablelands Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022 and Destination NSW Management Plan. Wombelyan Caves are a much-loved tourism attraction and this funding will deliver much-needed infrastructure, including new cabin accommodation, interpretive signage for caves, new amenities, a new look café and a bookable function area.

I know that neighbouring businesses in Taralga, Crookwell and the Highlands are excited about this transformation with all the infrastructure required to accommodate greater numbers of tourists in the region. This makeover will also open up a number of opportunities for corporate tours and group bookings through nature-based tourism activities and events such as concerts within the caves. This investment will provide an improved visitor experience from the moment a tourist enters the park to the second they rest their head on the pillow, importantly, while preserving the unique environmental features of the site.

Specifically the project will deliver a unique special events space in a marble cave setting; a nature-based destination venue for corporate events, special interest groups and boutique camping; a high-quality two to three day tourism experience linking heritage and nature-based tourism; a significantly improved offer of family and friends day trips and holidays; greater awareness of the linked regional attractions in surrounding villages; new visitors who stay longer in the region; new opportunities to promote tourism in the Southern Highlands and Southern Tablelands areas; and jobs creation during upgrade works and post-construction, including ongoing event management and tourism services such as hospitality, tour bus operators and other goods and service providers.

As the House knows, the horrendous bushfires at the start of the year certainly took their toll on tourism in many electorates, including my electorate of Goulburn. In the case of Wombelyan Caves there was also extensive

damage caused to the access road on the Upper Lachlan shire side, but mainly on the Wingecarribee shire side. As I understand it, betterment works are not part of the recovery program. I will continue to advocate for funding for the road to further encourage tourism and increase safety for all users. Access to the caves is paramount in order for this tourism boost to reach its full potential. I am aware of the ongoing discussions between Wingecarribee Shire Council and both Transport for NSW and Resilience NSW to get the Wingecarribee side of the road back to its pre-existing condition or better.

I will continue to advocate for further road funding to increase the standard on both sides of the road and in both local government areas. As the local member, I cannot stress enough the significance of this project and I eagerly look forward to its completion. I commend the New South Wales Government for its foresight and vision to invest in the Wombeyan Caves tourism project. As an aside, I was told by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service that in the 12 months before COVID over 40,000 people toured the caves, which is significant. This is a significant project for my area and I commend the Government.

### BEIRUT EXPLOSION

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:56:01):** On 4 August 2020 the city of Beirut was brought to its knees. As a result of the explosion that tore apart the Port of Beirut, over 200 people lost their lives, 600 were injured, 300,000 people were made homeless and an estimated \$13 billion to \$20 billion in damage was caused. During the early morning of that day distressing images of Beirut's port explosion began to surface on social media and through every mainstream media outlet. White smoke was seen billowing from warehouse 12. At approximately 6.00 p.m. the roof of the warehouse caught alight, followed by an initial explosion. Some 30 seconds later, 2,700 tonnes of ammonium nitrate—an industrial chemical used in mining explosives—caused the colossal explosion that sent a mushroom cloud into the air and a blast wave radiating throughout the city. The port was unrecognisable. Surrounding buildings were levelled to the ground. Cars were flipped, glass littered the streets and hospitals were severely overrun. The greatest damage was in the historic Christian suburbs of Beirut.

Since 2019 Lebanon has suffered the effects of COVID-19 and an unprecedented economic crisis, with the world's third-highest national public debt, unemployment at 25 per cent, hyperinflation and food shortages. The economic situation has pushed tens of thousands into poverty, and one can only imagine that for many the Beirut blast will be the final straw. The distressing images and videos of the explosions did not only shake Beirut. They sent shockwaves around the world and led to an international humanitarian movement to assist Lebanon in the wake of this catastrophic explosion. In a show of solidarity over 30 countries, including Australia, acted swiftly to pledge millions in humanitarian aid to assist the Lebanese people. Australia stepped up to the challenge, demonstrating our generosity as a people and assisting those in need, with \$5 million pledged in humanitarian relief supporting the World Food Programme, the Red Cross movement and UNICEF—organisations that are contributing to the relief effort.

In addition, an Australian Defence Force C-130J Hercules collected Australian-funded supplies from the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot in Dubai and delivered them to Lebanon. The community living in the electorate of Prospect is also assisting the Lebanese people. Although Prospect is not home to a large Lebanese community, it is home to Assyrians, Armenians and Palestinian communities who called Lebanon home for decades. Lebanon was a haven for these communities, who were fleeing persecution in other parts of the Middle East, and today many of the communities believe it is their responsibility to give back to a country that gave them so much. The Armenian community of Prospect is a great example, and businesses in the electorate of Prospect are also taking part in the campaign to assist Beirut's redevelopment.

Rami and Shannon Ykmour, owners of the Rashays restaurant in Wetherill Park, have created a GoFundMe page to help those affected by the devastating blast. Rashays and the wider community are hoping to raise \$1 million and Rami Ykmour has personally donated \$100,000 to kick off the initiative. Religious communities in the Prospect electorate are also uniting to assist those impacted by the blast. An appeal donation was made to Bishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay, OLM, Maronite Bishop of Australia, and the Beirut Disaster Relief Appeal by Bishop Vincent Long, Catholic Bishop of Parramatta, on behalf of the Diocese of Parramatta to assist those affected by the catastrophic blast, providing much-needed medical assistance, food packages and home repairs. In addition, the St Thomas the Apostle Chaldean and Assyrian Catholic Diocese of Australia and New Zealand has also donated \$100,000 in humanitarian aid. Furthermore, Aid to the Church in Need Australia has also taken part in an international effort that has raised some \$412,000 to assist the most vulnerable communities in Lebanon.

The funds raised from these community appeals will go a long way to assist a fractured nation reeling from the effects of the Beirut explosion, as well as the effects of COVID-19 and the unprecedented economic crisis. The Australian people have always been there to lend a hand, whether at home during the bushfires or abroad. Today it is time to assist our brothers and sisters living in Lebanon. I call on the New South Wales Government to join the Australian Federal Government and the numerous community-led appeals to help raise funds for the people of Lebanon. I urge the New South Wales Government to actively stand with the people of Lebanon and

the over 250,000 Lebanese Australians who have adopted Australia as their home and contributed to our success as a nation. Together, we can help Lebanon rise from the ashes. I thank the House.

### OXLEY ELECTORATE COASTLINE TREK

#### WIN SECOMBE

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (18:00:49):** I acknowledge and appreciate the private member's statement by the member for Prospect on the Beirut explosion. I know that the Lebanese community, particularly in regional New South Wales, has contributed for many generations and decades. Whether in major towns such as Moree, Armidale, Coffs Harbour or Taree, Lebanese families have grown incredible businesses and contributed jobs and opportunities. I know that terrible blast has had a profound effect on many of our very hardworking Lebanese members of the community in regional New South Wales.

At the beginning of this month I had the absolute pleasure of walking more than 100 kilometres over five days with the twin aims of promoting the mid North Coast coastline and my electorate, and highlighting the importance of exercise for mental health. The trek of the electorate's coastline has been on my to-do list since being elected the member for Oxley in 2015. Initially I devised it as an idea to promote the region as the ideal place to visit or, even better, live. However, since then it has become clear that the walk would also highlight how exercise has a positive impact on mental health.

To that end, I offer my true appreciation for all those who donated to the two charities I nominated, which both address and promote positive mental health messages: Dolly's Dream and, in particular, Baylin's Gift. Baylin's mum, Hayley, walked with me and her mum for a day. I understand that more than \$1,000 has been donated to their bank account to promote awareness of suicide and mental health issues, which was a real delight and a treasure. In particular I thank the Nambucca Heads RSL club and the Nambucca Heads Surf Life Saving Club for their generous donations.

I also thank staff from the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service—at one point when I thought we were not going to get back to the beaten track I was not going to thank them—as well as the NSW Crown Lands Commissioner, Richard Bush. In particular, I thank the Governor of New South Wales, Margaret Beazley, for joining me on the walk for a day. I felt privileged to spend time with her, in particular, talking about our communities, our coastline and the opportunities that exist in regional New South Wales. I also thank all the great people who joined me, and the Nambucca Heads RSL Club for putting on a special function. I was glad to talk to people during the walk about what is important to them and what we need to do to continue to live in the best region.

I also acknowledge Wauchope's Win Secombe, who has been awarded life membership of the United Hospital Auxiliaries of NSW [UHA], its highest honour. Everybody who meets Win loves her. The 82-year-old was nominated by her team members at Wauchope Hospital Volunteers. She was judged against nominees from throughout New South Wales and learned at the start of this month that she is now a life member of an organisation to which she has tirelessly dedicated herself to support—Wauchope District Memorial Hospital. Win is described by her fellow Wauchope volunteers as "the backbone" of the Wauchope UHA branch. She is beloved and well known throughout the Hastings Valley for her passion, determination and devotion to the Wauchope District Memorial Hospital. Win is a former nurse and current branch president, who joined the volunteer organisation 22 years ago. She previously held executive positions of vice-president and treasurer, but it is her tenacity and commitment to fundraising for hospital equipment for which she is best known.

Win is one of the familiar faces at the volunteers' monthly stalls outside the Independent Grocers of Australia [IGA] in Wauchope, greeting every shopper as they walk past and extracting from them a couple of dollars in exchange for raffle tickets. When the raffle book is not in her hands, she is selling plants, crocheted and knitted clothes or delicious home-baked goodies, many of which she baked or knitted herself. Win's fellow volunteers say she leads by absolute example and asks no more of her members than she is prepared to give. They underscore her extraordinary dedication and respect her as an inclusive leader who brings everyone together—a rare talent.

Like all organisations and community groups, the Wauchope branch of United Hospital Auxiliaries [UHA] has had a difficult year and has had to suspend their monthly stalls and meetings. However, even in this time of isolation Win has stayed in touch and has been supportive of her members by reaching out to them. Win is a Medal of the Order of Australia recipient and with her latest honour she remains humble. In an interview with the local paper, the *Wauchope Gazette*, Win said:

It is wonderful to receive this award, but it really belongs to every member of the branch.

To Win, my deepest congratulations. You are a shining example to us all about community leadership, sacrifice and dedication. To the ladies involved in the Wauchope UHA branch and volunteer organisation broadly, I thank you all. Your efforts make our hospitals and communities better places.

#### **PORT MACQUARIE DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COMMUNITY ALLIANCE**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:05:57):** This week we come together as a nation to recognise the thousands of people who sadly are diagnosed with some form of dementia each year. We also acknowledge their families, carers and service providers who work tirelessly to provide the best care and support available, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to ensure their loved ones live meaningful and purpose-driven lives. Today in Parliament we offer them our thoughts and well wishes.

Dementia, or major neurocognitive disorder as it is known by health professionals, is the second leading cause of death among Australians and the leading cause of death in women, surpassing heart disease in 2016. In Australia, it is estimated that 459,000 people are currently living with dementia, which, when broken down, equates to 250 people joining the statistics each and every day. In the electorate of Port Macquarie it is estimated that 1,857 people are presently living with some form of dementia. With an ageing demographic, this is the third highest prevalence in New South Wales. It is imperative we ensure that the best quality services are available and that practical solutions are offered for people living with dementia and their carers.

When I became the member for Port Macquarie it was apparent to me that additional services were required in our community to offer help and advice to not just those living with dementia but also their carers, who are often unexpectedly conscripted to undertake a difficult journey with their loved ones. The predicted statistics are also concerning, with a forecast increase in the prevalence of dementia growing to levels in some locations upwards of 350 per cent by 2050. Of course, the impact is not restricted to a dementia diagnosis—sadly extending to potentially poor outcomes and curbed lifestyle.

These statistics were so concerning to me that in October 2012 I convened a meeting with a staunch group of stakeholders, including local geriatrician Dr Matt Kinchington, the then Alzheimer's Australia regional manager in New South Wales, Gary Thomas, local advocate Margaret Allen, carer Kath Storey and Associate Professor Rick van der Zwan. At our first meeting it was a unanimous decision that, given the data before us, there was no time to delay action to develop a dementia-friendly community. In December 2013 Port Macquarie's first dementia-friendly community steering committee was formed, aiming to raise awareness across our communities and recognising the challenges that people living with dementia face each and every day. The committee also sought to understand how we as a community could better support people living with dementia and their carers with a high quality of life with meaning, purpose and value.

Now called the Dementia Friendly Community Alliance, the group focuses on key objectives to educate, plan and consult with members of the community, including council, to shine a spotlight on the areas of inequality and injustice in an often physically challenging environment. The alliance also hosts forums to provide guidance and understanding of dementia for carers and those living with this debilitating disease. I can honestly say that we, as a united and dedicated group, are achieving our goals but we know very well there is still more work to do to educate our community and ensure people living with dementia are getting the best out of life.

I applaud the members of the alliance who represent a cross-section of our community and particularly those living with dementia and their carers for their invaluable contribution: Margaret Allen, Graeme Atkins, Sarah Ashton, Kellon Beard, Karen Dubois, Kerry West, Lisa Hort, Bronwyn Chalker, Kaye Lilley, Jade Sinclair, Jenny Edmunds, Gai McPherson, Emma Walker, Vanessa Bushe, Julie Dunn, Barry Hacker, Sharen Marshall, Nicole Cornish, Mike Sheargold, Margaret-Ann Young, Kath Storey, Kara Nicholson, Ashley Davis, Emma Schofield, Hayley Owen, Kerry Wade and Anthony Parker. I also commend the Dementia Action Week working group committee for their hard work and commitment before and during this week's celebrations from 21 to 27 September to recognise Dementia Action Week: Sarah Ashton, Graeme Atkins, Emma Walker, Bronwyn Chalker, Jenny Edmunds, Margaret Allen, Vanessa Bushe, Kellon Beard, Lisa Hort and Jade Sinclair.

I am proud to be a part of this proactive group in its efforts to make Port Macquarie a dementia-friendly community. I was extremely honoured to recently be invited to be their inaugural patron. I congratulate them on the amazing work that is being undertaken by our members right across so many different spaces. I look forward to working with them in the future because everyone, no matter your race, religion, age, sex or disability, deserves to be treated equally in an inclusive Australia.

#### **WESTERN SYDNEY JOBS GROWTH**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (18:10:25):** This evening I speak about a matter of concern to all the communities I represent in this place as the impact of the pandemic lingers on and we look towards the recovery of our economy. The number one concern reported to me is ways that we can all assist in job creation and the

creation of employment prospects for the people of western Sydney. The Government has a lot of responsibility when it comes to job creation. It is incumbent on it to do a lot; the number one lever available to the State Government is job-creating infrastructure.

In western Sydney the Government has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to fast-track this job-creating infrastructure, much of which is well overdue and for which people now cry out as we recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In western Sydney around the Penrith and Nepean regions, the obvious way in which the Government can create jobs is to fast-track local roads and school upgrades that it committed to provide. In particular, Dunheved Road, which traverses not only my electorate of Londonderry but also the Penrith electorate, is one of the most congested roads in western Sydney. It is being made more congested by the rapidly growing release of housing estates such as Jordan Springs and Ropes Crossing. Both State and Federal governments have failed to address the outcome of releasing land for new homes and the resultant increase in traffic on our local roads.

Before last year's Federal election, the Morrison Government committed funds to upgrade the duplication of the road. I thank the Federal Government for that, but the funding was a fifty-fifty split with the New South Wales Government. Now more than 12 months later the project has not begun because the New South Wales Government has not given its commitment to the upgrade. At a time when we need to create jobs in western Sydney, what a great opportunity it is for this Government to make that commitment so that we can build this congestion-busting infrastructure and create more jobs.

The Government also committed to upgrading local schools such as the Cranebrook High School, Jamison High School, Nepean Creative and Performing Arts High School and Glenmore Park High School. Almost two years after the State election, no work has started at any of those projects. This is a no-brainer. I urge the Government to get that work happening to create local jobs. For parts of my electorate that are in the North West Growth Area, such as Marsden Park, infrastructure cannot come soon enough. The local residents have been crying out for infrastructure. They are basically living in housing estates on dirt tracks. I have spoken about this many times in this House.

Marsden Park is one of the fastest-growing suburbs in New South Wales. There are many things that this Government could do immediately to make life easier and create jobs for people living in those areas. It could build the 700-space car park at Schofield Station that was promised almost two years ago but has not been built. It could fast-track upgrades to Richmond Road, which is a daily nightmare for commuters—and that is an understatement. It could build the Bandon Road connection to Elara Boulevard and take pressure off Garfield Road. The Government must commit to a time frame to build the promised Marsden Park High School. The land is there. I recently met with many local residents and their young children. They moved into this beautiful area and erected new homes on the promise that this infrastructure would be built, but many months after the election we have yet to see any progress. We build into these communities and we expect the infrastructure. The Government must get started creating the jobs that are needed in western Sydney as we recover from this pandemic.

### **BATLOW RECOVERY FORUM**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (18:15:32):** When I was elected to this place I spoke of the need for the Government to listen to communities—not to dictate, but to genuinely listen and respond. Government must work with and for its people. Never has this been more important than as communities battle to recover from the bushfires of the summer. Immediately after the catastrophic bushfires there was, I believe, a genuine desire by the Government and its agencies to assist. It was, however, a top-down approach. There were websites and call numbers aplenty, but on the ground in my electorate it took some time for recovery help to arrive in person. Nevertheless, it did come and we saw counsellors and recovery officers work directly with the community.

I acknowledge and thank all those involved. But I also highlight that the work is not done. Recovery has really only just begun, and to succeed the Government must work in genuine partnership with communities. With this in mind, I and the newly elected Federal member for Eden-Monaro, Ms Kristy McBain, hosted the Batlow Recovery Forum. Batlow, I remind the House, was the "undefendable" town. In early January residents were urged to leave their homes ahead of the Dunns Road bushfire, which hit on a day of extreme heat and winds. The fire destroyed the old hospital, a petrol station and many houses in town, as well as outlying properties. It could have been far worse but for the brave efforts of the firefighters and volunteers who remained. The town survived. The community returned and, amidst the devastation, the Batlow fighting spirit lived on.

Not only did Batlow prove to be defensible; it is determined to thrive. On 19 August this year members of the community came together at the Batlow Recovery Forum to talk about how to rebuild and renew. Because of COVID, we were restricted to a gathering of 60. A survey prior to the event assisted in gaining community views. We were fortunate to have presentations by Major General Andrew Hocking from the National Bushfire

Recovery Agency and Mr Mark Conlan from Resilience NSW. I thank them. There was a process of facilitated discussion that allowed the sharing of questions and thoughts on the recovery efforts and a future vision. Front and centre were the impacts on and the needs of the community in terms of the built, natural, social and economic environment.

The immediate impact of the bushfire was obvious: Homes, buildings, animals and livelihoods were destroyed. The cannery site was lost, along with forestry assets, accommodation and businesses. There has been a huge loss in key industries such as softwood, horticulture and farming—losses that will take decades to restore. The environment has been scarred. The iconic sugar pines are gone. For some, the social and mental trauma will last years or a lifetime, but the feeling at the forum was that now is the time for recovery and renewal. There is a feeling of hope and a desire to use this crisis as an opportunity. Residents have pinpointed areas for improvement and renewal. They are keen to see diversified local industries, new tourism opportunities and better infrastructure. Even something as relatively straightforward as improving road access to the popular Blowering Dam could bring new tourism and business opportunities.

Residents want to see the natural environment thrive, better management of private and public lands, with weed and feral animal control, and cleared buffer zones around key areas of natural significance. There has been strong support from government through the National Bushfire Recovery Agency and Resilience NSW. I am pleased to tell the House that Resilience NSW has offered to support the community, to take forward the ideas raised at the forum, to work with the community to further identify and develop positive directions for Batlow's future, and to do this with the National Bushfire Recovery Agency. There are opportunities here and there is funding available. The community is keen to take advantage of that and to renew. I also note and welcome the strong support of the Snowy Valleys Council. All three layers of government need to be involved, and I believe they will be. They must support community leaders to bring the community together. Above all, they must listen to the community and allow them to fulfil their aspirations. I will not stop in my efforts to make sure this happens.

#### **TAFE NSW**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:20:17):** I proudly inform the House of the Government's achievements when it comes to the TAFE system in New South Wales. This Government has a strong appreciation of how valuable investment in skills is, both for the individual and for all of New South Wales. When we invest in TAFE we are investing not just in the student's future, but also in the State's future. Our plan over the years to expand and boost funding to TAFE across New South Wales is bold and ambitious. It will include 700,000 free TAFE courses over four years and an additional \$227 million in new funding for TAFE over four years. We look forward to seeing the results of this investment in the development of our skilled and trade industries across New South Wales.

We are fortunate as a government that our plan is being overseen by the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, Geoff Lee, who has a thorough understanding of and passion for the TAFE system. The Minister's hands-on experience and his enthusiasm for skills development is tangible. Locally, I was joined recently by Minister Lee to tour the new \$4.2 million health training facility at St George TAFE, Kogarah. This facility is part of our Government's ongoing investment in capital works projects across the TAFE network, totalling \$179.5 million across 25 projects. Health and wellbeing are among the fastest-growing courses across TAFE NSW and this is reflected locally, where enrolments have been surging in recent years. The new facilities have been built to reflect current industry practice and will deliver a much-needed increase in local training capacity to match growing demand in the St George area.

Our Government's significant redevelopment of St George Hospital means there is strong demand for a skilled health workforce. I am proud to be part of a government that is committed to expanding training opportunities in the St George area. This multimillion-dollar investment will equip students with the real world skills they need to excel in the health sector. The new facility has a particular health focus on nursing and aged care, reflecting a higher demand for those workers. This is just another example of the Government recognising employment trends and responding accordingly. As a government with a strong focus on business and the economy, we also understand that equipping students with job-ready skills means equipping businesses with job-ready employees. That is why we are not only investing in capital works projects, but also have developed a \$30 million TAFE NSW Skills for Business initiative.

As a government, it is fantastic that when we invest in skills we are also investing in small business and in local economies. Furthermore, the Government acknowledges that the cost of TAFE and tertiary education can be a burden on many individuals and families. In a win for vocational education students, from January 2020 the Government is investing \$54.3 million to make government-subsidised traineeships fee free. Traineeships are similar to apprenticeships but generally take around one to two years to complete and are in a variety of different fields including agriculture, allied health, early childhood education and retail. This is a game changer for small and medium businesses in the St George area. It will allow trainees to focus on practical training. This investment,

coupled with the \$285 million initiative that has made apprenticeships fee free, demonstrates that the Government is serious about getting people into sustainable work and addressing the skills shortage.

As highlighted by the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, this initiative is an important step in ensuring high-quality early childhood education and care. It is certainly encouraging that the most popular traineeships are in early childhood education, with over 10,000 students taking one up since 2015. My family is a product of TAFE. My grandfather was a cabinet-maker; my dad is, in fact, still a cabinet-maker; and my brother has a factory with our cousin in the electorate of the member for Heffron. They are cabinet-makers as well.

**Ms Gabrielle Upton:** What happened to you?

**Mr MARK COURE:** That is a very good question. Investment into TAFE is beneficial for all of us. The Government is investing heavily into a modern TAFE system that is developing skilled students and equipped businesses, as well as driving local economies and communities. I thank the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education for all his work on TAFE throughout New South Wales. My local community says thank you.

### MASCOT QANTAS HEADQUARTERS

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (18:25:16):** On behalf of my community, I raise my concern at reports that Qantas is considering moving its operations from its current headquarters in Mascot to either the new Western Sydney Airport or Victoria, or even Queensland. Unfortunately, more than several decades ago, I acquired shares in Qantas that are still held in the pandemic today. It is one of the single biggest employers in my electorate and its activities support thousands if not tens of thousands of jobs in my community. Whether it be pilots or flight attendants, warehouse staff or delivery drivers, the team at Disability Services Australia who prepare the individual cutlery packs used on flights, or the cafes and restaurants that serve employees, the economic impact of Qantas on my community is enormous.

As Australia's first airport, Mascot is synonymous with Qantas, Australia's oldest airline. Kingsford Smith Airport is Australia's gateway to the world—48 million people pass through its doors each year. So it was with some shock that I read that Qantas was considering putting an end to that long partnership. It was with even greater shock to learn that Qantas had nominated the new Nancy-Bird Walton Airport in western Sydney as a potential headquarters. I am old enough to remember when Qantas fought tooth and nail against the concept of a second airport for Sydney. Its opposition was motivated by its desire for the expansion of Kingsford Smith Airport to three and four runways—plans which I vociferously opposed. It was the prospect of expanding Kingsford Smith Airport that led me to support a second Sydney airport, long before Qantas came around to the idea.

It took until 2012 for Qantas to express any support for a new airport and until 2013 for it to confirm that it would utilise that airport at all, despite suggestions for a second Sydney airport first being raised during the time of the Chifley Government in 1946. According to Qantas in the past, moving from Mascot would have been too expensive. A 1997 report claimed it would take \$1 billion for Qantas to move its operations to Badgerys Creek—\$1.7 billion in today's dollars. That was at a time when it wanted public expenditure to benefit its activities at Kingsford Smith Airport. As sure as the sun rises, Qantas today is seeking public funds. In last week's *The Sydney Morning Herald* it was reported:

Qantas Group chief financial officer Vanessa Hudson said the group will look at what "incentives" state governments can provide when deciding where to base its workforce.

That has to be recognised for what it is: rent-seeking behaviour. How did our State Treasurer respond? The article continues:

NSW Treasurer Dominic Perrottet said the state would offer "every assistance to Qantas so they can keep as many of their employees as possible in NSW".

It is a noble goal, but Qantas is simply trying to extort some concession from the New South Wales Government and the Treasurer is all too keen to gratify the behaviour. Every other Premier on the east coast is jumping for joy at the thought that they can deliver the thousands of jobs that Qantas provides. Governments need to recognise that throwing money at Qantas in the hope it will do what they want is the financial equivalent of tossing a chip to a seagull in the hope that it will go away. This company is all too willing to take the public coin but feels no mutual obligation to its benefactors. It has taken probably a quarter of a billion dollars in JobKeeper payments this year. In June it begged the Federal Government to extend the payment beyond September and then turned around in August and laid off another 3,000 staff. That is on top of the 6,000 jobs it cut much earlier in the year. Australians are proud of Qantas. They are proud of its place as our national carrier. It is a national icon—the Spirit of Australia—but at a time of crisis, the Australian spirit is not to shake down your neighbours or your mates for a few extra dollars. That is a mean, nasty spirit indeed. I urge Qantas to remain where it belongs—at its home in Mascot, Sydney.

### COOTAMUNDRA ELECTORATE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE STUDENTS

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:29:48):** All around the State this week, our year 12 students are embarking on a week of lasts: their last day of school, last face-to-face classes and last assemblies. It will be a week of saying goodbye, preparing for exams, reflecting on the past and looking to the future. It is a challenging time for any student. I am sure everyone in the Chamber can remember snippets of that momentous week, when the safety of school starts to be left behind. For every student, as for every school, this week will mean something different. It is both an immensely personal experience and one shared with an entire year group.

Of the 79 schools in the electorate of Cootamundra, 20 are secondary and central schools, and each one of them strives for the best for its students. These schools go above and beyond, offering opportunities not always available in large schools and creating close-knit communities. I thank the students, staff and supporters of Ardlethan Central School, Ariaiah Park Central School, Barellan Central School, Coolamon Central School, Cootamundra High School, Cowra High School, Gundagai High School, Henry Lawson High School, Hennessy Catholic College, Junee High School, Murrumburrah High School, Narrandera High School, Sacred Heart Central School, St Anne's Central School, St Raphael's Catholic School, Temora High School, Ungarie Central School, West Wyalong High School, Young High School and Holman Place School.

They have all adapted to the challenges of this year with enthusiasm and patience, always putting the welfare and wellbeing of their students first. I thank them all for their hard work this year. The largest year 12 class in my electorate is at Hennessy Catholic College, which will see 63 students finish their secondary education this year. The smallest can be found at Ungarie Central School, where three students make up the 2020 graduating class. It is truly one of the great pleasures of my job to congratulate each student individually with a year 12 certificate, which I will shortly be sending out, marking this important milestone in their life. But, of course, this year is different. I have not been able to congratulate many of them on their achievement face to face, as I would normally do. This crop of year 12 students have had an incredibly challenging year. Just six months ago they adapted from face-to-face classes to remote lessons. Even now, with much of their school life returning to normal, performances, exam conditions, formals and graduations will look a little different to those in the past. They have taken these challenges in their stride with a resourcefulness and determination that never ceases to impress me.

At the end of this week our year 12 students will head home to get stuck into their studies before exams begin. This can be a surreal time, where it can feel like the outcome of years of schooling comes down to a few hours in an exam room, a final performance or a last project. The HSC is an incredibly stressful time for many students and I urge anyone who is struggling with their mental health to seek help. They should reach out to services like Beyond Blue or headspace who are there to help and understand what they are going through, or visit the HSC Hub, which has been designed in partnership with ReachOut Australia to support year 12 students and their parents.

I ask all students to please make sure they keep talking and stay connected to their friends, family and teachers. They should stay active and ask for help if they need it. While it might be hard to see now, the HSC and their ATAR is not the be-all and end-all. There are alternative pathways into tertiary education, and there are engaging and rewarding jobs out there that do not require a high mark. There are options and they will find the right fit for them. While working hard and striving for success is important, the sky will not fall in if they do not meet the high expectations they set for themselves. As a perfectionist, I know that is tough advice to take, but I urge them to please be kind to themselves during this time. At the end of the day, your greatest competition and your greatest critic is you. I urge all our year 12 students to take a look at the past six months and see what they have overcome and what they have achieved. Be proud of yourselves because your families, teachers, communities and I are already so proud of you all.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (18:34:37):** I acclaim the words of the member for Cootamundra about HSC students, particularly those HSC students in my electorate. I know this has been such a tough year for those young people, who will thrive and learn from this challenge. Just as the member for Cootamundra extended best wishes to the HSC students in her electorate, I extend to all HSC students in my electorate my very best wishes, a bit of wisdom and a bit of fun. I encourage them and want them to know that there is something beyond their COVID experience of the HSC, and 2021 will be a great year for all of them.

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:35:19):** I also congratulate the member for Cootamundra on her private member's statement. She has hit a nerve and hit the nail on the head. In my electorate of Shellharbour there are many victims of abusive intimate partner relationships. When we talk about victims we tend to identify the victim of the abuse but there is so much more grief associated with domestic abuse, especially when it ends in the death of an intimate partner or ex-intimate partner. Not surprisingly, the abuse and the deaths almost always involve coercive or controlling behaviours, with those behaviours following an escalating controlling pattern of

behaviour leading to physical abuse or the death of an intimate partner. The death of a victim of this type of abuse often leaves behind bewildered and devastated families and friends who are left to suffer the consequences of the actions of an obsessed, controlling partner or ex-partner. This burden will remain with them for the rest of their lives.

One such family is the Reddy family, who had their beloved daughter and sister Preethi cruelly snatched from them on 3 March 2019 by an ex-intimate partner in a murder case which exhibited what we can now call the classic kinds of coercive controlling behaviour. Preethi was a dentist in Dapto in my electorate. She spent many years there. Nithya, Preethi's sister, told some of her story to Wollongong's *Illawarra Mercury*. I will recount some of her story and her journey going forward. The newspaper article stated:

"I lost my sister to intimate partner violence and it was obviously the most difficult thing my family and I have gone through—and it will never be okay," Nithya said.

"It's the main reason for me to advocate for this trauma recovery centre—it gives me a sense of meaning and purpose in life to try and prevent this happening to others."

Nithya and her family are supporting the Women's Trauma Recovery Centre, the first of its kind in Australia and in the world, through their advocacy and financial support. Nithya made the observation, "Also working in psychiatry, I know there's so many gaps in the system." This is supported by Dr Karen Williams, a psychiatrist who works in the Illawarra at South Coast Private Hospital. The article continued:

"When I came into mental health I was mainly dealing with anxiety, depression and schizophrenia, but over time recognised the vast majority of female patients were traumatised as a result of domestic violence, physical or sexual abuse," she said. "And not much of that was being addressed at all."

...

And she added that unlike the current "piecemeal approach" to domestic violence services, the centre would be a one-stop shop for women—offering not only counselling but assistance with other areas including housing, finances and legal affairs.

According to the newspaper article, Nithya also said:

"... the majority of perpetrators are men, and victims women—I acknowledge that men can be victims too.

That's why we need services to break the cycle—services that are inter-generational so that mothers and children who have been victims can receive help.

So that girls and boys who have seen domestic violence at home don't go on to become victims, or perpetrators, because it has been normalised."

Early education is the key to turning the tide for those children. They need to understand that this type of behaviour is unacceptable and illegal. Through education, create a change in the way the whole society views and treats domestic violence. Nithya also said:

"There's so much misunderstanding around coercive control. And it's a very dangerous form of domestic abuse as it disables women—so my sister didn't think she was in danger around him.

But the evidence around domestic violence shows that often physical violence is preceded by coercive control—and that then escalates into physical violence."

Nithya said that she knew her sister's stance on violence. The article continued:

Nithya doesn't believe Preethi's former boyfriend had been physically violent during their relationship, but said he had shown signs of coercive control.

The bill named in Preethi's honour hopes to eradicate this type of behaviour. The article continued:

She believes that his first act of physical violence after he met up with Preethi on the night of her murder was his "final act of control".

## UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

### DEFENCE BUDGET

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:40:04):** I recently received a briefing from the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Newcastle, Professor Alex Zelinsky, on savings that the university needed to make to accommodate the collapse in income as a result of the current pandemic. Despite 85 per cent of the students being local, loss of overseas student income, loss of income from student accommodation, steps necessary to upgrade to online learning, rent relief for on-campus businesses and many other small costs and losses have hit the university hard. Cuts are being made and, as a graduate of the university, some of the cuts are personally painful. I graduated in 1989 with a Bachelor of Science majoring in geology. As of next year, a geology major will not be awarded at the university but I note that an earth science major will still be available.

In September I met with Professor Lee Smith and the Head of School, Environmental and Life Sciences, Professor Sandy Steacy, on the issue. I was advised it was a simple business decision. Numbers had declined in

geology—it was as simple as that. I do not record these comments to criticise my university. The response I received is a result of the public policy engaged in to a greater or lesser degree by both major parties, which has turned education post school into a private enterprise run along business lines. As someone who received his university education for free—provided by the State—and knowing the opportunities I was afforded, which set me on a path very different from that in the experience of my working-class family and friends, I feel compelled to say we in this place and in the Commonwealth Parliament should be doing more to support our higher education sector and more to support the children of this State to make the best of the opportunities that higher education offers.

We decide with our spending decisions what is supported and what is not in this society. We could do more now. Victoria has provided pandemic payroll tax relief to universities in that State. New South Wales has not. We could spend more on higher education as a nation but the Commonwealth Government is currently floating a plan to transfer more of the cost of university degrees onto the backs of students. At the same time, the Morrison Government is planning to spend \$270 billion on defence procurement over a decade, including submarines and long-range missiles. My home town of Newcastle also provides a fine record of past defence spending, and that can be instructive. I was once the youngest member of the Fort Scratchley Historical Society. I spent weekends tidying up the fort, which commands the entrance to Newcastle Harbour. I acknowledge David Berriman, who was the president at the time, for his efforts and support for me back then and all the work he did to get that project to where it is today.

The fort was constructed to repel the Russians in the 1880s. They never came, but the fort now records the defence equipment that public money was spent on to repel them and our other enemies from 1882 until 1972, when the Australian Defence Force finally vacated the fort. The fort only fired its guns once in anger: at a Japanese submarine running on the surface that fired 26 shells at the City of Newcastle in 1942. Incidentally, my grandfather was a crane driver who removed those six-inch guns from the fort in 1965 before the historical society agitated for their return and restoration at a later date. Defence is but one part of our foreign policy. We decide how much money goes to defence and how much goes to foreign engagement. When I look at the prospect of spending \$270 billion on defence I think of those guns at Newcastle that only fired once. Maybe we should spend some of it a little differently.

Perhaps instead of treating foreign students as a business income we could offer scholarships to foreign students, including students from the People's Republic of China. The long-term benefit of person-to-person engagement and exchange of goodwill created by helping foreign neighbours may be money better spent than the large amount we are preparing to allocate to weapons. Where is the modern Colombo Plan? A generation of South-East Asian politicians and public servants were supported under the plan to learn at universities in this country, the United Kingdom and the United States. Dr Boediono, the Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia from 2009 to 2014 studied in Australia under the Colombo Plan. He said the original Colombo Plan achieved a lot of benefits to both countries and both peoples, and I quote:

I think that the money the Australian Government spent on the Colombo Plan was money very well spent ... We always have affection for the country, the people ... Despite some friction and so on the basic good will is there.

The new Colombo Plan created by the Abbott Government did nothing more than provide scholarships for Australian students to study overseas. We should be providing more support for our universities for no other reason than the benefit it will reap for our own society. We also need to support more foreign students to study here. We need to reconsider the amount we will spend on weapons, which might be better spent on helping our neighbours.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (18:45:20):** I thank the member for The Entrance for his interesting private member's statement, particularly the matters that he raised with regard to Fort Scratchley and his involvement in the historical preservation of Fort Scratchley. It is a great ornament to Newcastle. It reminds me of my youth—I grew up close to Fort Scratchley. I was interested in the member's reference to the cannons that used to be at Fort Scratchley. Madam Speaker may remember, the guns that were removed by the grandfather of the member for The Entrance from Fort Scratchley were relocated to the Obelisk for many years and a great source of enjoyment in my youth was climbing over those cannons before they were returned back to Fort Scratchley. The member mentioned Mr Berryman, who I know very well, as one of the good citizens of Newcastle who has preserved that history.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Fort Scratchley is a wonderful organisation. The member for Newcastle has spoken about it many times in a positive fashion.

*Community Recognition Statements***JORDAN SPRINGS PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (18:46:41):** On day one of term 3 this year several hundred children began their first term of learning at the new Jordan Springs Public School. I was proud to stand alongside local families who fought for years for this school to be built and I am thrilled to finally see it open. Last Friday I was delighted to join the Jordan Springs Public School student leaders online to welcome them into their new roles. I congratulate every one of them on being selected as foundation student leaders: Jacinta Cai, Daniela Corry, Mosiah Crichton, Caleb Galvin, Jordan Geyer, Anantleen Kaur, Kevin Liu, Dario Lorenzotti, Zackery Orders, Sophie Payne and Rashel Priyanath. It is always inspiring to speak to young people about their aspirations. I know they will do their school proud. I also acknowledge the educational leadership of Kylie Becker, the foundation principal of Jordan Springs Public School. She has put together a team of passionate educators who are serving this western Sydney suburb with dedication and pride. I know this school has a bright future ahead.

**MARILYN RABINOWITZ**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (18:47:40):** I congratulate Turramurra resident Marilyn Rabinowitz whose art exhibition *Roots* is currently on display in the Fountain Court exhibition space here at Parliament House. Before immigrating to Australia in 1998, Marilyn was born and raised in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Since moving to Sydney she has attended various art classes, and she runs a private art therapy practice and children's art classes. I had the pleasure of meeting Marilyn and her husband, Solomon, a few weeks ago. Marilyn showed me her art, which she described as a collection that transports her to her past. Aspects of Africa and Australia are evident in each canvas—from the depiction of flora, fauna and colours. Marilyn said she has a deep gratitude for the life Australia has offered and the combination of the two influences has been labelled "tribal". Due to COVID-19 a virtual tour of Marilyn's art is available via the New South Wales Parliament website. I encourage my colleagues and the general public to view the exhibition.

**BILL MCNAMARA**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (18:48:48):** I acknowledge Mr Bill McNamara, a living legend in the city of Blacktown. Bill, who is now in his 90s, continues to work and serve the community. He has 26 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren. Bill can be described as property developer, entrepreneur, philanthropist, innovator and community servant. He is also devoted to his family. Bill always puts the health and safety of his employees ahead of profits. He is an all-round good guy. Bill can be attributed to many significant commercial and retail buildings in Blacktown and Parramatta, including Westpoint Blacktown in the 1970s and Parramatta's Riverside Theatre. In 2017 he was awarded Blacktown Corporate Citizen of the Year, as well as the first inductee into the Blacktown City Hall of Fame. Bill McNamara is one of the most influential people in western Sydney and has made a significant difference of which we can all be proud. Thank you, Bill, for your dedication and devotion to the people of western Sydney.

**LAWRANCE RYAN**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:49:47):** I congratulate Lawrance Ryan on celebrating his twentieth year working at Cowra Tourism. Lawrance began leading tours around Cowra from around 1990 on a voluntary basis, and from 2000 he has been employed in a number of capacities by Cowra Tourism. He is a wealth of knowledge about the history of Cowra and he makes a huge contribution to the positive experience of visitors who make their way to that part of the country. In addition to his role with Cowra Tourism, Lawrance has also published several books on rail and local history in Cowra. He is the Grants and Executive Projects Officer at Cowra Shire Council and is part of various community groups, such as the Cowra Breakout Association, Lachlan Valley Railway and the Cowra Musical and Dramatic Society. Lawrence is a true bright spark and an asset to community of Cowra.

**FERN BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (18:50:33):** A simple concept has been reaping big rewards at Fern Bay Public School, with a before-school reading program smashing goals with its youngest participants. Three mornings each week the school's younger students buddy up with an older student or adult to read together, with assessments already showing improvement in reading skills—a fantastic outcome. Collaboration is frequently the key to success and in addition to developing literacy, the program promotes mentorship, teamwork and confidence. Congratulations to teacher Emily True for kickstarting this program. The enthusiasm it garners from its participants is a testament to the positive outcomes being achieved for all involved. Well done!

**PAULINE KNOWLER**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (18:51:32):** One of the great stalwarts of St Paul the Apostle Primary School at Winston Hills retires today after 40 years of dedicated and professional service. That wonderful lady, Pauline Knowler, school secretary, mother, grandmother of Grace, St Vincent de Paul volunteer and compassionate friend to all has manned the school reception for one last time. She is leaving behind those long days of grazed knees, lost lunch money, juggling the school accounts and calming the occasional "challenging parent". Pauline is a lady of strong deep faith, committed, selfless and caring. She epitomises the true selfless servant to others. It goes without saying that Pauline has touched literally generations of families across our great community. Pauline, it is time to spend some "you time"—time that you so richly deserve. On behalf of the wider St Paul's family please rest and take care. Thank you for each and every single day of those 40 years of wonderful service.

**RENATA ROBERTS**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (18:52:37):** Congratulations to Renata Roberts, Chief Corporate Services Officer of The Bloomfield Group, who was recently awarded the Dyno Nobel Exceptional Woman in Australian Resources Award at the Women in Resources National Awards. Despite the many fantastic women that work in the resources sector in New South Wales, this is the first time that this award has been won by a New South Wales nominee. Renata was recognised for her leadership and capability across a number of areas throughout her career and for her involvement in community outreach. Renata has held the executive position of Chief Corporate Services Officer of The Bloomfield Group for over eight years and has responsibility for safety and health, human resources, industrial relations, information technology, and contractor and audit management. Renata said the recognition provided the opportunity to reflect on the journey the resources industry has taken her on. She said:

We are a sector that has so much to be proud of and I'm delighted to receive recognition from the industry that has been part of me throughout so much of my life.

John Richards, Chairman of The Bloomfield Group, said that the award recognised Renata's tireless efforts to promote the industry and its immense opportunities.

**RUBY PADE**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:53:39):** Karangi tennis ace Ruby Pade proudly takes her place among the Coffs Coast's sporting stars. Earlier this year I presented Ruby with a New South Wales Government certificate for her achievements. Ruby's New South Wales Primary Schools Sports Association [PSSA] tennis team contested the national primary schools titles—her team won and Ruby was undefeated in singles, doubles and mixed doubles. She has also reached the New South Wales PSSA State titles in the 100 metre sprint, long jump, swimming, softball and cross country, as well as being in the Narranga Public School girls softball and cricket teams, which also won their respective State titles. Now at Coffs Harbour High School, Ruby claimed gold in the 15 and under girls singles at the New South Wales Combined High Schools tennis titles. Ruby is coached by her father, Allan. She is also grateful to Mark Weiley and Jess Wilson at Narranga, New South Wales State tennis managers Sue Watts and Phil Shanahan, and Karangi and Narranga public schools.

**JOSHUA AND NOAH LEVIN**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (18:54:39):** Joshua and Noah Levin are students at Whitebridge High School in year 12 and year 10, respectively. After losing their father to illness in 2015, both young men have since grown and developed resilience and maturity beyond their years. The boys both attended the Camp Magic program, which supports grieving children. They were so appreciative of the experience that they have made it their mission to give back to the organisation, providing similar opportunities for young people faced with similar circumstances. The boys are both ambassadors for the program, and Joshua is now undergoing training as a camp mentor. Noah is continuing to raise awareness and funds through numerous endeavours to support the charity. Noah will be undertaking a running challenge throughout the month of October to raise money. He initially set a goal of \$1,000, which he has already surpassed. Both Levin brothers are high academic achievers. They represent the school in student leadership, work in part-time jobs in the local community and are giving of their time and energy to help others. I thank both for their extraordinary efforts. The Levin brothers were referred to me by Nadene Harvey, the principal of Whitebridge High School.

**EAST HILLS BASEBALL CLUB**

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (18:55:51):** I congratulate East Hills Baseball Club President Peter Archer on his dedication and his excellent coaching, culminating in two teams from the club experiencing grand final glory for the 2019-20 season. The East Hills third grade Red Sox team defeated St Patricks 14-3. That was a great achievement as St Pats had not lost a game all season. This placed the Red Sox into the grand final, where

they were put through their paces in a game that took nearly four hours to give them victory over the Cronulla Sharks. The East Hills under-9s Angel team went through this year's T-ball major division one competition undefeated. It is a credit to their hard work, and their efforts showed as they improved every week throughout the competition. The East Hills baseball and T-ball club work out of Kelso North Baseball Park, where I spent many a chilly morning in my youth enjoying that great sport. Peter and his wife, Jill, are completely dedicated to the Little Sluggers of East Hills and are inviting locals to come down to Kelso and give the sport a try. I remind all of the local sporting groups in my area that the local community sports grants are now open and close on 7 October. They have to be in it to win it.

### NEWTOWN BREAKAWAYS

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (18:56:52):** This month the Newtown Breakaways once again hosted the pride match at Henson Park, Marrickville. The iconic rainbow bounce returned to the field and players once again took to the pitch in their rainbow guernseys, all to promote diversity in sport. I thank players from the Newtown Breakaways, Campbelltown Blues and Macquarie University for taking part in the day's matches. Studies show that 80 per cent of people have either witnessed or experienced homophobia in sport, with 75 per cent believing that LGBTIQ+ people are not safe on the sports field. Events like the pride match are critical to breaking down those perceptions and making everyone feel welcome. The Newtown Breakaways have a proud history of championing inclusion. The club's core values are commitment, competitiveness and inclusivity. It welcomes players of all ages, genders, backgrounds and levels of experience. I again congratulate the Breakaways on another successful pride match and thank the Rainbow Swans for sponsoring the event. I cannot wait to see how this initiative will continue to go from strength to strength in Marrickville.

### TRIBUTE TO FLORA O'DEA

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:57:49):** The O'Dea family and the wider community lost one of its great champions recently when Flora O'Dea passed away at the age of 100. Flora was the great-granddaughter of Dubbo's first solicitor, and at one point ran the office of the Edgell's farm near Dubbo. At the age of 18 during World War II the then Flora Taylor was assistant commandant and then commandant with the Red Cross Voluntary Aid Detachment in Dubbo. She met Ron O'Dea and wrote to him many times during his time fighting in the war. They were married in 1956 and their marriage lasted more than 50 years before Ron passed away in 2008 at the age of 94. The couple had two daughters, Ellen and Catherine, although tragically Catherine died just days after her birth. The family has been much-loved residents of the Rawsonville area. At the NSW Nationals centenary celebrations in 2019, Flora O'Dea was recognised as the second longest living member of the party, having joined in September 1945. She was a remarkable woman and will be sadly missed. Vale, Flora O'Dea.

### CAITLIN ROODENRYS

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (18:58:53):** I acknowledge the contribution to NSW Young Labor of the outgoing secretary, Caitlin Roodenrys. She has worked hard to make Young Labor a more representative organisation and has been a strong voice for young people, particularly those from regional and rural areas. Caitlin, of course, comes from Wollongong. During her time as secretary she worked on governance issues, improving the code of conduct and developing a grievance policy. She worked on policy issues, campaigning for an increase in the Newstart allowance and young people's involvement in the Religious Discrimination Bill debate. Caitlin worked on engagement of Labor through activities such as organising dinners with the Wollongong Homeless Hub and Reclaim the Night activities. More importantly, she acted as a guide and a mentor, and supported and encouraged young people across New South Wales as they started out on their own political journey. I thank Caitlin for her contribution to my campaign in the past and to Young Labor and look forward to her having a bright future.

### CARMELO PESCE

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (19:00:07):** I acknowledge the outstanding contribution of Sutherland Shire Council's outgoing mayor, Councillor Carmelo Pesce. Councillor Pesce was first elected to represent D Ward in 2012, keen to see improvements to businesses, our environment and lifestyle. In 2014 he was elected deputy mayor, and since 2015 has served as not only the Liberal Party's longest continuous mayor but also one of the greatest mayors our shire has ever seen. Having worked with Councillor Pesce over the past five years to deliver countless projects and improvements for our community, there is no doubt that his leadership, passion and collaborative nature has contributed to cementing our shire as the best place to live, work and raise a family. Although his tenure as mayor may be over, I am confident that he will continue to fight for our community and represent D Ward with distinction, and that his best is yet to come. I sincerely thank Councillor Pesce for his years of dedication to our community, for his tireless efforts to deliver locally and, on a personal note, for his incomparable friendship.

### JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (19:01:04):** Justices of the peace are volunteers who provide a wonderful public service, often witnessing a person making a statutory declaration or affidavit and certifying copies of original documents. They come from all sections of the community and are available across New South Wales, including in my electorate of Davidson. The normal ceremonies held in the New South Wales Parliament to celebrate New South Wales justices of the peace who have served the community for 50 years have been postponed indefinitely due to COVID-19. However, commemorative certificates will be issued and will ensure that they all receive appropriate recognition, including those in my electorate of Davidson. Recipients will include John Watt of Frenchs Forest, David Armati of Roseville, Michael Gooley of St Ives, Richard Eagleton of Belrose, Cheryl Laing of Roseville, William Clark of Frenchs Forest, Ian Claridge of Killara, Philip Harvey of St Ives, Roslyn Tyler of St Ives Chase and Carolyn Bartlett of Lindfield. I thank the Attorney General for providing local MPs the opportunity to present the certificates to awardees in their electorates. I look forward to presenting them next month in recognition of those who have 50 years of service as justices of the peace.

### TERRY RAE

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (19:02:11):** I recognise Mr Terry Rae for his commitment to volunteering with the PCYC for over 42 years, including with the Penrith PCYC. Over the years he has held a number of committee roles, including president, for which he received the President's Trophy in 1991 for outstanding service. In 2010 Terry was awarded Life Governor of the Penrith PCYC for his continued dedication and support of the organisation. He has been the PCYC's music teacher, a role which he continues to enjoy. He has contributed to numerous fundraisers for the Penrith PCYC, taught and instructed the youth band and the swing band, driven the bus to take the local RSL pensioners out, cooked for events, and also assisted with improvement works at the centre by laying tiles and building the kitchen. Forty-two years of volunteering is a fantastic effort in any organisation and Terry deserves to be recognised in the Parliament of New South Wales.

### MEMBER FOR SHELLHARBOUR

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (19:03:13):** Today I pay special tribute to the member for Shellharbour, Anna Watson, for her tireless advocacy on behalf of victims of domestic violence not only in her electorate of Shellharbour but also statewide. Anna Watson has worked in a focused and committed manner to lobby for increased funding to the Illawarra Women's Health Centre and for it to establish a domestic and family violence trauma recovery centre in Shellharbour. Anna has also worked for many months to bring a private member's bill to the House to amend the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 relating to coercive control. I look forward to listening to her insights on this matter during her second reading speech. Whether the bill is agreed to or not is a matter for the House, but I have absolutely no doubt that Anna Watson's work and advocacy will provide a framework for future legislation on the matter. Well done, Anna Watson.

### MICHELLE EBBIN

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (19:04:19):** I congratulate Charlestown local Michelle Ebbin of JettProof for taking out five prestigious awards in the 2020 AusMumpreneur awards. Michelle won first prize in the product design, global brand and product innovation categories. She also achieved second place in the business excellence and making a difference categories. A mum of four, Michelle has invented and marketed a range of Australian-made, unique sensory compression clothing and products for children and adults with anxiety, autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and other sensory-based neurological conditions. She started JettProof in 2014, working by herself in her garage. Six years later, she has a factory and warehouse in Newcastle that employs 19 people. She has expanded internationally, with offices in the United Kingdom and Canada. She was inspired to develop these projects by her son, Jett, who as a toddler was diagnosed with severe autism, global development delay and sensory processing disorder. I congratulate Michelle on turning adversity into opportunity.

### GRENFELL PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (19:05:24):** I congratulate Grenfell Public School students Abigail Lester, Marley Loader, Patrick Radnedge and Dylan Forde, who took part in the NAIDOC Public Speaking challenge. With the challenge being delivered through a digital platform due to COVID-19, the two teams of two students joined 20 teams from across the region. They delivered a four-minute speech on the theme "Always Was, Always Will Be". It was a fantastic effort from the four students in years 3 and 5, who worked hard to prepare and deliver high-quality speeches. I wish Abigail, Marley, Patrick and Dylan all the best in their future endeavours and look forward to seeing what else they achieve.

### INNER WEST INDIGENOUS ARTWORKS

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (19:06:09):** Public art in our State often only reflects Australia's colonial white history while omitting First Nations history. That is why I am very proud that the Inner West Council, through the Gadigal Wangal Wayfinding Project, is delivering a series of Indigenous public artworks across the Gadigal and Wangal lands on which we live and work. At the Bay Run a statue by Edwards Clarke, *Fish Traps*, depicts the traditional fishing practices of the Gadigal and Wangal people. At Hawthorne Canal Reserve, *Cadi – The Clansman* by Adam Hill depicts the totem of the Gadigal. A statue by Joe Hurst immortalising the bark canoe now rests on the banks of the Cooks River at Steel Park. Another public statue, *Pemulwuy's Shield* by Jasmine Sarin, will be installed at Camperdown Memorial Rest Park at the end of this year. The Cooks River canoe club has been adorned with a beautiful mural called *Rivers Flow* by Indigenous artist Zachary Bennett-Brook and local artist Kim Siew. I thank these incredible First Nations artists.

### SHEREE JONES

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (19:07:14):** There is little doubt that 2020 has been a difficult year for everyone—including our wonderful teachers, who have had their roles turned upside down by COVID-19. It was great to see education Minister Sarah Mitchell recently announce her 2020 awards for excellence in teaching through the Public Education Foundation, and it was even greater to see one of those awards given to Dubbo teacher Sheree Jones. Sheree is the head support teacher at Dubbo College Delroy Campus and was nominated by her principal, Debbie Head, for the outstanding manner in which she approaches all aspects of her position. As an example of the unassuming nature in which she goes about her work, Sheree was not even aware she had been nominated until she was told by her principal that she was a recipient of an award. In her citation Sheree Jones was described as a well respected and valued member of the school, with her organisational and leadership skills being significantly highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. I congratulate Sheree on receiving this honour and thank her, her colleagues and all the teachers across the electorate for the great work they all do.

### CENTRAL WEST RUGBY UNION GRAND FINAL 2020

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (19:08:17):** There was much celebration in the lead-up to the Central West Rugby Union Grand Final on 12 September. Two teams in my electorate, the Young Yabbies and the Harden Red Devils, were competing for the cup. The Red Devils returned to the grand final this year after being pipped at the post by Cootamundra last season. Not even COVID restrictions could dampen the crowd's enthusiasm for the grand final, which was held in Harden, with strong support shown for both sides. It has been close to 40 years since the Yabbies have won a major trophy; unfortunately, 2020 was not their year, with the Red Devils taking home the cup. I make special mention of Will Wennerbom of the Yabbies, who achieved most points scored in the whole competition—an awesome achievement during his first season with the team. Well done to Harden on their exciting win for 2020.

### SUZIE BRODIE

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (19:09:12):** Mudgee woman Suzie Brodie has been legally blind since birth, but that has not stopped her enjoying a very fulfilling life. With the support of her husband, Paul, and her guide dog, Luna, Suzie turned August into "Pawgust" and walked more than 500 kilometres to raise money for Guide Dogs NSW/ACT. Luna is Suzie's third guide dog. She says the independence she feels from having a canine companion far outweighs that of using a cane, which is why she was determined to help the organisation that provides these dedicated and devoted dogs. "Without them, my lifestyle would be much more restricted," Suzie told the *Mudgee Guardian* recently. "Some people can wait six months on a waiting list because there's only so many dogs they can train with their funding. The more funding there is, the more chances that someone is going to get a dog," she said. With the support of the Mudgee community, Suzie's efforts have raised over \$4,000. She should be extremely proud of what she has been able to achieve. Well done to Suzie; I wish her good luck for the future.

### GET READY WEEKEND

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:10:09):** Last weekend was Get Ready Weekend. I acknowledge the great work done by all of the RFS stations across the Central Coast to help keep our community safe. In particular, I acknowledge the great work being done by the RFS stations in my electorate of Terrigal, which include Wamberal, Holgate, Avoca Beach, Macmasters Beach, Killcare, Empire Bay and Copacabana. Those stations do an amazing job. They are all manned by volunteers who put in their time and put their own lives at risk. While other people are walking away from danger, they are walking towards it. They do an incredible job. I acknowledge the great work they do across our community to help keep people safe. Obviously, bushfires are a way of life in Australia and on the Central Coast. Again I acknowledge the great work being done by our RFS

stations to help educate people about what they can do to keep themselves safe during the upcoming fire season. I thank them again for all the work they do in our community to keep everyone safe.

#### **NEW SOUTH WALES SCHOOLTEACHERS**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (19:11:10):** I acknowledge and congratulate every schoolteacher—whether they are primary school teachers, high school teachers or special school teachers of kids with disabilities. Schoolteachers do such an amazing job each and every day in all of our electorates. Given what we are going through now with COVID, it is extra hard work for these amazing school teachers. They put their lives on the line. I cannot sing their praises highly enough. They are the most decent and hardworking human beings and we are so lucky to have our children in their care. I say a very big thank you and congratulations to all of them.

#### **SYLVANIA HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (19:11:52):** I acknowledge the community at Sylvania Heights Public School for tackling the challenges presented by COVID-19. Led by principal Clint White, the supportive staff at Sylvania Heights displayed such innovation in teaching that they are being highlighted by the New South Wales Department of Education. When remote learning was introduced, highly differentiated teaching practices were deployed online to address different ability and engagement levels among students. Live video sessions were designed to cater for varying levels within subject areas, ensuring that all students were able to engage with the curriculum whilst learning from home.

Upon the resumption of face-to-face teaching, the wonderful student leadership team welcomed their peers back to school with tattoos, bubble machines and mindfulness activities and hosted "Gratitude Day" and a hot chocolate morning tea. I recognise the school leaders behind these initiatives, including school captains Charlotte Bowmer and Lucas De Oliveira, vice captains Amelia Gray and Theodore Karavias and prefects Christian Simos, Harrison Plakias, Jamie Curran, Jannah Gouda, Nicholas Mouskos, Sammar Gouda, Tia Shanahan and Tiana Lardis. I commend the Sylvania Heights Public School community for their efforts during this difficult time.

#### **MOREE ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (19:12:58):** I recognise the volunteers at the Vinnies family store in Moree for their commitment to the welfare of others. The St Vincent de Paul Society is a landmark institution in Australia due to its ongoing care of the less than fortunate in our communities. In times of stress, people can be angry and difficult. It takes a special attitude to continue caring when the recipients are abusive—sadly, this is often the case for the Vinnies crew in Moree. What makes the volunteers special is that they continue to serve. They turn situations around from being adversarial to being ones of respect and friendship. They dispense vouchers and essential items with a smile and a friendly chat. During the COVID-19 upheaval with job losses and impacts on our way of life, the resources of St Vinnies have helped people cope with their reduced incomes and mental health services. Thank you to the manager and the volunteers at Moree Vinnies store. They do an amazing job.

#### **PETER JAMES**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (19:14:02):** I acknowledge Mr Peter James, former Temora shire mayor and shire president, who was recently awarded the Freedom of the Shire. It is only the sixth time the award has been given to an individual or significant group in recognition of a lifetime of support and contribution to the Temora community. I thank Peter for his outstanding leadership, community involvement and passionate commitment to the people of Temora shire over many years. He was not only a third generation mayor and shire president but also a dedicated member or patron of many of sporting organisations, community organisations and businesses. I congratulate Peter on receiving the Freedom of the Shire Award. I cannot imagine a more worthy recipient.

#### **ROTARY NATURE PLAY PARK**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (19:14:46):** One of the best parts of being a local member of Parliament is the opportunity to fight to secure funding for some outstanding local projects that have long-lasting community benefits. Yesterday, I officially turned the first sod on the Rotary Nature Play Park at Boongaree in Berry after securing \$4.4 million from the New South Wales Government for the project. I was joined by representatives from Berry Rotary and the Rotary Nature Play Park Steering Committee for the milestone and official sod-turning event. The concept is a first for our region and is very exciting for all involved.

Like many adventure playgrounds, the Rotary Nature Play Park at Boongaree will provide a range of activities for all ages and levels of ability but set within a nature theme. Berry Rotary has been working hard to

raise funds for the park since 2014, with the project adopted by Shoalhaven City Council as part of the Berry Strategic Plan in 2016. Similar playgrounds in other parts of the country are not just popular with local families but also become tourism attractions for younger families as well. A community stakeholder workshop to commence the development of the master plan has taken place. I congratulate all of the members of the committee, chaired by Grahame Sweeney. I thank Terry Delahunt, Bill Seelis, Paul Andersen and all others involved.

#### **SKILLZ4ME**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (19:15:56):** I bring to the attention of the House Skillz4me, a wonderful not-for-profit organisation enabling children of all abilities to connect and learn together. Founded by husband and wife Jason and Sarah Stanton, Skillz4me combines fun with therapy, building confidence and improving social and life skills in children with a disability. Skillz4me offers a range of unique programs run by occupational therapists, social workers, early childhood teachers, support workers and professional coaches at one location for the convenience of families. Remarkably, Jason and Sarah personally fund the organisation which otherwise relies on donations. They go above and beyond to ensure that services remain free of charge. I congratulate Jason on being recognised for his advocacy for children with a disability and being nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. Should he emerge as one of the top three finalists locally, Jason will be awarded \$10,000 to cover the cost of therapists and to buy new equipment at Skillz4me. I commend Jason, Sarah and the entire team at Skillz4me for the life-changing work they do for local families with additional needs.

#### **CENTRAL COAST TENANTS' ADVICE & ADVOCACY SERVICE**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—I rise to thank the Central Coast Tenants' Advice & Advocacy Service for the work they do with the community. Central Coast Tenants' Advice & Advocacy Service provides valuable support to the Central Coast community. This includes providing tenants with advice, advocacy, community education and assistance at the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. In the current economic climate and with over 30 per cent of Central Coast residents' renters' organisations like the Central Coast Tenants' Advice & Advocacy Service are crucial in supporting families facing financial hardship. I offer my thanks to Central Coast Tenants' Advice & Advocacy Service and its staff for supporting vulnerable members of the community during this time of crisis.

#### **SWANSEA COMMUNITY COTTAGE**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)**—Speaker, I would like to recognise Swansea Community Cottage, its staff and volunteers for the work they do in supporting our community. Community organisations like Swansea Community Cottage have been important in supporting those in crisis within our community, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Cottage offers emergency relief services, a free laundry service, and works alongside OzHarvest to provide food hampers. It is also a partner of the SecondBite food program. It also assists with support groups such as Women in Recovery. The Cottage also runs two out of School Hours Care Centres, one located at Swansea supporting Swansea Public School, Blacksmiths Public School, Pelican Flat Public School and Mark Point Public School. Along with a Centre at Caves Beach supporting Caves Beach Public School, Nords Wharf Public School and St Patricks Primary School. I thank Swansea Community Cottage, its staff, volunteers and partners for their tireless dedication to our community.

#### **AMY MUNNS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)**—I congratulate Amy Munns of De La Salle Catholic College Cronulla who is the recipient of an Archbishop Award for Student Excellence. This award is presented to young people who display leadership in the religious life of their school and parish. Amy teaches scripture through her school's catechism program, creating lesson plans with year 5 children at Burraneer Bay Public School, assisting them connect with their faith. Amy is a Lasallian Youth Leader attending the Australian Catholic Youth Festival in 2017 and 2019. Amy has assisted with Homeless Awareness Day at St Aloysius Primary School, Cronulla, participating in the Stations of the Cross and regularly reading at Mass. Amy was part of the Our Lady of Mercy Action Group and she participated in community initiatives such as working at a women's refuge and raising funds for the St Vincent De Paul Society winter appeal. This dedication to service during her HSC year is admirable and I wish Amy all the best for her HSC exams and future endeavours.

#### **OUTGOING RICHMOND POLICE DISTRICT COMMANDER SUPERINTENDENT TOBY LINDSAY**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I place on record my appreciation and thanks to the outgoing Richmond Police District Commander Superintendent Toby "Tobes" Lindsay, who has taken up a new role as Commander of Traffic and Highway Patrol for the North Region from Newcastle to Tweed. I take this opportunity to welcome Superintendent Scott Tanner, his replacement, who has come across to the coast from the

New England Police District, where he was the commander. Superintendent Lindsay led the Richmond Police District with distinction for two years and was respected by all those who came into contact with him, including myself, as we kept in regular touch during bushfires, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic. The Community Safety Precinct Committee, of which I am a member, recently wrote to thank him for his commitment to the region:

The bushfires that plagued our district for more than seven months had a devastating effect on our rural areas and small townships. We are grateful for the energy that you gave during that time.

Superintendent Lindsay's calm and inclusive leadership style was most helpful during the COVID-19 lockdown. I wish Tobes and his wife, Julie, all the very best.

#### **TENTERFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL KICKING GOALS ON BRIDGE REPLACEMENT, SEALING ROADS**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I wish to congratulate Tenterfield Shire Council for replacing 23 of its local bridges during the past 19 months, with seven more bridges set to be replaced by Christmas. Tenterfield Shire Council has programmed to bitumen seal a further 43 kilometres of its unsealed or gravel road network by June 30, 2021. If this combined works program was not impressive enough, the Council will be in the construction phase of its new Water Filtration Plant early in the New Year. This level of activity, particularly during COVID-19, is a credit to Mayor Cr Peter Petty, his fellow councillors, who set policy direction working as a team, and their can-do Chief Executive Terry Dodds. Congratulations must go to key staff who make up the team on the ground – Fiona Keneally, Benjamin Mear, James Paynter, David Counsell, Gary Hirning, Clinton Airs, Ivan Foster, Nicholas Little, Joshua Lucas, Gary Back, Terry Stark, Kelly Pitkin and Neil Rhodes. The funding stream split for the bridge replacement and road sealing work is: State Government programs 80 per cent; Federal Government programs 14.5 per cent; Tenterfield Shire Council 2 per cent and industry 0.5 per cent.

#### **BANKSTOWN LEGACY**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I am pleased to recognise the wonderful work of Bankstown Legacy in providing valuable assistance and support to the families of brave veterans from the Bankstown community. For almost a century Bankstown Legacy has provided much-needed services to the families of our many brave servicemen and women, during the course of and following their service to our country. Bankstown Legacy's work is only made possible through the generosity and countless hours of work of dedicated volunteers, or Legatees. Historically Legatees were returned servicemen, but now Legacy welcomes volunteers from all walks of life. There are more than 2,700 Legatees around Australia, with only 16 currently serving within Legacy's Bankstown division, and I note Bankstown Legacy's recent call for new Legatees to step forward so it may continue the wonderful work it performs within our local community. I take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank Legacy Bankstown's Chairman Mr Alan Rawlinson and Honorary Secretary/Treasurer Ms Christine Kingston and commend them for their strong leadership and the vital support and services they provide for the dependants of veterans in the Bankstown area. I thank Bankstown's 16 dedicated Legatees for generously volunteering their time for a very noble cause.

#### **MS RACHEL THOMPSON**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I was delighted to see that Bankstown Canterbury Community Transport Executive Officer Rachel Thompson was recently named as a Finalist for the Western Sydney Community Woman Award at the Western Sydney Woman Awards 2020. In her capacity as the Executive Officer of Bankstown Canterbury Community Transport, Ms Thompson leads an organisation of 35 staff, transporting more than 3,000 elderly and disabled locals on around 65,000 community shuttle trips per year. In what has been a particularly challenging year for community organisations, and elderly and disabled Australians due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ms Thompson has displayed tremendous adaptability in redirecting the organisation's resources towards delivering essential goods and medical supplies to vulnerable peoples, ensuring they can safely isolate in their own homes. I congratulate Ms Thompson on her well-deserved nomination, and acknowledge BCCT Chairman John Murray, Secretary Ron Norman, and the executives, staff and volunteers of Bankstown Canterbury Community Transport. I also thank the Western Sydney Women Awards for recognising the exceptional women in the Bankstown electorate and the broader Greater Western Sydney area.

#### **THARAWAL ABORIGINAL CORPORATION**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—If there is one thing Campbelltown doesn't lack, it is organisations that make tremendous contributions to our community. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to one of those organisations in particular – Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation. Tharawal services the entire South-West Sydney region which comprises of numbers councils including: Campbelltown; Bankstown; Liverpool; Camden; Wollondilly and Wingecarribee. About 5 per cent of the South-West Sydney population is made of residents from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds. It is a significant portion of the

population which makes the existence of Tharawal even more important. In fact, the organisation is located in Airds where is estimated around 13 per cent of the population are from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds. The organisation offers a number of services including: medical; child and family; social and emotional wellbeing; and health lifestyles. It's not just the services Tharawal offers, but also the ability of to engage the community that is so important. I recently had a chance to get back out to Tharawal and was, as usual, extremely impressed with what I saw. To all the team at Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation, keep up the great work.

#### **CAMPBELLTOWN-AIRDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—There is certainly a lot of history attached to Campbelltown. In fact, 2020 marked 200 years since the proclamation of Campbelltown. While many residents have done an admirable job preserving and protecting our heritage and history, there is one organisation who stands above the rest. The Campbelltown and Airds Historical Society have been the biggest advocates for ensuring the history of Campbelltown is preserved for generations to come. Since 1947, those at the society have dedicated themselves to collecting and collating items throughout Campbelltown. The efforts of the society's members often goes unheralded and that is why I wanted to take this opportunity to recognise their important contributions to the community of Campbelltown. The society is currently based out of the historic Glenalvon House – a two-storey – Georgian-style home built in 1841. The house is located just a stone's throw away from the hustle and bustle of Queen Street and is maintained by those from the society. I would recommend everyone, when appropriate, take the opportunity to tour Glenalvon House. Thank you again to all those involved with the society for your tremendous contribution to the community of Campbelltown.

#### **JACOB CARSON**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—2020 has been a difficult year for school students, particularly those undergoing the HSC, in dealing with the challenges that COVID-19 has thrown at them. Lambton High School student Jacob Carson has risen above the challenges thrown at him this year and was recently awarded the 2020 Education Minister's Award for Excellence in Student Achievement. Jacob is an outstanding, highly motivated and dedicated student with an enquiring mind. He has consistently attained excellent scholastic achievement in all areas, including distinguished achievement in accelerated HSC Mathematics in Year 11. A dedicated high achiever in all his endeavours, Jacob has made significant contributions and led improvements to his school and community, through his commitment and leadership in the SRC and as School Captain. Jacob embodies the core values of public education and this is demonstrated by his passionate and tireless support of fellow students and staff and community groups. Congratulations Jacob, you are a very worthy recipient of this award.

#### **SWATHY RAVEENDRA**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—2020 has been a difficult year for school students, particularly those undergoing the HSC, in dealing with the challenges that COVID-19 has thrown at them. Lambton High School student Swathy Raveendran has risen above the challenges thrown at her this year and was recently awarded the 2020 Education Minister's Award for Excellence in Student Achievement. Swathy Raveendran is a creative, highly motivated and dedicated student. She has consistently attained excellent scholastic achievement in all areas, including distinguished achievement in accelerated HSC Visual Art in Year 11. A dedicated high achiever in all her endeavours, Swathy has made significant contributions and led improvements to her school, region and community, through her academic achievements and leadership in the SRC and as School Vice-Captain. Swathy is passionate about serving others, her community, her language and culture and has been recognised for her significant contributions to school events, dance and cultural festivals. Congratulations Swathy. You are a very worthy recipient of this award.

#### **SALVADOR ALLENDE MONUMENT IN SYDNEY INC. AND THE PABLO NERUDA ASSOCIATION**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)**—I acknowledge the Salvador Allende Monument in Sydney Inc. and the Pablo Neruda Association. For many years these organisations together with other members of the Chilean and Latin American communities in Australia, and their friends and supporters have commemorated the tragic events of 11 September 1973 and the fascist coup in Chile. This involved of course the death of Unidad Popular Chilean President Salvador Allende. Companero Allende and his government and the movement upon which they were based were, and continue to be, an inspiration to many around the world. The commemoration usually occurs at the Salvador Allende Monument at Fairfield Park. The commemoration could not occur this year because of COVID-19. This year was also the 50th Anniversary of the election of the Unidad Popular Government in 1970. The inability to hold the commemoration was unfortunate, but does not reduce the significance of the issues surrounding it, or the inspiration of Chilean events 50 years ago.

### YEAR 12 2020 – CANLEY VALE HIGH SCHOOL

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—On behalf of the Fairfield Electorate I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Year 12 from Canley Vale High School during the 2020 academic year. The year began with high expectations and much optimism for a memorable end to 13 years of compulsory school education. The COVID-19 pandemic unfortunately caused unnecessary stress to Year 12 due to the continuous interruptions to teaching and learning of the HSC curriculum. The final year of schooling brings with it much cause to celebrate through special events, assemblies, sport carnivals, extracurricular activities and inter school competitions, this was either cancelled or modified due to the COVID-19 restrictions. As the 2020 Higher School Certificate examinations approach I would like to express since gratitude to Principal Ms Deborah Santucci, 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.

### YEAR 12 2020 – VERONA SCHOOL

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

### THE GREEK HERALD RE-LAUNCH PARTY

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, in February I had the pleasure of attending The Greek Herald's Re-Launch Party, held in the St George area. Now in its 94th year, The Greek Herald is Australia's Largest National newspaper in the Greek Australian community. The paper circulates daily in South Australia, Victoria, Queensland and of course New South Wales. It was great to celebrate 94 years of success for The Greek Herald and hear about their vision for the future. Speaker, multicultural news outlets are crucial in our modern society. They ensure that all Australians have access to current affairs, and that everyone has the opportunity to be an informed citizen. They also allow multicultural Australians to stay up to date with what is happening back home. As well as this, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Greek Community across New South Wales, but particularly in my electorate. The Greek Community are honest and hardworking people, who have contributed so much to our great State. Once again, congratulations to The Greek Herald on the success of their re-launch party!

### ST GEORGE MEALS ON WHEELS

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—For more than 50 years, St George Meals on Wheels has provided nutritious food to people in my electorate. While everyone understands the importance of nutritious meals, St George Meals on Wheels and other community organisations like it, do more than just food deliveries. They allow thousands of people to remain independent in their own homes. Their generosity extends to the carers of those in need, often family members who gladly bear the burden of looking after a more vulnerable relative. Today, St George Meals on Wheels caters for the varying dietary requirements and tastes of its clients. I have visited their kitchens and I know the care and professionalism that goes into every meal. Their work has never been as important as it is now, during a global pandemic when older or sick Australians are forced to retreat to their homes. On behalf of the thousands of people they have helped over the years, I thank the management and volunteers of St George Meals on Wheels for their kindness and compassion.

### AHEPA NEW YEAR'S BLESSING

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to inform the house of the Order of AHEPA's New Year Blessing and Celebration, held on the 20th of January. His Eminence Archbishop of Australia Makarios delivered a blessing, where he wished everyone present health and success for the year ahead. The Order of AHEPA is part of the largest Hellenic association in the world. Their influence is felt in the local community, as well as across New South Wales. They endeavour primarily to raise funds for charitable courses, often using their following to reach regional areas. Aside from charitable initiatives, AHEPA are working to create further acceptance and appreciation for multicultural communities. They are influential in the Greek community, promoting cross-cultural cooperation and friendship. They are part of the reason that the Greek community has been so successful and widely appreciated in Australia. I would like to thank President John Kalaminas, Secretary

Dr Panayiotis Diamadis and the whole team at AHEPA for their New Year's Blessing and Celebration, and for all the work they do in the community.

#### **CHRIS BAILEY**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Speaker, I am very pleased to recognise Mr Chris Bailey for his 50 years of dedication to the NSW Ambulance Service, 34 years served in Leeton. Becoming involved in the ambulance service was something steeped in his family history as his late father, Superintendent Alan Bailey is known as the instigator and director of the first NSW Ambulance School. Chris was originally an appointee to the Ambulance Board's nursing cadetship scheme, being the first male nurse to start. Chris graduated as a registered nurse in 1973 and in 1976 started working in several metropolitan stations. In 1986 Chris was appointed station officer and manager in Leeton and during his career has helped countless people in their hour of need and fought hard for the rights of paramedics. Chris continued training over the years and has received many commendations; one highlight being his graduation as an intensive care paramedic. However, the biggest highlight was being awarded an Ambulance Service Medal and presented by Dame Marie Bashir. Congratulations Chris on your 50 years of service with NSW Ambulance!

#### **CURRY RESERVE ELDERSLIE**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—There is no doubt that Curry Reserve in Elderslie is one of the many amazing parks that can be found in Camden. However, its recent win for 'Park of the Year' at the 2020 Parks & Leisure Australia Awards of Excellence confirms its place as Australia's best park. The park, which opened in September last year, is renowned for its leaps in inclusivity with accessible activities, wet play wheelchairs and the first fully accessible and accredited public toilet and adult change facility in the Macarthur region. With more than 6000 residents in the Camden electorate currently living with some form of disability, Curry Reserve was recognised for allowing them to enjoy recreational spaces just like everybody else. The award also recognised the sustainable design of Curry Reserve, from its use of recycled and treated water to the water bottle refill research station that helps reduce plastic bottle wastage in Camden. This park has had a massive positive impact on the Camden community and it is very well deserving of this award. I commend the staff at Camden Council who brought this into fruition and look forward to seeing many more parks like it in the future.

#### **2020 LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK AWARDS**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—Mr Speaker, as one of the fastest growing LGAs in Australia, Camden Council has a number of fantastic staff that help support the residents of this growing community. The Local Government Week Awards are an opportunity to recognise the wonderful staff from LGAs around New South Wales and I am pleased to have been notified that Camden Council staff were amongst those who received these awards. Council Manager of Public Affairs, Casli Mehmed, was highly commended for his outstanding individual contribution to Communications and Events in Local Government. Further, Manager of Strategic Planning Martin Cooper and Coordinator LEP Review Louise McMahon were both recognised for their contribution and work on Camden's Local Strategic Planning Statement and LEP Review Project. Camden Council also received a merit certificate for Excellence in Leadership.

#### **RUBY WIFFEN**

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney)**—My congratulations to 11 year old Ruby Wiffen of Emu Plains Public School who raised almost \$6,000 for the Nepean Cancer Care Centre. After growing her hair for over a year, Ruby recently cut her waist length hair to above her shoulders to raise money for this important cause. Additionally to help kids Ruby donated her hair to the Wigs for Kids program. To show support for Ruby, Emu Plains Public School held a Crazy Hair Day to assist with her fundraising efforts. It is always fantastic to see young people like Ruby doing what they can to make our community and our world a better place. Great work Ruby!

#### **RAY AGOSTINO**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)**—Today I would like to acknowledge a great man and friend Ray Agostino, the General Manager of one of the best clubs in Hornsby, Magpies Waitara. Ray recently celebrated 40 years with the club, an achievement I thought deserved recognition in the Parliament today. Magpies is one of the best places to have lunch, dinner or a party in Hornsby. I can personally vouch for this, as I have held my Small Business Networking event there for the past 7 years. Ray has grown the club from debt and administration to become one of the most successful in our local area. It was under Ray's guidance that it was awarded the Most Improved Club in the 2000. ClubNSW Club of the Year Awards. Under his guidance the club has also given back hundreds of thousands of dollars supporting local community organisations. Congratulations Ray on 40 years – it is a remarkable achievement and it is your hard work and

dedication that has seen the transformation of this club into the success it is today. Thank you for your service and I look forward to catching up for a drink at Magpies!

#### **KATELYN CLEARY**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)**—Today I am pleased to acknowledge the efforts of a young Scout in my electorate doing something positive for our frontline workers during this challenging time. Katelyn Cleary from the 1st Asquith Scout Troop has come up with a wonderful concept to help her achieve an Australian Scout Medallion. Katelyn has designed a badge which reads 'Apart we are together' which indicates support for our frontline workers. Badges cost \$5.00 each and the money raised will go directly to our local Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital. Due to government restrictions, Katelyn has established an online store to sell her badges which has allowed her to reach hundreds of people across the local area. Well done Katelyn, I wish you all the best in obtaining your Australian Scout Medallion. This really is a great initiative.

#### **CASTLE HILL UNITED**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the Castle Hill United Soccer Club within my electorate of Castle Hill. Since its inception in 1972, the club has provided a great opportunity for all in the local area to play the game, and is one of the largest soccer clubs in the community. The club currently plays out of the ever-expanding Fred Caterson Reserve, and recently built their own clubhouse, the Glen Funnell Building. It was recently my pleasure to announce \$7,000 worth of funding for the club for the procurement of a shipping container in which to securely store their portable goal posts, and for the addition of a Defibrillator for the ground. This was a part of the \$300,000 provided to my electorate in the 2019 round of the Community Building Partnership Grants. My thanks and congratulations go out to all involved in the running of the club, including Mark Vujnovich, Ross Whitfield, Ruth Douglas, Scott Marchant, Neil Wares, Tanya Freeman, Jennifer Forster, Scott Albury, Connor Wares, Robert Douglas, Jenny Crandell, Katherine Mullen, Bruce Baker, Charlie Jones, Steve Burfield, Michael Stornelli, Chris Kirk, Lisa Arcidiacono, Christian Wright, Andrew Gardoni and Darren McDonald.

#### **HILLS HORNETS TOUCH FOOTBALL**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the Hills Hornets Touch Football Club within my electorate of Castle Hill. The club was founded in 1986 and is a three-time winner of NSW's Touch Football Club of the Year, all being awarded in the past decade. The 'swarm' represents the Hills in a variety of events, from social Park Touch to the more competitive Vawdon Cup Competition. The club goes beyond being a mere sporting club however, with charitable contributions being made towards the Cancer Council's Hills' Relay for Life and Clean Up Australia Day, as well as running a variety of school holiday programs, the club really does give back to the community in which it plays. It was recently my pleasure to announce \$2,500 worth of funding for the procurement of a much needed Defibrillator for the ground, ensuring the appropriate medical equipment is available should it be required. This was a 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 club, including Brad Mitchell, Timothy Sleigh, Craig Eggington, Dave Nolan and Katrina and Phil McIlwraith.

#### **COMO WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge Como West Public School for raising over \$9,500 in the Heart Foundation's Jump Rope for Heart program on 27 August 2020. Now in its 36th year, Jump Rope for Heart attracts more than 300,000 students annually and encourages a positive attitude towards exercise, healthy eating and heart health. I commend Principal Danielle Scott and her dedicated staff for continuing to promote heart health and physical activity at school. I also recognise the enthusiastic student body for their active involvement, particularly the student leadership team of Prime Minister Jacob Waller, Deputy Prime Minister Lola Faass and Ministers Keira Davies, Leo Blackburn, Saskia Batley and Jasper Dickins. This initiative had extra special meaning for two Como West students, Jacob and Byron Waller. Their mum, Melissa, became aware that she had a heart murmur in 2013, and the boys themselves now have regular echocardiograms to monitor their own heart health. The brothers both exceeded their own personal fundraising targets, understanding just how important it is to raise funds for research into conditions like hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. I congratulate the Como West Public School community for their outstanding fundraising efforts.

#### **VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC DAY**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—On 15 August 2020, our community paused and reflected on Australia's efforts in the Second World War as we marked the 75th anniversary of Victory in the Pacific Day. The Second World War saw nearly one million Australians serve in the armed forces. More than 39,000 paid the ultimate sacrifice, over 23,000 were wounded, and at least 30,000 taken prisoners of war. Although 75 years

ago, it is important that we continue to reflect on the bravery, courage and sacrifice of those who fought for our country. They fought throughout the Pacific defending our nation, while on the home front, hundreds of thousands more contributed to essential services to support the war effort. I acknowledge World War II veterans from our own community, Richard Barnes and Arthur Williamson, for their contribution to the war effort and for ensuring we are all able to live with the freedom that we do today. On behalf of our community, I thank Richard Barnes and Arthur Williamson for their service.

#### **THOMAS AND ASHLEA COUPLAND**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—I would like to acknowledge Glenmore Park couple, Thomas and Ashlea Coupland for speaking out on the important topic of IVF. Thomas and Ashlea had a desire to expand their family, but struggled for four years to fall pregnant. After a miscarriage two years ago, they decided to try IVF as another alternative with hopes this would help them to achieve their dreams of starting a family. After two rounds of IVF, they successfully fell pregnant with their son, Colby who is now eight weeks old and healthy. Thomas & Ashlea are now strong advocates for IVF and are aiming to fight against the taboo that surrounds the topic. After realising that many of their friends and peers have struggled to have children, they are now facilitating open conversation about the benefits of IVF and how it has changed their lives for the better. Congratulations Thomas and Ashlea on the birth of your very special boy, Colby. Thank you for speaking out on this important topic and I wish your family all the best for the future!

#### **COOTAMUNDRA HIGH SCHOOL**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Mr Speaker, congratulations to Luke Dowell and Blake George from Cootamundra High School who have been nominated as delegates to the NSW Rural Youth Ambassador 2020 pilot program. The new program aims to boost the aspirations and leadership capabilities of young people in rural and regional schools and I'm delighted Luke and Blake will be participating in leadership development, advocacy and learning opportunities. Students will interact with experienced local leaders, share ideas and experiences through online forums, discussions and working groups ahead of a three day forum in term four. Well done Luke and Blake, I know you'll be fantastic representatives for your communities.

#### **GANMAIN GRONG GRONG MATONG LIONS FOOTBALL NETBALL CLUB, U17S NETBALL PREMIERS**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Mr Speaker, a huge congratulations to the Ganmain Grong Grong Matong Lions under 17s netball team who are the 2020 Premiers, defeating Osborne in a thrilling score of 33 to 30. There was much celebration at Robertson Oval on the weekend with the girls winning the championships for the first time since 2011. Well done to their coaches Brooke and Prue Walsh for a fantastic season with the Lions. A special mention to Abbey Hamblin who received the Best on Court award. This is a wonderful achievement to be selected for this award with only one player chosen. All the hard work and training the team has endured over the season has paid off with the Grand final win. Congratulations again girls and enjoy your celebrations.

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

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)**—I'd like to congratulate Mr Brian and Mrs Sheila Wood residing at John Paul Village Heathcote on celebrating 60 years of marriage on the 1st October. 60 years is a significant achievement and I wish them happiness and good health as they continue their golden years together.

#### **VALERIE WILLIAMS AND THE MOREE GIFT BARREL**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I recognise a symbol of country craft and enterprise, the Moree Gift Barrel, along with its many volunteers and contributors. The Gift Barrel opened the 22nd of November 1983 and since then has provided not only hand-crafted gift items for the public but an enterprise for local producers. The Gift Barrel is also a centre for community contact, a place to keep craft production alive, and as one producer said regarding activity for mental health – this place keeps me sane. I was asked not to list participants because there were so many and it would be remiss to leave anyone out. However, one name was advanced and that was Mrs Valerie Williams who deserves special mention. Val, as she is known, is a founding member of the Gift Barrel and the longest serving member. She has faithfully served wherever she was asked and her culinary skills produce the country relishes and other delights that our modern market shelves lack, attracting both buyers and tourists who return to Moree and look for Val's friendly smile. I commend Val and the volunteers at the Moree Gift Barrel for their service to the community in keeping the country spirit alive.

#### **GOOD LUCK TO THE CLASS OF 2020**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker, this year has been a particularly challenging year for many of us, and none more so than our current year 12 students. As many in this place would know, completing

your final year of study can be difficult and this year has presented unique and unprecedented challenges for schools and students to navigate. Living through COVID-19 and the challenges that this year has brought have made our students more resilient. It has made them value their peers, teachers, and the wider school community. I would like to wish all our local year 12's, and those right across the State, all the very best as they begin to head into their HSC exams. Make sure to study hard, enjoy these last few months together with your peers, and take a moment to relax with friends and family so you don't burn yourself out. Good luck to you all and all the best in your future endeavours.

#### **BEN CRAFOORD RECIPIENT OF FLYAS AWARD**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker, congratulations to Ben Crafoord, the Youth Club Captain at Middle Harbour Yacht Club who was awarded this year's FYLAS Award. This award aims to assist Middle Harbour Yacht Club members and young sailors, selected at the discretion of the Committee, to compete in yacht and dinghy racing. Ben started his sailing career at Middle Harbour Yacht Club at age 4, where it was all about having fun, forming relationships and learning the basics of sailing. He joined the Opti squad at age 9, is now competing at the top level of the Open Fleet, and after competing in a number of local and interstate regattas, was selected for the Australian Sailing Team to compete in Tallin, Estonia this year. Like many of the top sailors at Middle Harbour Yacht Club, Ben was planning to compete in a number of regattas around Australia and overseas. In the meantime, he is currently being coached by Rob Brewer, and his parents Carl and Bettina follow him with a great interest, and are keen volunteers with the youth sailing program. Congratulations once again to Ben on this achievement.

#### **SERGEANT DAVID BRAMBLE**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I recognise Sergeant David Bramble of Armidale for recently celebrating 40 years of service with the New South Wales Police Force. Sergeant Bramble has served with the Traffic and Highway Patrol Command for 37 of those 40 years, devoting his working life to reducing road trauma and ensuring the safety of our road users and community. Sergeant Bramble is highly respected among his colleagues with his dedication to the job and the care and commitment he shows to the community. I congratulate Sergeant Bramble on this fantastic milestone and thank him for his service to the community. Our roads are safer for having Sergeant Bramble working on them.

#### **CARE 4 KIDS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)**—On 20 September with over 100 other guests, I attended the Care 4 Kids Gala Fundraiser Luncheon at Doltone House Sylvania Waters. Care 4 Kids is a Sutherland Shire based domestic violence charity with a focus on children affected by domestic violence. Danielle Lucas, a victim-survivor of domestic violence, founded the charity after years of witnessing domestic violence at home and is a tireless and generous volunteer. Danielle's life changed permanently in 1980 when her mother passed away after years of mental and physical abuse. Since its creation, Care 4 Kids has distributed over 9000 care packs through the NSW Police, the Australian Federal Police and NSW Communities and Justice, containing colouring items, bubbles, stickers and lollipops. These care packs help to engage and settle children who have been traumatised by domestic violence.

#### **KELLE BROADHEAD, OAKDALE WORKERS CLUB**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—I would like to commend Kelle Broadhead for her role in saving the Oakdale Workers Club from closure. The Club was a strong community club. It was the staging point for the RFS vehicles during the summer bushfires. The club was in danger of permanent closure as a result of the drought, floods and the bushfires. Kelle met with me and asked how I could help. She was most persistent that the club needed assistance. As a Patron of the Macarthur Bulls FC I was able to link the Club Chairman Gino Marra with Kelle to see what assistance could be given. Kelle worked tirelessly with the existing members to ensure that the offer of assistance by Macarthur FC was taken up. The Club will now be again operational and continue to be a strong and vital part of the Oakdale community. Thank you Kelle for all of your hard work.

#### **OAKDALE WORKERS RLFC GROUP 6 TEAMS**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—I would like to congratulate the teams representing the Oakdale Workers Rugby League Club on their achievement in making the Grand Finals of the Group 6 Rugby League competition. The Ladies League Tag team with coach Troy Waters and captain Mandy Carlile will be playing their grand final at The Oaks sportsground on Saturday 26th September. The men's team with co-Coaches Brennon Reeves and Russell Lewis and Captain Jason Thompson will represent the district with pride. The Grand Final will be played against Thirlmere Roosters on Sunday 27th September at Campbelltown Sports Club. It is a fitting tribute to the Club that both teams have made the Grand final in a year that their area has been severely

impacted by bushfires and floods. The resilience shown by Oakdale community has helped them reach the biggest game of the year. I wish them well in their respective Grand Finals.

#### **JESSE BLACKADDER, AUTHOR AND ADVENTURER**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I pay tribute to the late Jesse Blackadder. Jesse was extremely well known and loved as an author and for her pioneering spirit and commitment to literature and literacy in young people. Jesse was twice awarded the Australian Antarctic Arts Fellowship – conferred to enable those with a non-science focus to experience Antarctica first-hand. Jesse had a literary passion for strong female characters and extreme landscapes and the Antarctic Fellowships supported the publishing of her novel "Chasing the Light", about Norway's Ingrid Christensen, the first European woman to see Antarctica. Jesse stayed for many weeks at Australia's Davis Station in Antarctica and shared the experiences of her trip through social media, magazine articles and in her Doctorate. In 2018, Jesse travelled again to Antarctica, voyaging for two weeks across 5000km of rough oceans and flying for the last few hundred kilometres to Mawson Station. She stayed in Antarctica for three months, devised a new TV drama and wrote a junior adventure novel series. Jesse died in June after a short illness, leaving a remarkable and unique legacy and on behalf of our community I offer my condolences to her family and loved ones.

#### **LOOKING FOR THEO HAYEZ SEARCH TEAM**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I congratulate those members of our community in the "Looking for Theo Hayez Search Team" on receiving the Volunteer Team of the Year Award (Northern Rivers region) and for their tireless efforts to locate 18-year-old Theo who went missing in Byron Bay in 2019. The 80 members of the Team led the community response to help find Theo and maintained their compassionate work for over 15 months. Theo was last seen on the night of 31 May leaving a nightclub in the centre of Byron and his disappearance led to an extensive land, sea and air search of the coast and bushland by police, Surf Lifesavers and State Emergency Services. Theo's distressed father came to Australia and joined the search but the mystery remains unsolved. The Search team willingly took on the task of assisting police in what must have been very distressing for them at times. The on-going pain for the family in Europe is unimaginable, but as Theo's dad acknowledged, the efforts of the Search Team provided a ray of light during their darkest hours.

#### **CASULA POWERHOUSE ARTS CENTRE KOORI FLOOR**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)**—Mr Speaker, today I rise to speak about Casula Powerhouse's restoration of the Koori Floor in the Turbine Hall of the Arts Centre. The Koori Floor is a First Nations artwork that is situated on the floor, and was first created by the artist, Judy Watson, in 1994. The Koori Floor covers the 600sq metres of the Turbine Hall, and is best viewed and appreciated from the upper level walkway of the hall. The Koori Floor artwork was designed to acknowledge the Aboriginal presence on the land that the Casula Powerhouse is situated. This artwork was designed and created by contemporary Aboriginal artists, and represents the values and stories of Aboriginal people from not only the local community, but from across New South Wales. The Koori Floor is a fundamental part of the heritage of Casula Powerhouse, and the restoration works will ensure that it will remain this way! Once again Mr Speaker, I wish Casula Powerhouse all the best with the restoration of the Koori Floor, and I am sure that it will be excellent once it is opened to the public in November 2020.

#### **BLACKTOWN GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—I want to acknowledge the terrific public education being provided to Seven Hills Electorate students at Blacktown Girls High School. The school's catchment covers parts of the Seven Hills electorate at Kings Langley and as a partially selective school educates other local students from Blacktown, Lalor Park and Seven Hills. I note the work of principal Jeff Lumb and his dedicated team of teachers and support staff. I acknowledge the school captain Riya Patel; vice captain Vivyanne Kassar; senior prefects Yasmine Kassar, Rabia Nasser and Ritu Patel; and prefects Demia Prichard, Harsha Kamalananathan, Princess Marcos, Frances Fronteras, Simar Walia, Aleisha Brennan, Mridula Tirumala, Shreya Krishna and Maheen Tariq. I also want to thank the work of the Blacktown Girls High School Parents and Citizens Committee, including president April Jean; treasurer Aylmer Rebello; and committee members Sheryl Rebello and Sayed Jeffrey.

#### **SHELLEY PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—I want to take this opportunity to recognise the staff, students leaders and P&C members of Shelley Public School in Blacktown. Shelley Public School catchment overlaps part of my Seven Hills Electorate and educates 555 students across Blacktown, Prospect and Seven Hills. I acknowledge the 2020 student leaders, including: captains Marayam Bukhari and Ronit Rai; vice captains Mania Reid and Elizabeth Sharp; and councillors Eshal Ahmed, Arnav Chopra, Declan Fahy and Angus Kershaw. I also want to acknowledge Shelley Public School's Parents and Citizens Committee, including: president Cathy Landell; vice president and canteen convenor Cristina Sousa; junior vice president and fundraising coordinator

Nicki Jacques; secretary and uniform shop coordinator Larisa Vella-Xuereb; and treasurer Tracey Dennett. I thank principal Jo-Ann Campion and her team of dedicated teachers and staff for their support of local Seven Hills Electorate students and families.

#### **NEDD BROCKMANN**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise Mr Nedd Brockmann. Bedgerebong born and bred, Nedd now lives and works in Sydney as a second year apprentice electrician. As a boy from the bush, Nedd had not faced the realities of homelessness until he witnessed the many people living tough and sleeping rough on the streets of the city. Nedd felt that everyone deserved to at least have a roof over their head and food to eat, and was motivated to help the homeless. Nedd commenced a fundraising campaign in partnership with the Australian Red Cross, through which he undertook to raise \$50,000 by running fifty 42 kilometre marathons in fifty consecutive days, which is no mean feat, even for a healthy and fit 21 year old man. Commencing on August 31st, Nedd has run a 42km marathon every day since and is nearing the halfway point of his campaign. As of today, Nedd is up to day and marathon 23, and has already raised \$38,702. Amazingly, Nedd is undertaking daily marathon runs across Sydney whilst maintaining full-time work, five days a week, in addition to his TAFE training! Congratulations Nedd, you are a true inspiration and a credit to our community. Well done.

#### **NEWTOWN BREAKAWAYS FC**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—I draw the attention of this parliament to the Newtown Breakaways FC, trailblazers of women's AFL in NSW. The Breakaways are an independent women's AFL club established in 2002 by a group of players looking for a club which reflected their values - diversity, inclusivity and community. Since then the club has been incredibly successful, taking out four consecutive premierships between 2002 and 2005, and three more in 2009, 2010 and 2015. In 2011 they were awarded the Team of the Decade by the AFL. In 2020 they introduced a Men's team. On Saturday 12th September I was pleased to attend the clubs annual Pride Round. Players took to the ground wearing the club's rainbow jersey to promote diversity and inclusion in sport. Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia is still a significant barrier to participation in sport for LGBTIQ+ players so I congratulate the Breakaways for taking positive steps to show that everyone is welcome to play AFL. I acknowledge the incredible work of player Lauren Foy and secretary Peter Tregilgas for putting Pride Round together, and thank all the players, volunteers, supporters and families for making the Newtown Breakaways such a wonderful community.

#### **SUNSHINE SUGAR**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)**—I rise to offer my congratulations to Sunshine Sugar who were recently awarded a Silver Award for Innovative Management in Consumer Product and Service Industries in the Category of "Innovation in Management", at the Asia-Pacific Stevie Awards for 2020. The Stevie Awards were created to honour organisations and working professionals world-wide and the Asia-Pacific Awards are one of eight international programs and covers 29 nations within the Asia-Pacific Region. Other recipients of the Silver Award in this Region included Dell Technologies in India and USANA Health Sciences in the USA. It is a huge achievement for Sunshine Sugar to be recognised amongst these businesses and I offer my sincere congratulations to Chief Executive Officer Chris Connors and his team for this wonderful recognition and wish them continued success into the future.

#### **LEANNE SANDERS, VISUAL DREAMING**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Wagga Wagga's Leanne Sanders understands that mental health can be a lonely journey, but she has visualised something better for her community. After seeing family members dealing with their own mental health issues, Ms Sanders decided she wanted to do something to help others navigate our often-complex health and disability system. The result is the Visual Dreaming app that aims to empower Aboriginal youth to regain cultural identity and understand, access, negotiate and use services to tackle mental health issues. Users can record their personal story and goals using a range of media and share this with providers or mentors without having to constantly repeat themselves and re-experience the associated trauma. App users have full control of their information. Last week I was privileged to attend the launch of the app in a wonderful event in Wagga Wagga. I hope that the app will allow non-Indigenous providers to understand better the experience of Aboriginal people. Leanne is the founder of Visual Dreaming, a First Nations female-led tech company. I heartily commend Leanne for her insight, compassion and dedication and her inspiring leadership. And I congratulate Leanne on also receiving a Wagga Business Chamber Crow award for outstanding start-up.

#### **TAMWORTH TEXTILES TRIENNIAL**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation)**—I recognise and congratulate the Tamworth Regional Gallery for the Tamworth Textiles Triennial. Held every three years the Tamworth Textiles Triennial showcases the best of textiles from across the country. The exhibition opens at

Tamworth Regional Gallery before heading on a three year National Tour. The arts are for everyone and Tamworth Regional Gallery caters for a range of audiences from young children to older community members, art buffs to beginners. The arts sector has been drastically affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Tamworth Regional Gallery have taken a responsive approach to breaking down barriers to bring the arts to the people. They have developed an online exhibition for the fourth Textiles Triennial allowing a fully immersive online experience including audio narration of artists discussing their works. I really enjoyed walking through the Tamworth Regional Gallery with Director Bridget Guthrie recently to soak up the Tamworth Textiles Triennial – Tensions 2020 works and hearing from an expert about the artists and their vision. I commend Tamworth Regional Gallery for continually providing access to high quality arts and culture programs to regional New South Wales.

#### **STEVEN FORDHAM**

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter)**—I would like to congratulate Steven Fordham a Muswellbrook businessman who scooped the pool at the recent NSW/ACT Young Achiever of the Year Awards. The proud Kamilaroi man won the Transgrid Indigenous Achievement Award. Premier Gladys Berejiklian then announced that Steven was the overall winner from the nine individual categories. Steven is the co-founder of Blackrock Industries, a member of the Muswellbrook Aboriginal Land Council board, Advisory Committee for Muswellbrook PCYC and Upper Hunter Aboriginal Land Council Board. I again congratulate Steven on his outstanding success and his remarkable contribution to the community of Muswellbrook.

#### **"REPORTING TO YOUR COMMUNITY" AWARDS**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Mr Speaker, Tonight I want to acknowledge some fantastic staff who work at Central Coast Council. I am pleased to advise that in August, Central Coast Council won the "Reporting To Your Community" Award at the annual Local Government NSW Awards for its innovative Waterways Report Card. The Waterways Report Card was described by the judges as a tool that "helps educate the community about the impacts of their actions on local waterways". Waterways are an inherent part of our Central Coast lifestyle, and I congratulate Council staff for being recognised as leaders in this space. Mister Speaker, I want to particularly congratulate Team Leader Estuary Management Vanessa McCann, Senior Estuary Management Officer Nicole McGaharan, Communication Officer Hayley Schwartz, Team Leader Graphic Design Alison Icton, and Graphic Design Officer Candice Marsh for their work.

#### **SURRY HILLS NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I'd like to record the important role and value of the Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre. This non-profit community organisation provides after school child and vacation care, information, advice and referral, domestic violence support, free Tax Help, support groups and venue hire. There are activities like computer classes, English classes, Tai Chi, Blokes Business groups, wellness programs and excursions. There are regular newsletters, the monthly Surry Hills market and the annual Surry Hills Festival. There are community education events like Overdose Awareness Day, Hepatitis Awareness Day and Reconciliation Week. The Community Café provides lunches from their kitchen, freshly baked scones, jam & cream and tea, all served with care and support; a great indicator of the centre's approach to including everyone, building a supportive community and helping those most vulnerable. Like other agencies, Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre has responded to COVID-19 conditions and adapted services to protect the community, with health recipes and nutrition hints online and on YouTube, and community mask making workshops. I commend the Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre for this vital support and thank all involved for working to make Surry Hills a strong community.

#### **FERGUS FRICKE**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)**—Today I recognise the longstanding contributions of a tireless community advocate in my local electorate, Fergus Fricke. Fergus moved to Balmain in 1974 and has been active, vocal and effective on a broad range of local campaigns ever since. From his work in the Balmain United Residents Strategic Taskforce, to Callan Park, the Balmain Public Square heritage restoration through the Balmain Association, and his wonderful historical examinations of life in 19th century Balmain. Fergus is fiercely passionate about heritage conservation and his activism has had a hand in shaping the built form and liveability of our suburbs. In 1989 he spearheaded a 15 year battle to save Ballast Point from development to reclaim industrial sites owned by Unilever, Caltex, Ampol, Monsanto, Balmain Power Station as public space. More recently, Fergus has been a force in the campaign to pull down the ugly Telstra Exchange on Balmain Road and reveal the stunning heritage façade of our Post Office. At the grassroots level of democracy, you couldn't ask for someone with more tenacity, passion or commitment. Our community will never be able to give thanks enough for Fergus's efforts to make our local area a better place to live.

### **MARINE RESCUE PORT MACQUARIE SERVICE AWARDS**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I recognise our local award recipients from Marine Rescue Port Macquarie Unit for their outstanding dedication and commitment to our community which was acknowledged on Monday 7 September 2020. Our wonderful Marine Rescue team in Port Macquarie each year provides vital safety services on a daily basis for our boating community to ensure every person is protected on our waterways. This year I welcomed an invitation to attend the annual awards ceremony, held at Marine Rescue Port Macquarie to congratulate those longstanding members who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to maintain the daily operations of the Unit. Described as a stalwart of the organisation, Patricia White celebrated her fifteen year milestone as a member of Marine Rescue, joining in 2004 as a radio operator and applauded for her tireless pursuit in raising funds for the organisation. I congratulate the following members who were awarded service medals on the day; Patricia White (2004), Christopher Wright (2009), Peter Baxter (2010), Colin Mellors (2010), Noel Cobcroft (2010), Peter Lundman (2010), Janette Lundman (2010), Mary Thomas (2015), Scott Saunders (leading crew qualification) and Taylah Urquhart (new member). Thank you all for your service.

### **RUN AGAINST VIOLENCE**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise in the House today to applaud our very own League of Kilted Athletes for undertaking a mammoth 1300 kilometre Run Against Violence from Port Macquarie to Crowdy Head and back again. The importance of shining a spotlight on domestic violence was at the forefront of Port Macquarie's League of Kilted Athletes efforts to raise \$40,000 for two separate projects that aim to invest into preventative initiatives in our local community while supporting childhood family violence and education programs. Rolling up the socks and hitting the pavement were ten kilted athletes; Clifford Hoeft, Matt Bell, Andrew O'Donnell, Scott Hogan, Rob Lloyd, Gary Snow, Jamis Turner, James Stevenson, Roger Shipton and Michael Percival who battled the conditions as one to end domestic violence in our community. In 2017, our kilted heroes came home with the top honours with a first place while smashing the three day record in an epic run from Broken Hill to Sydney. League clansman, Clifford Hoeft remarked on the team's outstanding contribution to support some fantastic organisations in our region like Liberty Domestic and Family Violence.

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT YOUTH COUNCIL**

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)**—As part of Local Government week, I was pleased to hold the first ever Youth Council Event at Shoalhaven City Council. The event was organised in partnership with my office and the wonderful team at the Advocate for Children and Young People's Office, and was designed to introduce young people to local government. Participants will met with the Mayor of Shoalhaven City Council, staff from the Office of Local Government and me, as we participated in a panel discussion and provided training in advocacy and experience a mock council meeting in the council chambers. The participants pre-prepared a short speech on a local issue they are passionate about. South Coast locals Adrian Le, Alannah Mannix, Archie Skinner, Elizabeth Peabody, Isabella Vinson, Lilly Wright, Neve Lawson, and Takesa Frank took part and presented wonderful speeches on various topics. We need more young people taking an active role in Local Government, and I hope that each participant has been encouraged and inspired to take leadership roles within their local community and council.

**The House adjourned pursuant to standing and sessional orders at 19:17  
until Wednesday 23 September 2020 at 09:30.**