



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 24 September 2020

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 24 September 2020

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Announcements

HANSARD SERVICES

The SPEAKER: Members will be aware that this House sat late last night, as did the other place. Hansard has very few options but to ensure that all relevant staff have a break. That means that transcription of proceedings in the Legislative Assembly ceased last night at 11.00 p.m. To enable Hansard staff to get their required breaks there will be a slight delay to some transcription from last night, but it is anticipated it will be caught up by the end of the day. If members are looking for their private member's statement or late-night contributions these will be available by the end of the day, or by lunchtime tomorrow at the very latest.

SHANE FITZSIMMONS

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons, the new Commissioner of Resilience NSW and the previous RFS commissioner. He was the special guest at our Thought Leadership breakfast this morning. Almost 30 members of Parliament from both Houses attended. I place on record our appreciation to Shane for both his contribution this morning and his past and ongoing work.

[Notices of motions given]

Bills

PUBLIC WORKS AND PROCUREMENT AMENDMENT (WORKERS COMPENSATION NOMINAL INSURER) BILL 2020

First Reading

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

The SPEAKER: I set down the second reading of the bill as an order of the day for tomorrow.

Documents

AUDITOR-GENERAL

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I table the report of the Auditor-General entitled *Support for regional town water infrastructure*, dated 24 September 2020. I order that the report be printed.

Bills

WARNERVALE AIRPORT (RESTRICTIONS) REPEAL BILL 2020

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Rob Stokes, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (09:49:14): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Warnervale Airport (Restrictions) Act 1996 has been the subject of contention at different points over the years ever since it was introduced as a private member's bill—by Mr Paul Crittenden, if memory serves me right—and assented to in July 1996. That ongoing contention, as well as representations from the Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast, and Government Whip in this place, Adam Crouch, and concerns raised by the Central Coast Council, by the Hon. Taylor Martin and by community members at Community Cabinet late last year led me, in my capacity as the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, to invite Central Coast Council—the new council up there—to partner with the New South Wales Government on an independent review of the Warnervale

Airport (Restrictions) Act 1996 to determine whether it remains relevant and necessary. I note that the new Central Coast Council is the only local government area in New South Wales that corresponds with an entire region of the State.

The independent review was initiated in October 2019 and was undertaken by Ms Abigail Goldberg, an expert in infrastructure, urban planning and governance. Ms Goldberg was supported by Mr Peter Fiegehen, who was put forward as council's representative. I understand Mr Fiegehen is an expert with over 40 years' experience in aviation and executive management. In addition to the question of whether the Act remains relevant and necessary, the terms of reference asked the review to also consider the interaction and consistency of the Act with other legislation applying to the site, to examine statutory frameworks for airports of a similar scale to Warnervale Airport, and to seek and consider submissions on the matter. Comprehensive and robust consultation was undertaken with the community as part of the review. Face-to-face presentations occurred, public meetings were held, and written and verbal submissions were invited from any interested individual or entity.

I note the presence in the Chamber of the member for Wyong, who also has raised his concerns about the operation of the airport and its interactions with the aero club. The review team and the Department of Planning met with Central Coast Council at the beginning and end of the review to discuss the outcomes and recommendations. After months and months of consultation, 939 unique written and verbal submissions were received, 75 per cent of which supported the Act being repealed. The reviewers agreed that the Act was no longer necessary and had little relevance as it did not alleviate or allay community uncertainty and concern about the future operations of the airport. They recommended that the Act be repealed as soon as possible and, particularly, that the limit on the number of daily take-offs and landings in section 6 of the Act be suspended immediately.

The future operation of Warnervale Airport needs to be clarified and assured for the Central Coast community and other stakeholders. Concern about its operation has dragged on far too long. Countless discussions have occurred in council and a way forward is long overdue. It is now time for the Central Coast Council, which owns and operates the airport, to put in place a stated position and strategy, or business plan, for future operations. Crucially, certainty is also needed for the operator of the airport, the Central Coast Aero Club, whose licence expires later this year. The repeal of the Act will reduce the administrative complexity for both the council, as owner, and the aero club, as the licensee. The repeal will also strengthen community confidence, as it calls on positive action to be undertaken by Central Coast Council to establish a clear framework and business plan and local planning controls to support the continued operation of the airport for community and recreational uses and to ensure community certainty on the future of the airport.

This is a useful juncture at which to point out that this is the only piece of legislation that refers specifically to the operation of an airport in the State of New South Wales. Our State is littered with a variety of airfields and airports, operated privately or by councils or corporations. It is an historical anomaly that there is a piece of legislation that provides for the operation of just one of those airports, and the reviewers reached the reasonably obvious conclusion that treating it in this way was unnecessary and complex, created uncertainty and was unnecessarily duplicative.

Members may be wondering where is Warnervale and why does its airport have its own Act? Warnervale is a town about 100 kilometres north of Sydney's CBD, established in 1893 by Albert Hamlyn Warner. Interestingly for planning boffins, Warnervale was established very early on as a regional growth area in the Sydney Region Outline Plan in 1968. It was marked as a new town in the British model of new towns. It was Australia's answer to places like Stevenage or Milton Keynes. Others may recognise Warnervale as the town that American actor Matthew McConaughey resided in for a year while on exchange to Australia. Over time, Warnervale has developed its own suburbs of Hamlyn Terrace, Kanwal and Woongarah. It is bordered by Lake Tuggerah and Lake Budgewoi. It is home to Warnies Cafe and the Warnervale Wildcats Rugby Union Club.

But today we are talking about Warnervale Airport. Since the 1970s, there has been concern about the development of Warnervale Airport beyond what the community originally envisaged. That concern really came to the fore in 1994, when residents of Wyong and Warnervale formed the Central Coast Airport Action Group and took Wyong Shire Council to court over plans to develop the airport into a commercial and freight hub. Members of the House will recall that Wyong Shire Council had a rather colourful history and certainly had grand visions for the future of the Central Coast. In my time as Minister for the Central Coast, there were some memorable characters who represented the good burghers of Wyong. They had a range of interesting and, shall we say, innovative ideas about how to progress their area.

I remind the House that when the Warnervale Airport (Restrictions) Act 1996 was originally introduced as a private member's bill it was responding to community concern about the actions of the former Wyong Shire Council, which had issued consent to itself to expand its own airport. The Act restricted operations and future development of the airport and aimed to protect the amenity of the surrounding area. It prevented Wyong Shire Council from implementing most of its development consent relating to the airport without additional assessment

and approvals from the then Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning. Unsurprisingly, the Wyong Shire Council requested that the Act be repealed in 2015, at which point the then Department of Planning and Environment initiated a review to determine whether the Act remained the most appropriate way to regulate activities at the airport. The 2016-17 review found, broadly, that it was.

But uncertainty amongst stakeholders in regard to operational and compliance issues has continued to grow. That uncertainty has largely been created by the extension of the runway by the then council in 2015, which triggered the flight movement restriction provisions in section 6 of the Act that limit take-offs and landings to 88 movements per day. It was an unwitting effect of the actions of council at the time that has created an acute problem for the operations of the Central Coast Aero Club. These changes have affected the financial viability of the aero club and other users of the site, as well as creating a range of other unintended concerns. Since the Central Coast Council was created through the amalgamation of the former Gosford City and Wyong Shire councils in 2016, the future of the airport has been subject to continuing debate. In November 2017 a majority of councillors resolved to support the retention of the Act, suspend works on the airport and reallocate funding that had been earmarked for the airport.

As I foreshadowed earlier in my contribution, in September last year I met with Andrew Smith and Michael Allen of the Central Coast Aero Club at Community Cabinet in Tumby Umbi at the request of the member for Terrigal. They told me of the problems they and their members were facing since the flight cap in the Act was triggered. A limit of only 88 take-offs and landings per day meant their club was unviable, their members were unable to enjoy the skies as easily and again the financial viability of this crucial community group and employment opportunities on the Central Coast were put in jeopardy. I acknowledge the efforts of the member for Terrigal and note his presence in the Chamber today. He was and remains an excellent advocate for the concerns of his community. The club was 47 years old at this meeting in September 2019 and it was facing total uncertainty.

Council and its then mayor, Jane Smith, were not providing the club with any certainty about its licence, given the cap. As a government and at the request of the member for Terrigal and the Hon. Taylor Martin, MLC, in the other place, we knew we needed to act. An independent review was the best way to take the politics out of the discussion, give the community a say, and get the best results for everyone. As touched upon, the results of the independent review were very clear. In no uncertain terms the reviewers have recommended that the Act be repealed as soon as possible. The reasons for this are many and varied. The review found the Act is ambiguous and outdated in its content as well as its legal format, and also with regard to key administrative processes.

It found the Act duplicates other primary legislation such as the Civil Aviation Safety Authority [CASA] and environmental planning legislation that are updated more frequently, and that the Act does not add any requirements that are unique. The Act is the only legislation of its kind for an airport of this size. Comparative analysis found that other airports of similar scale are governed by local environmental plans, not unique Acts of Parliament. In other words, it was unnecessary and duplicative, and, as a result, it was confusing and added a layer of opacity for the community to understand how it operated in practice.

The review also found the Act to be difficult to administer, which contributed to operational complexity, and had done little to resolve or allay community and stakeholder differences. This point is crucial: The review found the Act adds complexity for pilots and, as a result, presents potential operational, compliance and safety risks. We cannot, therefore, in good conscience allow the continued operation of an Act that in any way jeopardises the safety of pilots or passengers. An Act that has superseded its purpose is no longer needed. At the most basic level, the repeal of the Act meets this Government's desire to cut red tape and unnecessary regulation. But from these findings it is clear that the repeal will do so much more than that.

I also fundamentally believe that as a government we need to ensure there is less red tape and less law imposed on our citizenry. It is ironic in one way, but the more law, the less freedom. We need to make sure that our laws are simple and clear, and are as few in number as necessary. We hear rhetoric about the need to strip away red tape. Well, why not start with Acts that are now redundant? It is true that this Act had a purpose at some point in time, but the spectre of the old Wyong Shire Council has moved on and we now have a new Central Coast Council that has been a willing partner in this review. I know it has its own political challenges, but the journey that it is on is in the right direction for the coast.

For too long the coast has struggled, in a governance and a political sense, to find a way to express its own identity. It was wedged between the Hunter with a very strong and clear identity to the north and Greater Sydney to the south. The Central Coast council, for the first time, gives the opportunity for the whole coast to come together, to recognise its community interests and to govern itself in an efficient and effective way, and respond to the local communities' interests. When local planning controls and Federal regulation can or already cover the activities of this airport, why on earth does the New South Wales Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council need to intervene in the administration of the airport? The simple answer is that we do not. As a government we

should be looking for more examples of Acts that are not necessary or Acts that can be consolidated into similar legislation. We are actively on that journey. Law is important, but it is also complex.

Apart from recommending that the Act be repealed, the review also made two other recommendations. The second recommendation was for Central Coast Council to commit to establishing a clear framework for the governance of operations and change management at the airport, including robust technical assessments, a business plan and operations plan. The third recommendation was for the council to undertake urgent works to modify vegetation height to the north of the runway that pose safety risks and limit the useable length of the runway. In July Cabinet endorsed that the review be released, that the Government accept all of the recommendations of the review and that it introduce a bill to Parliament to give effect to those recommendations.

Today the Government seeks to adopt that first recommendation and repeal the Act. The Warnervale Airport (Restrictions) Repeal Bill 2020 will do this in a staged approach that I will refer to briefly. I now turn to the substantive elements of the bill. Clause 1 sets out the name of the instrument, being the Warnervale Airport (Restrictions) Repeal Act 2020. Clause 2 allows for the staged commencement of the bill, but I will return to how that provision works in a minute. Clause 3 is most significant: It provides for the immediate omission of section 6 of the Act, which sits in part 2 of the Act that deals with restrictions on aircraft movements.

Section 6 has the effect of limiting the number of daily take-offs and landings at the airport to a cap of 88 aircraft movements. This amendment is crucial and will provide clarity in operation to local businesses and community groups that use Warnervale Airport and improve its financial viability in providing a reliable airspace. As the review notes, the current limit of 88 aircraft movements appears arbitrary and without explanation. And there is nothing in the provision that allows for an increase or decrease in movements to be applied for or permitted to address operational realities as they change from time to time. Section 6 of the Act is administratively ineffective and its immediate removal is a significant step.

The final provision of the bill, clause 4, will repeal the remainder of the Act but, unlike the omission of section 6, this complete repeal will not be done immediately for a very important reason. Subclause (2) of clause 2 provides that this repeal will occur on the earlier of a day to be appointed by proclamation, or the day that is two years after the date of assent to the Act. I am cognisant that there is some work to be done, and to respect the council in getting on and doing this important work. The bill therefore proposed a staged approach to the repeal of the Act. A two-year time frame is deemed reasonable to allow for appropriate local planning controls, and business and operations plans to be prepared and put in place by council to address the future operations and any changes proposed for the airport, prior to the Act being repealed.

Obviously, any changes to local planning controls will require community consultation and, therefore, it is appropriate to allow for these administrative processes, and for consultation with the community as to how exactly the airport is to operate. Should I or whoever else is in my role as the Minister be satisfied that appropriate local planning controls sufficiently manage the airport, and that council has responded to the other matters of recommendations ahead of the two-year timeframe then the Minister will recommend to the Governor that the Act be repealed by proclamation.

This work must be done promptly. Two years sounds like a long time, but with any deliberative process it is important to take the community with us, and it is important the council start now on this important work to provide certainty to the wider Central Coast community. Warnervale Airport will be a permanent feature on the Central Coast so it is very important to take the time to get this planning right. Two years is ample time but, again, only if council starts now.

The review was released in July and received local media attention. The Aero Club in particular was delighted that its operations can continue, with community responses in support of a clear way forward. I understand not all on the Central Coast Council will necessarily agree with the repeal of the airport's restrictions, but let me point out, first, the bill directly responds to the recommendations of the independent review, with which the Central Coast Council was a partner, which is supported by a robust and comprehensive evidence base and community consultation process. Further, the public and stakeholders clearly are in favour of repealing the Act. Second, the establishment of the Central Coast Council provides a new context and new opportunity for a new council to have more flexibility over its future plans for the airport as long as the local planning mechanisms are in place to appropriately manage this. Frankly, it is time that the council made the safety and stability of the Warnervale Airport an urgent priority going forward.

I note this month's decision by AirMed, which is an independent medevac specialist service operating on the Central Coast, to cancel all flights to Warnervale Airport owing to safety concerns caused by the current height of trees near the runway. This recent example only serves to highlight the urgency for the council to address the issues associated with the airport, including addressing vegetation heights surrounding the airport as recommendation 3 of the review makes clear. The repeal of the Act allows the council to restore community

confidence in the council by drawing a line in the sand. The council needs a current, endorsed and publicly stated position in relation to the airport and its future use and operations that is based on robust environmental, social, economic and technical assessments. It should formulate a business and operations plan for the airport and it needs to clarify its public position on the renewal of the licence of the Central Coast Aero Club—and it should do those things quickly.

It is clear that there are a number of compelling safety, financial, governance and operational reasons for the repeal of the Act. As the review team found, the relevance of the Act is of a symbolic nature only. Its provisions are largely ineffective and, as a whole, the Act is no longer necessary. In fact, it is an impediment to the progress of the prosperity of the Central Coast community, which I know is important to all members of this House. I encourage those opposite to support this plan and this certainty for the people of the Central Coast. The community of the coast provided a strong message in response to the review and as a Parliament we should honour and support that by acting out their wishes in law.

I therefore thank the following people for their work and contributions in this process. First, to the mighty local members: Adam Crouch, the member for Terrigal and Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast, and the Hon. Taylor Martin, MLC, in the other place who brought these issues to our attention. Thank you for your advocacy on behalf of the community. I note the presence in the Chamber of members of the Australian Labor Party who represent the Central Coast in this place—the member for Wyong and the member for Gosford. Second, my thanks go to Abigail Goldberg and Peter Fiegehen for undertaking a thorough and consultative review that properly examined not only the Act itself but also the entire context, including the council's role and all the Federal regulations that already exist.

Third, my thanks go to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment regional team led by Monica Gibson and Greg Sullivan on the coast. I acknowledge both those individuals and their team for doing an extraordinary job. It is important that we in this place take the time to acknowledge the incredible work of the public servants who execute the will of the Executive and who carry out the intentions of the Legislature in implementing legislation. The hard work of those individuals and their team and their relationships on the Central Coast have resulted in a good outcome for the local community.

I also thank the Aero Club and the Central Coast community for their advocacy on this issue and for providing a clear message of what they want for their community. I also thank the council for partnering with the Government to move through this issue. As I have said, I urge them to now take action and take control of this important regional asset and to ensure that the area has a clear and focused business plan that serves the needs of the regional Central Coast community.

Ms Liesl Tesch: I am not sure they've got the capacity.

Mr ROB STOKES: I note the interjection by the member for Gosford about the capacity of the council. This is an important point because the Central Coast Council was created with the objective of making the whole greater than the sum of its parts.

Mr David Harris: And that's going well!

Mr ROB STOKES: It has estimable resources at its fingertips.

Ms Liesl Tesch: They are trying to be a council. They are not into managing airports.

Mr David Harris: What a disaster.

Mr ROB STOKES: There really is a clear clarion call.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmeh Singh): Order!

Mr ROB STOKES: The interjection is about the council managing an airport and whether that is an unreasonable thing to ask. Frankly, there are plenty of councils right across New South Wales that do an excellent job of managing regional airports. If Opposition members think that the council does not have that capacity, that is a reflection on the council. The council really needs to step up and take on board the examples of what other regional councils can do with fewer resources.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Coffs Harbour.

Mr ROB STOKES: I note the interjection of the Minister for Water, Property and Housing in relation to Coffs Harbour, for example. It is a council with fewer resources that does an excellent job of running a significant regional airport—

Mrs Melinda Pavey: And Kempsey.

Mr ROB STOKES: —not to mention Kempsey and not to mention other councils all along the coast and in regional areas of New South Wales, who do an excellent job with fewer resources.

Mr David Harris: And they all lose money.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: No, they don't. You are wrong.

Mr David Harris: They have written to me. They are losing money and going out backwards.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: You're wrong.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh): Order! I call Opposition members to order.

Mr ROB STOKES: If the view of Opposition members is that the council cannot do that function, then my call is that they need to step up. If the council cannot step up and if the current council cannot do it when it has the resources to be able to do it, then the community should take it into their hands and elect people who can do the job.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh): Order! The member for Gosford will come to order.

Mr David Harris: It's the staff.

Mr ROB STOKES: Now I hear Opposition members saying, "It's the staff."

Mrs Melinda Pavey: It's a Labor council.

Mr ROB STOKES: Hang on.

Mr David Harris: Do a proper investigation and you'll find out how much money they have.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh): Order! The member for Wyong will come to order.

Mr ROB STOKES: That is a completely unreasonable and outrageous slur on the staff of the Central Coast Council. If the idea is that somehow the councillors believe that it is the fault of the staff, then it is the job of the councillors to take that into their own hands and ensure that the resources of the council are properly managed. After all, the councillors are democratically elected to do that job. If they are unwilling to do that job, then I suggest that they stand down at the next election and make way for people who will.

I also thank members of my own team: Tom Loomes and Isabel Virgona, who work so hard across the Parliament and who, with officers of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, organised this legislation and brought it to Parliament. In conclusion, it is time to repeal the Warnervale Airport (Restrictions) Act 1996 and the Warnervale Airport (Restrictions) Repeal Bill 2020 will achieve precisely that outcome. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

GOVERNMENT SECTOR EMPLOYMENT AMENDMENT (TELEWORKING) BILL 2020

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Roy Butler, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (10:18:58): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This wretched pandemic has taken many things away from us. It has curtailed our liberties, cruelled the economy and taken many jobs. The list of things this virus is taking from us continues to grow. It would be folly not to take the learnings of the past 10 months and apply them to our future plans. A failure to take on the learnings since COVID hit means we pay an even higher price for this pandemic. As international and domestic data about the virus grew, our ability to nuance our approach improved. We learned, we changed, we got better. For that, I appreciate the contributions of people at all levels of government—especially our health services. One of the other things that COVID has taught us is that workers can be just as productive working remotely. Every government agency has made faltering steps towards remote work policies. In 2019 the New South Wales Public Service Commission issued the discussion paper entitled "If not, why not". It started to talk about the need for flexible work arrangements and acknowledged that there should be less impediments to remote working.

Having spent 20 years working for the government, I can tell you that agencies never really got there. Remote working has been inconsistently implemented, at best, and agencies are not sure how to progress it. But COVID pulled the trigger on around 150,000 New South Wales public servants working remotely. John Keats

said, "Nothing ever becomes real till experienced". COVID has made remote work en masse a real thing. In the private sector they are a bit smarter and faster than government. Major companies, including Optus, Siemens, Google, American Express, Sodexo, Hilton Group, Dell, Amazon, Phillips, Wells Fargo, Johnson and Johnson and Carlson Wagonlit, are just a handful of the thousands of businesses that have embraced remote working. Those different types of industries will now stick with remote working even when not in a pandemic.

We in New South Wales have the opportunity to leapfrog a couple of stages and go straight to the end game—remote working for suitable positions within the public service. Let us keep up, rather than play catch-up. Old-school thinking that people need to be supervised by someone physically to be productive has been blown away. In June and July 2020 a survey of 6,000 public servants, including 1,400 managers, found that only 8 per cent of managers rated their teams less productive when working from home, 57 per cent thought productivity was the same and 35 per cent said they thought productivity had actually increased. So that is 92 per cent of managers saying productivity was the same or better—92 per cent.

What happened? Well, the world did not end and productivity was no issue. Workers and managers are now able to be flexible in their work arrangements. There are fewer cars on the road and workers are happier. This is a win for all. Public servants who are remote working take phone calls from their office landline numbers seamlessly with Voice over Internet Protocol technology, they participate in team meetings, and engage with their customers and stakeholders just as they always have. So back to the teleworking bill. What does it do? It rebalances the inequities created through decades of centralisation and privatisation. Those changes have been at the expense of smaller communities in regional New South Wales. Moving whole agencies is hard. It is a major disruption to the agency and comes at a high capital cost for government.

Moving positions deemed suitable for telework one at a time is easy. We have seven months of evidence using 150,000 public servants to show that it works. The bill will require the Public Service Commissioner to establish sector-wide rules that facilitate teleworking and create a remote working portal online with resources and information for public servants working remotely. The Public Service Commissioner would be required to evaluate positions for their suitability for telework. If suitable, they would be advertised as such. People from anywhere in the State could apply for these roles on merit. What does merit mean? It means the best person for the job can win it regardless of where they are in New South Wales.

This also means that optimal public value is achieved for the salary spend. If the most talented applicant for a role is in Bourke, Lake Cargelligo, Narrabri or Broken Hill—to name a few of the towns in my electorate—it would allow them to fill that role. It will also allow people with a disability to work from home and secure meaningful employment, especially those with mobility issues. This is not just about Barwon; any regional member of Parliament will see the benefits for their community. Every \$60,000, \$80,000 or \$100,000 per year job in your community helps other businesses to survive. I am not politicising or seeking to cause the Government or anyone else any grief with this bill. To that end, I wrote to every regional member of Parliament and the Premier in May this year letting them know this was coming and why I hoped they would support the bill.

It also means that regional perspectives and an understanding of regional New South Wales becomes part of the culture within agencies. City-centric decisions and policy will be tempered by regional voices. This has been a weakness of centralisation: The bush gets sidelined in agency decisions. There is a one-way gate on Sydney. The intent of the bill is to get more jobs and population into regional areas. As such, one thing you could not do is remote work into a role in regional New South Wales from Sydney. But you could make the tree change, win a job on merit, move to a regional community and take up a job—just as you can now. Why is there a bias for regional New South Wales? Let us look at the history of why. The O'Farrell Government cut 6,000 public service jobs in regional New South Wales. Then the Baird Government privatised a whole swag of government services, slashing jobs and leaving towns with fewer services. In 2019 our current Treasurer announced that he would eliminate up to 3,000 public sector jobs over the next four years.

The importance of public sector work is all the more visible in my communities. Good jobs in schools, hospitals and public administration are essential to the overall wellbeing of rural and regional towns. They function as economic anchor and they support the local economy and the many spin-off jobs that come from having well-paid locals such as retail, cafes, consumer goods, hospitality, trades—the list goes on. Of the 20 local government areas that experienced the greatest loss of public sector jobs between 2011 and 2016, six were located in the Barwon electorate—Central Darling, Brewarrina, Bourke, Coonamble, Cobar and Warren. This is not imagined. I had excellent staff in those towns over the 17 years I worked across the electorate. But most of those positions have now disappeared.

Public service jobs in regional areas build resilience in the community. Think about a farming family where a highly skilled worker has left the workforce because of isolation on the farm. Imagine how much more resilient those families would be with off-farm income that supports them through the next inevitable drought. We hear talk of job creation, but it generally does not help smaller towns. Independent analysis has shown that over

80 per cent of new jobs in New South Wales in the past five years have been created in the Greater Sydney Basin. Public sector jobs in regional areas tend to be created or sucked into major regional centres and smaller communities miss out. This is replicated across all regional areas. We have the opportunity to address that imbalance for the citizens of New South Wales.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme did a couple of things in regional areas. It took out every single disability worker, support worker and therapist employed by the public service and pushed them into an uncertain employment environment. Many left, seeking the security of bigger towns and cities. This has had an enormous impact not only on the economy of our towns but also, most importantly, on the availability and sustainability of services in our towns. The NDIS impact on people with disabilities is a discussion for another day. Between 2011 and 2016 the Central Darling, Brewarrina, Bourke, Coonamble, Cobar and Warren local government areas lost 205 public service jobs from their towns. The loss of public sector employment has damaged the economy of towns across Barwon and other regional electorates in New South Wales.

Consumer spending across regional New South Wales has decreased by an estimated \$1.9 billion. That is a loss of economic activity in the main streets and business parks in our regional communities, which means less expansion and less private sector job growth. It seems reinvestment of the dollars saved through public service cuts to regional electorates are not forthcoming. How else can I get the benefits of public service salaries into regional communities? Teleworking does just that. The bill does not stop people from working from an office or government service building if that is the preference of the worker or a requirement of the role. That does not change.

I urge every regional member of Parliament, regardless of their political persuasion, to support the bill. Their communities will benefit and the people they represent want to see this happen. I ask those metro members of Parliament to please show they care about people in regional New South Wales and want them to have a good life. Show that they care about equity of opportunity and want to see regional areas help themselves to progress. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

**CRIMES (DOMESTIC AND PERSONAL VIOLENCE) AMENDMENT (COERCIVE CONTROL—
PREETHI'S LAW) BILL 2020**

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Anna Watson, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (10:28:56): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Coercive Control—Preethi's Law) Bill 2020 to the House. We should always be alert and ready to do what we can to eradicate the blight that is domestic abuse and to improve the criminal justice system. The bill amends and improves the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 by ensuring that criminal law reflects that domestic abuse can often be conduct which takes place over a sustained period of time. The offence is a general offence of "domestic abuse" and is intended to cover a wide range of conduct that can make up a pattern of abusive behaviour within a relationship. That behaviour amounts to psychological abuse or coercive control, which either cannot be, or at least cannot easily be, prosecuted using existing criminal laws.

The bill provides that for an offence to be committed a person would need to engage in conduct that constitutes the coercive control of another person with whom the person has, or has had, a domestic relationship. For clarity, the definition of "domestic relationship" in section 5 of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 covers all relationships relevant to this offence. The bill will improve the justice system. By enabling abuse of various types which take place over a period of time to be prosecuted as a single course of conduct within a new offence of domestic abuse, the criminal law will better reflect how victims actually experience such abuse.

The purpose of the bill is to change the way we respond to domestic abuse and to better define what constitutes domestic abuse to enable greater protection for victims and their children. It will give victims confidence to report what they are enduring. Knowing it is illegal could make all the difference. The bill changes the justice system so it is better able to facilitate the early detection and prosecution of domestic abuse and coercive controlling behaviours. The main benefits of doing this are to create an informed social and legal environment, reduce offending and re-offending, and bring the incidence of domestic violence down.

The main feature of the bill is to create a broader definition of domestic abuse, including an aggravation section where children are involved in the coercive controlling behaviour, as well as an extra-territorial section. Domestic abuse is not just physical violence but can also be economic, emotional, coercive or controlling abuse. By creating a new domestic abuse offence of coercive control in New South Wales, the bill will enable the police to intervene in situations where it occurs. It will give victims the confidence they need in the justice system to report these kinds of behaviours. It will empower our justice system.

The bill provides that for an offence to have been committed it is necessary for the following condition to be met: a person must not engage in conduct that constitutes the coercive control of another person with whom the person has, or has had, a domestic relationship. Trying to describe the exact behaviour and capture all of the different ways in which a person may abuse their partner or ex-partner would be difficult if not impossible to do exhaustively, including capturing all of the different ways in which a person may abuse their partner or ex-partner. Therefore, the definition contained at proposed section 14A (2) in the bill provides that:

... the coercive control of another person is conduct that has, or is reasonably likely to have, one or more of the following effects—

- (a) making the other person dependent on, or subordinate to, the person,
- (b) isolating the other person from friends, relatives or other sources of support,
- (c) controlling, regulating or monitoring the other person's day to day activities,
- (d) depriving the other person of, or restricting the other person's, freedom of action,
- (e) depriving the other person of, or restricting the other person's, access to support services of health practitioners and legal practitioners,
- (f) frightening, humiliating, degrading or punishing the other person.

Conduct may have, or be reasonably likely to have, an effect referred to in proposed section 14A (2) on a person even if the conduct is directed at a third person, including a child, relative or a friend of the person, or a companion animal as defined in the Companion Animal Act 1998 that is owned by or in the possession of the person. The bill also allows for an aggravated coercive control offence. An increased penalty applies if the coercive controlling behaviour is aggravated:

- (1) A person who engages in conduct that constitutes the coercive control of another person with whom the person has, or has had, a domestic relationship in circumstances of aggravation is guilty of an offence.
- ...
- (2) A person commits an offence in circumstances of aggravation if—
 - (a) all or part of the conduct that constitutes the coercive control of another person—
 - (i) is directed at a child of the other person, or
 - (ii) makes use of a child of the other person in directing the conduct at the other person, or
 - (iii) takes place in the presence or hearing of a child of the other person, and
 - (b) the conduct has, or is reasonably likely to have, a serious adverse effect on the child.

A person commits an offence under proposed section 14A or 14B if:

- (a) the person engages in conduct outside the State that constitutes the offence, and
- (b) apart from this section, the conduct would have constituted the offence had it been done within this State, and
- (c) the offence involves conduct that has, or is reasonable likely to have, one or more of the effects set out in the other section 14A(2) on a person residing within the State.

A person who commits an offence by the operation of this new section may be dealt with, and is liable to the same punishment, as if the person had committed the offence within the State. No matter where the offence occurs, it is punishable by the courts of New South Wales. If an offence under proposed section 14A or 14B of the bill involves conduct that has, or is reasonably likely to have, one or more of the effects set out in proposed section 14A (2) on a person residing within the State, a geographical nexus between the State and any other element of the offence is not required. The other provisions of the Act, the provisions of other Acts and the common law, in so far as these are applicable, apply to an offence to which new section 14C applies as if it had been committed within the State. This new subsection is in addition to and does not derogate from any other basis on which the courts of the State may exercise criminal jurisdiction.

The bill has a defence of reasonableness. In criminal proceedings brought against a person for an offence under proposed sections 14A and 14B, it is a defence that the conduct was reasonable in the particular circumstances. A reasonable person test is a standard used to measure or determine something that a person has done who has an ordinary degree of care, prudence, foresight, or intelligence, and whose conduct, conclusion, or

expectation in relation to a particular circumstance or fact is used as an objective standard. These amendments to the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 are timely and relevant for New South Wales. The academic basis for the argument is well and truly over. Scotland has laid good groundwork in the area of domestic violence prevention. It has introduced mandatory sentencing and there is proof that it is working. They are now doing the same in the rest of the United Kingdom and in Ireland.

I acknowledge all of the victims and their families who have been subject to this scourge. I acknowledge the survivors who have sent me many emails telling me of their stories. It has been a privilege and an honour to know them. NSW Labor will continue to strive for justice. We will keep this debate alive until we get the outcome that is deserved. [*Extension of time*]

I acknowledge Delia Donovan, the CEO of Domestic Violence NSW. I also acknowledge Karen Willis from Rape & Domestic Violence Services, who does an amazing job, and Hayley Foster from Women's Safety NSW, who is a tireless worker in this sector. and I will be having a conversation with her at 1.00 p.m. today. I take my hat off to all the women who work in this sector day in, day out. I also acknowledge Illawarra Women's Health Centre CEO Sally Stevenson and Dr Karen Williams, both of whom have worked tirelessly alongside their teams to bring this issue to the public debate. They are amazing women who work so hard despite such little funding. I acknowledge the shadow Minister for Women and the shadow Attorney General for their assistance in bringing forward the bill. I also acknowledge Preethi Reddy, who is no longer with us, and her family—Nithya, and Mr and Mrs Reddy—who have been through hell and back. I will discuss Preethi's journey and the effect that it has had on her family and friends at a later date.

Debate adjourned.

WATER MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT (TRANSPARENCY OF WATER RIGHTS) BILL 2020

Second Reading Debate

Debate resume from 6 August 2020.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (10:40:56): This bill is the fourth piece of legislation before the House regarding water transparency and ownership that particularly concerns members of Parliament. That is a really important and great starting point. The bill also looks more broadly into community water ownership, especially with regard to speculators in the market who are unfortunately—and much to the despair of irrigators—impacting the market in the worst possible way. They are not farmers, but they take ownership of water and manipulate prices by withholding it, or they buy such enormous volumes that they force up the price until they are willing to sell. The NSW Water Register is incredibly important because it allows us to see that activity, and the Minister put out a media release to that effect today.

The Government proposed its own bill, which was supported by Labor, although we sought amendments, which were refused. The bill is the third proposed by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. We again sought amendments, which have been adopted, and more amendments that take on board the feedback from the Government will be proposed. But despite widespread bipartisan support for transparency, there is a 99 per cent chance that Government members will vote these amendments down. The Minister put out a media release today talking about the need for improvements to and better transparency around the NSW Water Register. I applaud that, but that is not an excuse to not adopt the bill.

Going back three or four months, the Minister used the impending Australian Competition and Consumer Commission report as an excuse to refuse the bill. That report is out now, so that excuse has gone. The Minister also said that she is concerned that mum-and-dad farmers' information will be available online. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party proposed an amendment to deal with that. The Government bill, which I have commended, included the idea that we reach into the irrigation corporations so that we can see the many transfers that take place behind that wall. That has been acknowledged and proposed as an amendment to the bill as well. It seems like we are going to have an amalgamation of everyone's best ideas on a bill that brings in all of the issues raised by all parties. It seems unimaginable that Government members would vote against that, but I suspect that is the direction we are heading in. I look forward enormously to the Minister explaining why Government members are about to vote against the bill. The Opposition supports the bill.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (10:44:56): I welcome the opportunity to contribute to debate on the Water Management Amendment (Transparency of Water Rights) Bill 2020 and I thank the member for Cessnock. His comments about the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission report are an important part of the debate. This is the correction: The interim report has been tabled, the final report has yet to be tabled. Chapter 8 details that Commissioner Keogh is looking at what should be available on the NSW Water Register.

Mrs Helen Dalton: What do your irrigators think?

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY: I will acknowledge that interjection because I will come to that shortly. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's [ACCC] Murray-Darling Basin water markets inquiry—otherwise known as the Keogh inquiry—released its interim report in July 2020. The period for submissions in response to the interim report has been extended to 30 October 2020, with the final report expected on 26 February 2021. We are right in the middle of what is a groundbreaking inquiry into water markets and water transparency. One finding that has emerged is that the \$1.5 billion-a-year basin water markets have outgrown the frameworks that govern them, and change is needed for a market of this scale to operate efficiently and benefit the industries that depend on it. The inquiry points to a significant program of change for the industry and the management of water resources. But that sphere of work and development passes by, as mentioned by the member for Cessnock and is unheralded in the bill. Why is the 542-page interim report not referenced by the member for Murray in her second reading speech? I believe that the ACCC inquiry is the critical component in formulating the next generation of water rights legislation and regulation.

As a vet, I base my decisions on evidence. When you are aware of a large body of evidence being tabled, would you not look to it? Submissions to the ACCC inquiry have come from the Australian Dairy Industry Council, Australian Grape and Wine Incorporated, the Australian Water Brokers Association, Citrus Australia, the Department of Agriculture, Fruit Growers Victoria, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of New South Wales, the Murray Darling Association, the Murray River Group of Councils, the National Farmers' Federation, Ricegrowers' Association of Australia, and the Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation, as well as numerous councils and individual primary producers. When tabled, the final inquiry report will be a significant body of work. Chapter 8 of the interim report notes:

There are also inconsistencies across the states' entitlement and trade frameworks prescribed by state specific water management legislation and regulations. The ACCC's analysis to date indicates there are substantial differences in Basin States' entitlement frameworks and trade processes and that these differences have generated problems at three levels:

- For individual traders, interactions with different trade approval authorities across the Basin may be cumbersome due to differences in terminology, fees and trade approval forms and processes.
- For the market more broadly, inconsistent trading processes have created complex and difficult to understand market data. As a result, participants may not make well-informed trading decisions and may limit their engagement with water markets because they lack confidence or perceive that the costs of obtaining the necessary information to benefit from water markets are too high.
- For governance, differences in Basin States' management of water rights has impeded reforms in the past and continues to hinder streamlined interstate allocation trading. On the matter of transparency and harmonisation across jurisdictions, the ACCC has identified that different record keeping by different States and trade processes mean participants cannot get a full, timely or accurate picture of water trading. Yet that is what we are being asked to consider today by this bill—New South Wales going its own way. The ACCC's preliminary view is that trade processing in the basin could be improved with a mix of changes, including:
 - (d) consistent terminology and types of water rights and water dealings across states
 - ...
 - (e) consistent assessment processes for allocation trades
 - (f) increased interoperability between brokers/exchanges and trade approval authorities, and between Basin State and IIO trade approval authorities' systems and registries
 - (g) consistent clearing, recording settlement and registration processes across all states, particularly for permanent trades
 - (h) consistent processes for recording and dissemination of information on all trades ... by all water registers ...

This bill is not a step on that journey. Water market reform is crucial and improved transparency important. In the end, it is about doing the job thoroughly and leaving farmers and the regulator with a model that works and that is integrated into its regulatory and interstate context. On the eve of significant and comprehensive water reform recommendations we should prepare for the final ACCC report, do the reading and take note of the input of submissions that are currently being sought in response to the interim report. I share much in common with the member for Murray on the subject of water regulation. We both want transparency, accountability, availability, registration of interests and the application of appropriate sanctions where necessary.

That common ground is strong and fundamental, and that forms the bedrock as we look to continual improvement in management of the water supply that sustains our regional communities. We have more in common than in dispute. But it is not wrong or, as the member alluded to in her speech, corrupt to disagree with her on the best way forward. We bring different perspectives to the debate and these are born not just from our experiences in life but, I believe, also arise from the stretch of the river system we know best and its geography, weather, water requirements and local agricultural concerns. I note that the Minister has received correspondence from several irrigation districts, which have called on the Government to oppose the bill, including irrigation districts that fall in both my electorate and the electorate of Murray—important stakeholders such as Coleambally and Murray.

They use phrases like "extremely concerned", "grave concerns" and "prepared without any discussion or consultation with [our irrigation scheme]" in relation to the bill. The timing of the bill has not gone unnoticed. One stakeholder points out that "it is premature and inefficient for the New South Wales Government to be legislating increased regulation until the final recommendations are made by the ACCC and agreed by government". The interim Keogh report issues us with this warning:

Many of the issues that the ACCC views as harmful to open and efficient water trading are grounded in failures of governance. Water markets have developed at different times across different regions as an adjunct to broader water management reform, resulting in an extremely complex, fragmented and inconsistent system. Many of the historical market settings and governance arrangements are no longer suitable to deliver all of the potential benefits of trade.

The message is this: Let us work together on this. In opposition or on the crossbenches, rocks can be thrown and single issues cherry-picked out of policy design to make a noise but without accountability to deliver a working solution. You can garner headlines but, down the track, leave the community disappointed. Government, however, has to build the engine that will power a fairer, more transparent and improved water sharing scheme for the State and connect that to the States around us. On the eve of the delivery of the final report of the Keogh inquiry, such an important body of work must fuel our direction.

From what I have seen so far, this will be constructive and authoritative. I urge members not to sweep it under the carpet because they are afraid of what that research might say. In short, I support three things today: First, seek out stakeholder knowledge and the body of research; secondly, design the water sharing process in harmony with our neighbouring States; and, thirdly, be wary of a single-issue bill that allows government to disseminate indiscriminately yet publicly what is sensitive business information. True advocacy, true representation, involves working constructively with government, relying upon the best available research and stakeholder submissions. For those reasons, I do not support the bill.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (10:54:43): I again speak in support of the Water Management Amendment (Transparency of Water Rights) Bill 2020, which my colleague the member for Murray has been pushing hard for the past year. I listened keenly to the contribution of the member for Cessnock. I think it is the third or fourth time that a bill of this nature has been before this Chamber. It feels like *deja vu* making another contribution that is almost the same as those I made on previous occasions. I am sure it is a nightmare for The Nationals, who just want this issue over. But today is an opportunity for the Minister and members of her Government to show some support for this legislation and show that they are fair dinkum about supporting transparency in relation to water management in New South Wales by supporting the bill of the member for Murray. Similarly, if the Minister believes she can improve the bill, why not speak to the member for Murray and move an amendment? But I do not think that will happen.

I commend the member for Murray for her tenacity and resilience, because she has copped so much venom for introducing this bill. I know the last time I joined this debate members opposite used the excuse of privacy to oppose the bill. They said that a water register would lead to greenie activists attacking mum and dad farmers on their properties because the bill would reveal private contact details. That excuse cannot be used anymore. The member for Murray has tabled an amendment that states the public online water register will not contain any private phone numbers, addresses or emails. So if those opposite are only concerned about privacy, those issues have been addressed. They can vote yes for this bill today with no more excuses.

As I said before, this bill is simple and necessary, and I do not understand why there is so much hostility to it from those opposite—especially The Nationals. We, the public, need to know how water—our most precious and valuable resource—is used and who owns it. We have a situation in Australia where ruthless, often foreign-owned companies and corporates are making millions of dollars from the secret trading of water. They buy water when it is cheap, hold onto it and watch the price soar during a drought. They make millions of dollars while farmers go broke and they are only driven by profit. But it is impossible for an ordinary Australian to find out how much they own or even who they are. The people who own water might be politicians, they might be foreign corporates or they might be foreign governments—but we do not know.

The first step in addressing our water woes is to lift the lid on the secrecy and find out exactly who owns the water. Across the country there is widespread support for a public water register. In my electorate of Orange people have contacted my office to tell me how proud they are of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party—especially the member for Murray—in pushing through this long-overdue law change. We have a land register so there is no reason for water ownership to be such a secret. Across the bush, 11,000 people signed a petition for a water register. It is up to us, as their representatives, to make this happen. However, the member for Murray has copped nothing but vicious personal abuse ever since she first brought the legislation to this Chamber. She has been called things like "a disgrace", "a disgusting human" and "a mean girl from school" by members of The Nationals.

The question must be asked: Who are they all protecting? The Nationals keep talking about the member's family and her personal farming activities—the sort of behaviour we expect from people who do not have a real argument against her bill. For years there has been no requirement for people in this Chamber to declare their water interests. That is absolutely outrageous and does not make sense at all. Members of Parliament are required to declare any property or shares they own. But any water traders in Parliament can keep their water holdings secret. The Premier says that we can trust politicians to proactively declare their water ownership. Unfortunately, I do not think we can. My colleague the member for Murray finally introduced legislation to address this anomaly and all the Government did was oppose her and abuse her—and those opposite continue to do so.

Suddenly, a couple of months ago, the water Minister decided to introduce her own bill on politicians declaring water interests. We all know how that ended up, because that bill was a weak imitation of the much more comprehensive bill we are debating today. It was rightly voted down by upper House members, who saw straight through the bill. The water Minister's bill protected National Party donors and special interest groups. That is all it did. There was no provision in the bill for a public water register. This is what we need. This is what the public wants. This is what the member for Murray and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party are committed to deliver.

We need to know not just about politicians but about their donors, their mates and foreign interests—all of who have their fingers in Australian water. It is not good enough for a company in the Cayman Islands to buy large quantities of water, while keeping the names of directors, board members and major shareholders secret. If you are a corporation, foreign or domestic, and you want to own Australia's most valuable natural resource then we, the Australian taxpayers, deserve to know something about it. The important thing about a water register is that it will expose the non-farmers who own water—the city-based traders, the speculators, the foreign corporates and the politicians. We need transparency about how much water they own. That is why I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (11:00:56): I speak in opposition to the Water Management Amendment (Transparency of Water Rights) Bill 2020. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has failed its electorates with this shameful attempt to suggest there is some conspiracy and that The Nationals are secret water barons. They have used Parliament to play politics, while also removing all consideration for the privacy of small family farms. I note the contribution of the member for Cessnock last week, who quoted Select Harvests and its support for the bill. Members might be interested to know that Select Harvests is one of the largest corporate almond farmers in the country. On the topic of privacy, there is only one line members need to read in the detail of the Shooters bill. New section 71J (5) states that:

Except as provided by subsections (3) and (4)—

which I might add relate only to the payment of a \$10 fee—

access to the information is not to be restricted in any way.

It is also interesting to see that the Shooters have finally recognised that irrigation corporations were not covered in their original bill as proposed by both the member for Murray and the Hon. Mark Banasiak in the other place. Unfortunately, this attempt to amend their bill at the last minute would have been completely unnecessary had they even bothered to debate my bill in the upper House, which suggested a pathway to how irrigation corporations could improve transparency in a practical way. We need only look at the correspondence my office has received from the irrigation corporations in New South Wales to see the lack of understanding about this important issue on the part of the member for Murray. Coleambally Irrigation Cooperative Limited wrote to me recently to say:

CICL [Coleambally Irrigation Co-operative Limited] is extremely concerned this Bill will provide increased opportunity for vexatious behaviour toward individuals and create division and conflict in our region.

That is something the member for Murray is just brilliant at. What a fitting description of the member for Murray and her Shooters colleagues. Murray Irrigation wrote to me to say:

In general we are in favour of openness and transparency, however this proposed legislation is likely to be counter-productive especially since this area is already within the remit of the current review by the ACCC.

That is Murray Irrigation.

Mrs Helen Dalton: Who represent themselves, not the irrigators.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Please, Hansard, record that interjection.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): Order! The Minister will direct her remarks through the Chair.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Through the Chair, please, Hansard, record that interjection. That is Murray Irrigation. The letter continues:

We do not feel there has been sufficient consultation with irrigation companies about this proposed legislation and its consequences for Murray Irrigation and our customers—

who are the farmers—

The consequences would certainly include increased costs and staffing to meet what appear to be onerous requirements. It is unclear whether we would be able to meet the requirements in terms of information even with our best efforts and there is potential for the legislation to overlap or contradict, for example, privacy laws.

It is not me saying that; it is Murray Irrigation.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Murrumbidgee Irrigation had this to say on the Shooters—

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: The husband of the member for Murray is the chair of Murrumbidgee Irrigation.

Mr Philip Donato: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 76, relevance. What has the husband of the member for Murray got to do with this debate right now? Nothing.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Everything.

Mr Philip Donato: Nothing.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Everything.

Mr Philip Donato: Stick to the facts.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Everything.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): There is no point of order. The member for Orange and the member for Murray have noted their objections previously. The Minister will continue.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Murrumbidgee Irrigation said:

Murrumbidgee Irrigation supports the greater transparency and disclosure of water entitlements and trading by politicians and/or decision makers.

In regards to the current bill we are concerned that it places requirements on Irrigation Infrastructure Operators that are not reasonable or practicable. Murrumbidgee Irrigation understands the community and political desire for greater transparency in the water market and would support a process to develop a concept suitable for all stakeholders.

This bill is not it. The Nationals will always stand up for water users, including the environment, and not support poor legislation. That is why we have announced that we are taking steps to improve—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The member for Murray will come to order. The member for Orange will come to order. Their interjections are not helpful. The Minister will continue.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: That is why we have announced that we are taking steps to improve transparency around water trading in New South Wales by cracking down on the big corporates and water speculators. That process will commence public consultation in November on changes that will balance increasing transparency with protecting the privacy of small farm operators. That is the appropriate way to address this important issue. I commend the member for Albury for his measured contribution. There are concerns. But they need to be addressed in a way that has the important stakeholders having an input into getting the settings right—no more so than the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, which has released its interim report. For transparency, this needs to be done at a national level. We will work down that path. The appropriate way to deal with it is by taking the community with us, not setting one community against another. That is what I am committed to do as water Minister. The Government opposes the Shooters bill.

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (11:08:32): In reply: I thank all members for their contributions to the debate on the very important Water Management Amendment (Transparency of Water Rights) Bill 2020. On Tuesday the people of New South Wales had a huge victory on water: The New South Wales Government's secret law change on floodplain harvesting was shot down in the upper House. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers, Labor, Independents, One Nation and the Animal Justice Party—diverse groups of very different political stripes—banded together for the good of the State. Today, members of this House have the chance to make it a double: to end two decades of secrecy in water ownership and emerge from the shadows by treating water like any other

asset, such as property or shares. Comedian and journalist Friendlyjordies summed it up best on the Marcus Paul 2SM radio show yesterday when he stated:

The reason for opposing this bill can be summed up in one word: "corruption". Unless you secretly own lots of liquid assets, you would vote for this bill? Why don't we treat water like every other asset?

This is the world we live in today. A comedian makes more sense than our leaders opposite me in this Chamber, who have aggressively fought against this bill for 12 months. In voting against my bill in August, water Minister Melinda Pavey talked all about the mum-and-dad farmers and stated the bill would breach their privacy. It is a wonder she has not tried to ban the *White Pages* for the same reason. Today, Melinda Pavey says we need to wait for the ACCC to hand down its final recommendations. I find that incredibly interesting, given she introduced her own bill prior to the ACCC report. The ACCC interim report has been the most damning report about water and water trades that has ever been written. It is quite amazing that the member for Albury has cherry-picked from it.

Why do we need to wait for the ACCC to hand down its final recommendations? When does this Government ever implement any inquiry's recommendations, anyway? As though 20 years of hiding water ownership has not been enough—what a ridiculous delaying tactic. We have already had more than 118 inquiries and reports into the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. There are plenty of recommendations in those reports for this New South Wales Government, but it has not acted on one of them. Instead, this Government wants to wait for another lot of recommendations. In 2004 all State governments and the Federal Government agreed to implement a transparent water register under the National Water Initiative. Some 16 years later the New South Wales Government has done nothing—zip. Why would members think an ACCC report will make any difference to it, given it has not acted on any recommendations from those 118 reports?

It is just disgraceful that today the National Party is going to kill the chance for Australia to have a proper, searchable water register for the first time. New South Wales could lead the way and the other States would follow. It is an opportunity for The Nationals to be the star—and its members need some help at the moment. They have been beaten up. They have lost their deputy leader and had a member defect. They need all the help they can get, yet they sit there and carry on about this issue. Once again The Nationals have sold out our farmers. They have sold out our Indigenous communities. They have sold out our future generations.

Since I introduced this bill into Parliament in October last year, The Nationals have come up with all sorts of intriguing and creative, weak-as-water excuses to oppose it. First, The Nationals tried reporting me to the ethics committee. The party's members said that because I am a farmer who owns water I cannot introduce a bill about water—that was creative! Perhaps I am the only member who knows anything about water. Then they kept delaying and delaying until my bill lapsed. At one point they said my bill was not necessary because we already have a water register. Under this New South Wales Government system a person can buy millions of dollars' worth of water without revealing their name or true identity. They do not even have to show their Australian Business Number. My bill addresses this gross flaw in our system.

Importantly, an amendment I am tabling today will lift the lid on the secrecy of water held within irrigation corporations such as Murrumbidgee Irrigation and Coleambally Irrigation. At present, a foreign company could hide its water within the bulk water licence of an irrigation company. I believe that in his contribution the member for Cessnock alluded to the fact that Minister Pavey had put that in her bill. Now she is backflipping again—we are used to that from The Nationals. The public has no way of finding out anything about these secret water traders within the irrigation corporations. Australian water is the ideal investment for criminals wanting to launder money. The Interim Inspector-General of Murray-Darling Basin Water Resources, Mick Keelty, stated that money can be laundered through our system. Why have we let this go on for two decades?

My bill will ensure that all water hidden within irrigation corporations will be searchable on a public water register. They already have to have an internal water register with people doing it; this will just make it public and searchable. I am sure those corporations could do it cheaply and efficiently. It would be the first time in history this would happen. It is not good enough for a company in the Cayman Islands to buy large quantities of water while keeping the names of directors, board members and major shareholders a secret. Members know that has happened. If a corporation, foreign or domestic, wants to own Australia's most valuable natural resource then the taxpayer deserves to know something about it.

Last month the media made the shocking revelation that the New South Wales environment Minister has been storing water for big foreign-owned water speculators in water licences that are supposed to be used for environmental water. This is extraordinary. Our State environment department is helping big water speculators save money and make a profit. Call me old-fashioned, but I thought environmental water was supposed to be used for the environment. What the hell is the environment Minister doing trading water with big corporate irrigators? What is going on with this unholy alliance between the New South Wales Government, Webster Limited, Duxton

Water and the many other special interest groups? How much money did the New South Wales Government charge these big foreign corporates? Was it a cut-price sweetheart deal to help them maximize their profits?

We do not know the answers to these questions, because water ownership is so secretive in this State—and they love it. It is another reason why we urgently need a transparent water register. It is the reason why the New South Wales Government seems so determined to block a water register and stop this bill. We need to know how much water foreign companies own and how much water government departments own. Our taxes are paying for dodgy deals. It is time to come clean. We have a land register in Australia. Why does a water register terrify so many powerful people? It is because there is so much to hide. The fact that The Nationals and its lobby groups oppose a water register is the exact reason we need this register so much. I urge all members in the Chamber to support this bill.

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

The House divided.

Ayes41
Noes45
Majority.....4

AYES

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

NOES

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

PAIRS

Atalla, E	Barilaro, J
Hoenig, R	Wilson, F
Lalich, N	Williams, R

Motion negatived.

ROADS AMENDMENT (TOLL-FREE PERIOD) BILL 2020**Second Reading Speech**

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (11:29:48): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

After nearly a decade of a Liberal-Nationals Government, Sydney is the most tolled city in the world. The Berejiklian Government receives our taxes and it has privatised our electricity assets, yet it forces motorists to keep paying for our roads over and over again. The legacy of this Premier and this Government is: tolls. Tolls for the rest of our lifetime. Tolls scooting ahead of inflation and increasing 4 per cent per year. It does not matter if it is a new or old motorway, tolls are being slapped on it. It does not matter if we are in a pandemic or a recession, the Premier slaps a toll on it. Beyoncé puts a ring on it; Gladys Berejiklian slaps a toll on it.

No mercy for motorists during the worst economic downturn since the Second World War. We have seen no relief for cash-strapped families, no respite for truckies and tradies and not a shred of sympathy for the unemployed. In a moment of accidental honesty, which I think shocked the transport Minister, the Premier has dubbed her approach "toll mania" and that is exactly what her legacy is after a decade in power. The Premier has inflicted toll mania on the people of Sydney and all who enter this city—from the Macarthur region, the Southern Highlands, the Blue Mountains and very shortly, of course, the Central Coast and the Hunter region.

The important Roads Amendment (Toll-Free Period) Bill 2020 was introduced in the Legislative Council by the shadow Minister for Roads, the Hon. John Graham. It received support in the Legislative Council and was passed, which is why it is now in the Legislative Assembly. It is now up to members of Parliament in this Chamber to cast judgement on this bill. I acknowledge the hard work of shadow Minister for Roads, the Hon. John Graham. The bill strikes a blow against toll mania in a modest but important way. The Opposition cannot influence policy but we can have a view. We certainly cannot influence the secret contract negotiations with private toll operators and the Government. They are done behind closed doors, with no third party involved.

I have said for a number of years now, particularly when I was the shadow Minister for Transport and Roads, that we require transparency around the setting of these contracts in regard to motorways. I think that is only fair. We have also pushed for the involvement of the Auditor General. However, we have seen no transparency whatsoever in how tolls are set and the negotiations underway with toll operators. The Opposition wants to set a starting point for discussions, which is what this bill seeks to do. The bill will introduce mandatory toll-free periods on all new toll roads in New South Wales. We bring this bill to the House out of economic fairness and, importantly, to promote road safety. This relief will apply to both cars and trucks.

Importantly we still believe it should be up to the Minister to determine the toll-free period and for that reason we are not seeking to impose a period within the bill. For approximately 15 years the NRMA has advocated for a toll-free period of one month, which seems to be a sensible option. Ultimately, this bill does not prescribe a certain period. The establishment of the toll-free period should take into consideration the economic circumstances at a particular time. For example, factors such as the pandemic and the recession we are currently in would play into the Minister's decision. And once gazetted, it would obviously have an immediate effect. Importantly, we have the opportunity to make this bill law before the opening of NorthConnex and all other toll roads this Government has in store. We hope that NorthConnex will open shortly—perhaps in the Minister's contribution he could indicate when it will open.

Importantly, the bill was passed in the Legislative Council with an overwhelming majority of 23 to 17. The only thing standing in the way of it passing in this Chamber is the vote of those on the other side. Many members of the Government will be impacted by impending tolls. It is also important to understand why toll-free periods are needed. Today, with Peter Khoury from the NRMA, a membership organisation that is well regarded and has a view on important road matters, we stood before the media. Sometimes the NRMA supports the Government on matters but in relation to our push for a toll-free period it is supporting the Opposition. The NRMA feel very strongly about this matter and, as Pete Khoury said this morning, and I reiterated, we should not have to introduce a bill into Parliament to make this happen. It is just common sense. As he said, it is a no brainer. But because the Government will not do that the Opposition has been forced to introduce this bill in the House.

In July the Government introduced, for the first time, a toll on the M5 East for cars travelling from the south-west. Many members have commented that their constituents are very upset with them over the M5 East being tolled. It is about \$5.95 each way, which adds up to an extra \$3,300 a year for people using that road on a regular basis. The toll for trucks is \$20.86 per trip, which adds up to an extra \$14,000 a year and is a huge impost on a small business. As I said earlier, we know from the M4 and the M4 East that tolls will be increasing at 4 per cent a year for about the next 20 years. Motorists who travel on M5 East motorway had a nasty shock when the toll was imposed. As I said, members have been advocating hard for their constituents. It is such a shame that

the M5 East motorway, which was built by Labor and has been paid for by the public, now has a toll—even though it has been toll free since 2001.

It is important to note that the M5 East is an old road that has not been upgraded—at least when the toll was applied to the M4 it had been upgraded—and the Opposition opposed the toll because it was on an old road. We do not accept that current roads should be tolled. The M5 East had not been upgraded, yet the Berejiklian Government suddenly introduced a brand new toll on the same old road. We warned the Government that putting a toll on the M4 set a dangerous precedent, but it repeated it. When the toll was introduced there was no M5 East cashback and, importantly there was no grace period. In a recession and a pandemic one cannot imagine a bigger kick in the guts for the people of south-west Sydney when suddenly a toll was imposed on a motorway on which they had previously travelled for free.

I acknowledge my colleagues in this House who have advocated so very strongly on this matter: the member for Macquarie Fields, the member for Campbelltown, the member for Liverpool, the member for Bankstown, the member for Lakemba, the member for Kogarah, the member for Canterbury and the member for Rockdale. I note the member for Canterbury is in the Chamber. Those hardworking members represent communities that are being hit by—I again use the Premier's words—toll mania. I also acknowledge our Central Coast members whose constituents will be significantly impacted when the toll is applied to NorthConnex: the member for Wyong, the member for Gosford and the member for The Entrance. Importantly, what will the member for Terrigal will do? The toll will also impact constituents in his electorate.

I have said publicly on a number of occasions that the Opposition is not opposed to NorthConnex. It is a good project that will help motorists who face increased congestion along Pennant Hills Road. Central Coast residents will also benefit from this motorway but they should not have a toll introduced without a toll-free period. Recently, the Opposition lodged a petition in this Parliament. We collected more than 10,000 signatures in double-quick time. Opposition members have said that when they posted the petitions the response was immediate and overwhelming.

What also concerns many people is that the Government promised that if it privatised our electricity assets the State would be able to fund the construction of roads into the future. The Government never, ever told people that effectively they would pay for the M5 East 15 times over, with half of the toll proceeds going to a private company. The Government has betrayed the Liberal voters of Revesby. The Government has betrayed places like Padstow, Panania, East Hills, Picnic Point, Hammondville, Wattle Grove, Holsworthy, Moorebank, Lurnea, Casula and Prestons. At the most recent State election the people of East Hills, Holsworthy, Oatley and Camden all voted Liberal and did not think they would end up in the situation they are in now—with a road that is not new but has a toll. What did Liberal members who represent those areas actually do?

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Nothing.

Ms JODI McKAY: They certainly did not voice the concerns of their constituents. I think it is a shame that in this Parliament, a place in which members have the ability to influence policy and make changes, they did not advocate on behalf of the people who live in the areas I have mentioned. But now they have the opportunity to support them. They can support this bill, which is a very modest change to the way the Government introduces and manages tolls in this State.

A few weeks ago, in the company of the Opposition shadow roads Minister, the Hon. John Graham, and members representing the electorates of Kogarah, Rockdale and Canterbury, I spoke to a gentleman, Paul Read, who owns a Kingsgrove plumbing business. Recently he told his staff to avoid using the M5 tunnel to minimise costs. His five workers travel from Kingsgrove to the city and the Eastern Suburbs every day of the week. This very successful and longstanding business depends on roads around the city to get to where they need to go. The business's previous toll bill was \$960 a month. It is now double that at \$1,920. As Paul and his wife said to me, "It's completely unsustainable." It is simply too much for their business to bear. When the cost of tolls is combined with the recession and the pandemic we are facing currently, a large toll bill is a huge burden for this business.

Mandating a toll-free period on all new toll roads would offer what is desperately needed—relief to motorists and business owners such as Paul Read. But it is also important and sound policy to support safety on our roads. That is an important part of this bill and it is the reason that Labor has introduced the bill. As I stated, this concept is supported by the NRMA and the 2005 Richmond review. We are now 15 years down the track from that review, yet relief from tolls still has not happened, despite being recommended and supported by the Richmond review. Ironically, it is backed not only by Labor but also by Liberals on Liverpool City Council who have come out in support of this because they know the impact of the toll on local roads.

Toll roads and tunnels were once designed to reduce surface traffic but this Government's tolls do the exact opposite. The Opposition believes that drivers need time to adapt. They deserve a notice period. They deserve an

opportunity to adjust their routes before being hit with a big charge. That is certainly not happening. In fact, the Opposition has heard that people wake up one day and for the first time find that the toll has been imposed. There is a motorway toll sign, which had been covered up when the sign was installed, and they received a huge shock at having to pay a toll. Often people make risky manoeuvres, such as last-minute lane changes, to try to get off the toll road. A toll-free period could prevent that from happening.

We saw examples of people's responses to an unannounced toll on the M4 when drivers tried to get off the motorway at Church Street to avoid paying the toll. There were a number of very significant accidents. It took quite a while for the Government to react and fix those safety issues. In every way it is safer to give drivers toll relief while they familiarise themselves with new routes and decide how they will respond. What will their daily journey then look like? It is important for people to work out, as the Government has acknowledged, if choosing the motorway saves time and if the toll road will benefit them by saving both time and money. That is at the heart of what the Labor Opposition is saying to the Government.

As I have said, the Opposition is calling on the Government to back the Opposition's approach as a matter of urgency before NorthConnex opens. The Government has not announced the date when NorthConnex will open, despite having contributed \$577 million of taxpayers' money. NorthConnex was meant to open in December last year. I note that when the Minister for Transport and Roads was asked at a media conference when it would open, he threw his hands in the air because he did not know. It would be great if the toll-free period could be in place before NorthConnex opens so that the opening goes smoothly. The NorthConnex toll is \$7.91 per trip for cars or up to \$3,800 a year for regular users. It is \$23.73 for heavy vehicles or \$11,000 a year for trucks and buses.

There is something very unusual about NorthConnex. It is the first toll road that forces truck drivers to either pay a toll or pay a fine. I have heard the Minister for Transport and Roads say a number of times that there will always be a free option, a free road that drivers can use as an alternative to the toll road. He has said if drivers want to use the toll road they can but if they do not want to use the toll road there would always be a free option. However, there is no free alternative to NorthConnex. Truck drivers either use NorthConnex and pay \$23.73 for heavy vehicles or they use the surface road. If they use the surface road, they face a fine of \$194. How is that fair? Consultation with small business owners in that situation and the Transport Workers' Union [TWU] has been very poor.

The Government has not prepared drivers for the shock of the toll. I know that because I have spoken to them. I have heard they have not been able to prepare and do not know how they will bear the enormous cost of the toll. It is important to acknowledge that drivers have not just sat back and watched the tolls being imposed. People have rallied. I recognise and thank Richard Olsen from the TWU for doing what the Government should have done. He informed his union members, made them aware of what is being proposed and, importantly, advocated on their behalf. He has brought to the attention of those who need to know the financial impact that the toll will have on small businesses.

Heavy vehicle operators need support at this time because most of them are small business operators. Like everyone else, they have been doing it tough. I plead with the Minister, when he presents the Government's case to this House, to understand that many of the people who will be impacted by the truck toll are small business owners. In my previous role as the shadow Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight I said many times that the Minister should explain how the triple toll amount was calculated. I have never heard an explanation. The Opposition understands that trucks cause wear and tear on roads but so far there has been no explanation of the Government's formula for the triple toll. If the Government wishes to effectively tax small businesses, it is worthwhile explaining to them how the amount of the toll was calculated, why the amount is justified and why drivers have to pay it. I do not think that is too much to ask.

It is also important to acknowledge that the toll on NorthConnex will have a huge impact on Central Coast and Hunter residents. I have no doubt that members of this House to whom I have referred will support this bill. They know that the toll will impact many of their constituents who previously have been able to come to Sydney free of charge but who will soon have to pay a significant toll. Opposition members have done a terrific job in trying to raise awareness but many Central Coast and Hunter residents do not know what is coming their way. If there was a toll-free period, people would have had an opportunity to get used to the idea of paying.

An opportunity to drive through the tunnel will give people an understanding of the time-saving versus the financial cost in order to decide whether in the future that is what they are going to do. Instead, they will be forced to pay the toll without understanding any of the benefits. The cost of introducing a toll-free period for Central Coast and Hunter residents could be about \$320 a year. It is not just about cost or easing that financial burden; it is about fairness and helping motorists understand what is coming. It is also, importantly, about safety. The Opposition urges the Government to put politics aside and support this bill. If it does not want to support the bill at least make it policy. I should not have to bring a bill before this House simply to have the Government act on something that has been there for 15 years and has been advocated for and supported by the NRMA. The NRMA

is a large motoring membership organisation. It is common sense, it is a no-brainer and it should happen. The community wants toll-free periods. Labor wants toll-free periods. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (11:50:31): I have listened intently to what the Leader of the Opposition has had to say. I have listened intently to what the shadow Minister in the other place has had to say in relation to toll roads. There are a couple of key principles that need to be brought to the table. First, the reason we have tollways on the road network is to enable major pieces of infrastructure to be built generations ahead of time. We are a government that is using taxpayer moneys today on the road network where there are no tolls to duplicate roads such as the Pacific Highway, the Princes Highway and the Great Western Highway. We have made great investment in western Sydney roads in and around the Western Sydney Airport.

We are investing in major pinch points across the road network. It is billions and billions of dollars—in excess of \$25 billion—over the next four years. I say to those opposite that, despite this principle of being against toll roads, when they were in government they had responsibility for a number of toll roads across the network. The Cross City Tunnel has gone broke twice. Lane Cove Tunnel is financially distressed to the point where the motorway is not working in the way it should be. For those opposite to claim they are against tolls, as they do, is wrong. When they were in government they understood the necessity of building infrastructure generations in advance and the importance of having tolling concessions to finance that infrastructure today and have it paid off over many years so the Government can continue to use its balance sheet to build hospitals, schools, police stations and fire stations, and provide services. That is the first principle to which we adhere. Secondly, in terms of toll-free periods, as the Minister, I can introduce a toll-free period now; I do not need legislation.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Do it.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Just hang on, Ms Cotsis. I note there is a Central Coast member present in the Chamber.

Ms Liesl Tesch: Three, in fact.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We have three members here from the Central Coast who are opposed to NorthConnex.

Mr David Harris: That is not true.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We will get to that in a minute, because they cannot have it both ways—on one hand, they say, "We are opposed to the financing" and, on the other, say, "But we support it." That is what they are doing.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: That is exactly what this bill is seeking to do. The first point is that a Minister can introduce a toll-free period; we do not need to legislate. The second point is obviously those opposite do not know about the pricing of risk when it comes to contracts. The counterparties who sign these contracts are not going to be particularly pleased, and will factor in the cost of Labor's bill—if it is passed—in their future contracts. There is an argument that what those opposite are seeking to do through this bill is override existing commercial arrangements. They are seeking to override existing commercial arrangements that have already been put in place. Imagine what the effect will be in terms of pricing risk into those contracts. Unfortunately, that is something those opposite do not understand—as evidenced by their record when it comes to toll roads that went broke.

In terms of road safety, WestConnex is yet to be completed, so the toll-free period under the bill would force a Minister to potentially put a toll-free period into a half-constructed toll road and put people at risk. I am trying to avoid having a very long queue of cars on the incomplete WestConnex project, if it was to be applied to the M4 East. That is one of the reasons why this bill should not be before the Parliament. It poses financial risks and risks to commuters.

In terms of affordability, I do not think that there is a member in this place who does not support the noble cause of trying to reduce costs on families. I see where Labor is going in that noble cause, but the reality is there are measures already in place to assist motorists when it comes to the cost of tolls—not just for those 20 per cent or 30 per cent of motorists who use the road for a toll-free period and then stop using it afterwards. We have put in place measures to help people with that. Motorists who spend more than \$811 during the previous financial year are eligible for half-price registration. Motorists who spend more than \$1,352 during the previous financial year are eligible for a full reimbursement of their registration costs.

It is not just those cost-of-living measures that we are offering to families, particularly those in western Sydney. The member for Mulgoa is in the Chamber and she will say that people can get a raft of rebate benefits through Service NSW. It would not matter if it was for electricity, registration for toll road users, benefits for families, sporting benefits for kids or recreation benefits; there is a raft of measures. As a government, we are focused on cost-of-living pressures on families and that is why we have that measure for toll roads. We also still have cashback on the M5, and anybody who is in hardship can go to Transurban and be supported, particularly through the COVID period. These measures are in place, so what is the bill doing?

In essence, it wants to rush an extra 30 per cent of motorists onto toll roads knowing that they will walk away from them at the end of the toll-free period. The Leader of the Opposition is not going to stipulate a time period and is just going to leave it to me, the Minister. I can put a toll-free period in now if I need or want to, because I have the ability to do that. This bill is trying to appease the NRMA and improve the profitability of Transurban. Well, that is nice. The arguments really are not that strong. It is fair to say that NorthConnex was an unsolicited proposal to government. For the benefit of those opposite, the tunnel has been in the hands of Transurban and its builder. Initially, one decision made for the project was to build a 70-metre shaft underground to lower equipment, rather than buy up residential homes to build the project.

Transurban hit hard geology when it did the project and it led to some challenges in its building. In recent weeks, the advice that I have been given through the agency is that there have been challenges in the software and the commissioning. That is not uncommon. I am sorry to tell everyone that. Around the world, when this type of infrastructure is built, these things can happen. The ability of Transurban to get teams of people together to resolve those issues has been affected by COVID. It is hopefully only a matter of weeks before we have it open. I have not been given an exact date yet, and it is up to Transurban to indicate that to me, to the community and to the people of Central Coast who are going to benefit from the project. Hopefully it is not far off. I think that is really good news for people because even the members opposite from the Central Coast know that Pennant Hills Road is hardly the best road in the country for congestion. It is certainly going to bring a lot of benefits for businesses.

Our freight companies and heavy vehicle operators are facing some recognised challenges. I understand that, but the reason that these toll roads exist is to reduce the amount of time that trucks travel on the road network. One of the benefits is maintenance. I think around 21 or so traffic lights were taken out on Pennant Hills Road. Stopping and starting at all of those traffic lights creates a lot of wear and tear on vehicles. There will be a 15-minute travel time benefit as well. Time wise, there are value and cost benefits. We understand that. There is a benefit in terms of maintenance—less stopping and starting of vehicles and less pressure on brakes. There is a very real safety benefit that comes with getting trucks off Pennant Hills Road and into the tunnel, which was part of the decision-making process in the years that have gone by on this project. Those opposite need to consider that when they argue their case.

Our \$57 billion program is looking to generate 130,000 jobs over the next four years but, as I said, financing and infrastructure are bolstered when toll roads are part of the mix because we deliver toll roads years and generations ahead of time. That is incredibly important. Over the years, those opposite opposed to WestConnex. I would ask them to reconsider their position on NorthConnex. Now that these projects are being realised, it is only fair that they put their hands up and say that they were not quite right on their position on them. These projects are going to change lives. Having toll roads means funding for roads is freed up to save lives, particularly in the country where there are unfortunately way too many road deaths. I ask every member to consider what life would be like if we did not have these motorways in place. Imagine how our existing road network would work now. Imagine how Bexley Road, Forest Road and King Georges Road would work if we did not have the M8 and the M5 working together. I appreciate where Opposition members are coming from, but in this case they are on the wrong track. The Government will not be supporting the bill.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (12:07:23): I speak in favour of the Roads Amendment (Toll-free Period) Bill 2020. The Labor Party has never opposed NorthConnex, and to suggest otherwise is dishonest and not true. What we are calling for with the bill is a short toll-free period for people to get used to the road and work out how much it may or may not cost them to use this new piece of infrastructure. When I posted this toll-free period idea on Facebook a month or so ago, over 3,500 people were supportive of it. The ABC ran an article after a discussion on a local radio station, and there was a massive response in favour of a toll-free period. People on the Central Coast have been waiting a long time for this road. In a way, they see it as a bit of a reward because for years they have put up with construction and delays while the road was being built. I am not complaining about that because we have got to build roads, and it will cause some inconvenience.

If a motorist was using NorthConnex daily for return trips, a month of a toll-free period would save the average car driver \$320 and the average truck driver \$970. Cost is a consideration for people. Once NorthConnex opens it will cost about \$7.91 per car for a single journey. That is nearly \$16 per day. If people travel into Sydney on the M1, use NorthConnex, use the M2, go through the Lane Cove Tunnel and then travel over the Sydney

Harbour Bridge, the cumulative toll charges will be significant. When trying to work out a budget—particularly during a pandemic when people are already struggling and when families may have lost an income—it makes sense that people should have the opportunity to get used to the new toll measures.

A normal commuter using the new NorthConnex tunnel from the Central Coast doing a return daily trip for 48 weeks a year—taking four weeks off for annual leave—will be charged \$3,796.80 a year. If they drive a truck or a bus under the same circumstances, the cost will be \$11,390.40. In her contribution, the Leader of the Opposition talked about a rally that was held a couple of weekends ago at Observatory Park in Pennant Hills.

Debate interrupted.

Motions

HOSPITAL PARKING

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (12:11:46): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Appreciates all the indispensable frontline workers in New South Wales hospitals.
- (2) Recognises workers' morale has been improved by the implementation of free parking for staff at hospitals.
- (3) Urges the Minister for Health and Medical Research to continue the successful free parking scheme for all New South Wales hospitals.

It is the little things that make us happy. When the COVID pandemic first hit New South Wales, our valiant healthcare staff were at the coalface. They make us happy. It was not just the doctors and nurses treating patients and testing for COVID that kept the hospital open; it was also the cleaners, caterers, administration staff, parking attendants, security staff, engineers and tradies. I particularly thank all staff at the John Hunter Hospital and the Calvary Mater Hospital in my electorate. I put on record the incredibly hard work that the Minister for Health and Medical Research has done on a daily basis in dealing with the pandemic. The advice and assistance that he has provided me and my staff is truly appreciated.

One kind gesture from the Government that has meant a lot to all of our healthcare workers is the elimination of parking fees at hospitals. Parking costs are significant for local hospital workers, with kitchen staff and cleaners on lower wages often feeling the pinch. Access to free parking has lifted some of that pressure and it is an important morale boost for workers. Frontline staff must be able to access their place of work as easily as possible, and these measures ensure that this can happen. It is a difficult and unprecedented time, and we need to do everything possible to ease the pressure on the family budgets. Now is not the time to make money from the people who are dealing with this health crisis. The free parking initiative was welcomed and its news was eagerly shared by my many Facebook followers, and by many of my followers on other social media channels. Rebecca, a nurse at the John Hunter Hospital, said:

Thank you. It is the only reason I got parking this year. It saves me sometimes long walks in the rain and at night when I am already tired enough.

Vicky, who also works at the John Hunter Hospital, said:

The free parking will make a huge impact on the bottom line of my family. My husband has lost his job, as has my daughter who still lives with us. I would have had to have given up the parking to save some money, which would have meant walking long distances to the hospital.

The union representing many workers in the New South Wales hospital system, the Health Services Union [HSU], worked closely with the Government to bring this important initiative to fruition. Secretary of the NSW branch of the HSU Gerard Hayes said:

These changes have gone a long way to ensure that our health workers are well supported during the COVID pandemic. This is a stressful time for our hospital staff, who are doing vital work to keep the community safe. Overworked staff can ill afford the additional financial stresses at this time of serious health concerns.

Those are just some of the hundreds of comments and messages that were sent to me. For many families, the money saved is spent at local small businesses, who as we all know have struggled due to COVID. Since the virus hit in February, more than 40,000 Hunter citizens have lost their jobs, with many thousands more surviving on JobKeeper or JobSeeker payments. We know that the situation is the same across New South Wales. The Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey estimates that 21,500 people in the Newcastle local government area were unemployed in June. This is the highest figure since the bureau began regional reporting in 1998 and is 1,900 more than the previous record, set in May. Those numbers will climb further as JobSeeker and JobKeeper payments subside, people return to the labour market and zombie businesses fail.

We know that many people in our community are faced with extreme financial stress at this difficult time, and that includes many families of healthcare workers. There is still a long way to go to defeat the COVID virus. We need to do all we can to ease the burden on them, as they have performed above and beyond all of our needs. I nicely, kindly and graciously ask the Minister for Health and Medical Research to continue this successful free parking scheme for all New South Wales hospitals. It is a little thankyou for the hard work that our hospital staff put in, and we know that they appreciate it. We want to show all hospital staff—particularly those at the John Hunter Hospital and the Calvary Mater Hospital—that they are appreciated by members of the House.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (12:17:52): I note that the Minister for Health and Medical Research is present, and I am sure that he agrees that we need free parking at the new Tweed Valley Hospital. The Government committed to it and I am not going to back away from it. I am putting the Minister on notice right now.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Thank you, Geoff. I appreciate that.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: Now go and do some work! I compliment the member for Wallsend. She has always exhibited a great deal of kindness, compassion and understanding, and her work on this issue is another example of that. I congratulate her. I too support our frontline workers. From Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant to our contact tracers, public health workers and doctors and nurses—everyone has been outstanding. I was recently invited by the Health Services Union [HSU] to its thankyou for food service staff. I attended, and I must admit that I had a very good morning tea. Peter Hall, the union delegate out that way, does an outstanding job representing the rights of union members. Well done, Peter. Goodness me, I have spent two days praising those on the other side!

A diverse and multiskilled team of professionals are providing essential healthcare services to the people of New South Wales during the pandemic. In addition to their usual duties, healthcare professionals are providing treatment and support for people who are suffering from COVID-19 as well as delivering the help needed by those undergoing rehabilitation and recovery. When the pandemic was declared, NSW Health workers acted immediately to ensure that health services were ready and able to respond. We see this time and again. Once again, we owe them a great deal of credit. The collective effort is continuing to ensure that the State is prepared and ready to respond to any scenario. The New South Wales Government appreciates the effort of our frontline healthcare workers during this time and acknowledges the stresses they experience in responding to COVID-19.

Our healthcare professionals are among the best in the world and it is critical that our frontline workers can access their place of work as easily as possible in this unprecedented period. To support New South Wales healthcare workers during this time, the New South Wales Government has arranged accommodation and free parking. Free parking at New South Wales public hospital car parks has been available to healthcare workers since 10 April 2020. This initiative was intended to make life easier for our doctors, nurses, allied health workers and other hospital staff, including cleaners and security, who make sure our hospitals run smoothly. Following the announcement made by the New South Wales Premier and Minister for Health and Medical Research, hospitals across New South Wales implemented several measures to manage capacity and increase access to free parking for New South Wales healthcare workers.

The initiative provides support for healthcare workers and is intended to ease the burden on hospital workers during COVID-19. The uptake of this initiative by New South Wales healthcare workers at New South Wales hospitals has been strong, with staff providing positive feedback. The New South Wales Government has also been liaising with local councils to see how they can expand parking options for hospital staff during this period, such as by removing timed parking around hospitals. I thank local councils that have assisted by improving access to suitable car parking for healthcare workers around New South Wales public hospitals. The temporary free car parking for New South Wales healthcare workers at New South Wales public hospitals is continuing, as dedicated healthcare workers continue to respond to the needs of the people of New South Wales during COVID-19.

Supporting healthcare workers through this response to COVID-19 is extraordinarily important. I am sure I speak for everybody in this House—and I know your background as a nurse, Madam Deputy Speaker; well done for that—in saying that we are in awe of the way they turn up to work and look after us all. I recently had pneumonia and attended hospital. It is a daunting process when you front to emergency and say, "Yes, I'm experiencing flu-like symptoms and I have a fever," and they respond, "Stand over there in the corner, Mr Provest, till we get all ready." I cannot honour them too much. I see them time and again. The HSU food service workers and security workers are the real unsung heroes. I praise nurses and doctors but the support service staff are also essential. They all work as a team. I have been canvassing for a trial of stab-proof vests for security officers. I am pushing very hard for that. We held an inquiry and I think we should do all we possibly can. I will probably get hit by the health Minister when I walk out of the Chamber.

I was quite amazed to see in the hospital a drawer of knives and implements that had been confiscated. We are talking about knives and small swords. It is amazing. The stress those security workers experience is intense. To my way of thinking, providing security officers with a stab-proof vest is very similar to construction workers being supplied steel-cap boots and helmets by their employers. It is a tool of trade. We hear a lot in the media about personal protective equipment and its supply. Unfortunately, I have seen in our hospitals some of the results of the use of illicit drugs such as ice. I was in a hospital when a young girl was in an isolation ward with her parents crying outside because she was a different person from the one they brought up. I believe all workers in our hospitals, not only doctors and nurses, do their best. Everyone loves free parking. You have to get there early to get it at most hospitals, but I endorse the Government's actions and those of the member for Wallsend in moving the motion. I commend the motion.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (12:24:43): We all applauded the New South Wales Government's action on 10 April 2020 when it was announced that healthcare workers would have free access to parking at public hospital car parks to ease the burden on our hospital workers during this health crisis. I commend the member for Wallsend for moving this motion. It is a well thought-out motion and affects every person in every electorate. The implementation of this moratorium on the payment of parking fees has made a huge difference to the bottom line for many healthcare workers, especially those working in lower-paid jobs and particularly in my electorate of Shellharbour.

The savings made by healthcare workers because of free parking will not be squirrelled away; they will be spent in local shops and supermarkets, buying the things their families need. The types of savings we are talking about here will make a difference for a household that is struggling. This initiative will not bring in a great deal of money but it might fill the tank or buy something that eases the constant pressure of working in an industry where the risk of contracting COVID-19 is not a vague threat but a constant workplace hazard. Many of our hospitals are located in densely populated areas, where street parking is often at a premium. It can be very difficult to find parking within close proximity of a hospital if you cannot afford to park in the hospital car park. The provision of free parking at hospitals for these frontline employees should be more than just a one-off; it should remain as an ongoing provision of their employment.

We learnt very quickly the value of our frontline healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The provision of free parking has made it quicker and easier for them to access their workplace, which is necessary. It saves those who simply cannot afford to pay daily parking fees the time it takes to search much further afield for limited parking on the street. We are talking not just about doctors or nurses, as the member for Tweed highlighted, but about the cleaners, caterers, administration staff, parking attendants, security, engineers, tradies—and the list goes on. Those health workers and others need the quick and affordable access that free parking provides. It is something the general public will acknowledge is a good idea on an ongoing basis.

The Government is in a position to continue to provide free parking—an initiative that should remain even when all other subsidies such as JobKeeper and JobSeeker are wound back. The initiative is extremely popular and is often shared on social media. When the pandemic passes it will leave the Australian economy in a deep recession, with many of the employment areas cited impacted seriously. Those frontline workers have worked tirelessly to provide the level of service that has gone a long way towards keeping virus transmission at such a low level. I ask that the health Minister recognise this service in perpetuity by leaving in place the Government's very successful free parking arrangement for all New South Wales hospitals. In closing, if the Government were really fair dinkum about its feelings for public sector workers it would lift the wage freeze and pay all our public healthcare workers their 2.5 per cent increase.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (12:28:18): I too thank the member for Wallsend for moving this motion. I acknowledge her words and those of the member for Tweed and the member for Shellharbour. Something like 145,000 health staff are employed across 15 local health districts. The member for Shellharbour referred to the diversity of roles. As she said, it is not just the doctors and nurses; it is also the cleaners, the assistants and the people who work behind the scenes in the executive teams. All of them have faced immense pressures and challenges over the past few months, so I put on record my thanks to them.

At the border, where I am from, we get Victorian television. A commercial that has been played over the past month or so shows parents of a nurse talking about the stress and anxiety they feel for their daughter as they see her go to work. I want to thank not only the healthcare staff but also their families for their support. When we talk about the diversity of roles, I point out that in the middle of the term "healthcare worker" is the word "care". That is the important part of that phrase. I recognise the good work and care that is being provided by people in the healthcare sector during these challenging times. It is important that they get our support.

Support is being provided from the \$2.3 billion funding the New South Wales Government announced in March to protect jobs in the community, with Health receiving \$700 million from the fund. That money has gone towards increasing intensive care unit [ICU] capacity, preparing for the scale up of COVID-19 testing, purchasing

additional ventilators and medical equipment and the establishment of extra testing clinics. The Government also delivered 89 new ambulances as well as additional lifesaving defibrillators and laryngoscopes as part of the stimulus. Last year the Minister for Health and Medical Research visited my electorate of Albury and noted the use of video laryngoscopes at Culcairn or Holbrook. Technology is always evolving and we need to ensure we evolve with it and provide the funding. Further investment has been made towards medical research and vaccine trials, the commercialisation of research products and industry partnerships.

In April the Government announced the fast-tracking of health infrastructure projects to ensure we had additional hospital and ICU capacity available. The projects included a recovery ward at Royal North Shore Hospital, the Westmead Central Acute Services Building, the Macksville Hospital development, the Mudgee Hospital redevelopment, new ICU beds at Dubbo Hospital and, of course, free parking. The New South Wales Premier and Minister for Health and Medical Research announced that New South Wales healthcare workers would have access to free parking at New South Wales public hospitals. It is important to note that the temporary free car parking is still being offered, given the vital role that healthcare workers are playing in response to COVID-19. There are dedicated funds to ensure that doctors, nurses, paramedics and other hospital and ambulance staff can stay out of home in hotels and motels. That is important when we consider the safety of family members as well. I thank the member for Wallsend for bringing this important motion to the House and I thank all members for their contributions. Most importantly, I thank our healthcare workers and their families.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (12:32:10): I support the very good motion brought by the member for Wallsend stating that we appreciate all the indispensable frontline workers in New South Wales hospitals, recognising workers' morale has been improved by the implementation of free parking for staff at hospitals and, most importantly, urging the Minister for Health and Medical Research to continue this successful free parking scheme for all New South Wales hospitals. When the decision on free parking was made in April, it was welcomed throughout the community. It was particularly welcomed at the John Hunter and Calvary Mater hospitals in Newcastle, which are located in the Wallsend electorate. These staff work hard. During the pandemic there is no time that they have not worked harder, given the extra-long hours, double shifts and extra days they have all worked.

At the John Hunter Hospital, in particular, parking is a huge problem and many workers have to park a long way away in neighbouring suburbs. They have long walks in the dark late at night. This change has been very positive for them. It can take up to an hour to get out of John Hunter Hospital at the entry-exit points during the peak hours. Staff who want to get out onto the road sit in their car in the staff car park and inch forward. It takes them a very long time. Parking is problematic. We look forward to the inner-city bypass and extra entry and exit points. NSW Health paid for the exit point because Transport for NSW would not pay for it. It is a massive issue in our area.

Many workers have told me that not having to pay for parking and the convenience of parking at the hospital is a plus. On 15 June I visited the John Hunter Hospital for National Cleaners Day and I noted that the free parking was a huge boost to staff morale. I met with cleaners, members of the Health Services Union, nurses, people from the Nurses and Midwives' Association, security guards, doctors and administration workers. They were all so appreciative. The pandemic is far from over and we ask the Government to continue the free parking. It is not just for the convenience and safety, as the member for Shellharbour indicated, it is also for the hip pocket.

For people who may not earn a great deal, such as cleaners and administration staff, every dollar adds up every day, every week, every month, every year. It is important for them to have extra money when JobKeeper is being decreased and unemployment is increasing to the highest it has ever been in the Hunter, with 21,500 people unemployed—the highest rate since figures were recorded in 1998. Inevitably that number will climb. Any money we can put back into the pockets of hardworking people on the front line is welcome. I commend the Government for this terrific initiative and, along with my colleagues, I ask that the Government continues to provide free parking.

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (12:36:11): I thank the member for Wallsend for bringing the motion to the House. The New South Wales healthcare system is the largest in Australia and amongst the best in the world. There are more than 145,000 health staff employed across 15 local health districts, three specialty networks and 228 public hospitals, with our dedicated teams tending to more than 1.9 million admitted patients on average each year. They are pretty amazing statistics. I thank all those healthcare workers who are involved in this system. The New South Wales Government has provided an excellent response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are incredibly grateful for the ongoing efforts of our health staff. Each day thousands of staff walk through the doors of our health facilities to ensure that our community receives the best care available. When the pandemic was declared our health workers immediately went into action to ensure that health services were ready and able to respond. Extensive planning goes into a response like the one we have now and it takes a collective effort to

make it effective and successful. To this day NSW Health continues to work on ensuring the State is prepared and ready to respond to any outbreak scenario.

The New South Wales Government appreciates the challenges experienced by our frontline healthcare workers during this time. It is critical that our frontline workers are able to access their place of work as easily as possible in this unprecedented pandemic and we have taken steps to ensure that is the case. The Government is doing everything it can to reduce the stress on our healthcare staff, who have been working around the clock responding to COVID-19. It has undertaken a number of measures to support our healthcare workers during this time, including the provision of accommodation and free parking. As announced by the Premier and the Minister for Health and Medical Research, from 10 April 2020 healthcare workers have been provided access to free parking at New South Wales public hospital car parks.

This initiative was intended to make life a little easier for our doctors, nurses and other hospital staff who are working hard to keep us all safe. Included are administration staff and cleaners, everyone involved in our healthcare system. This means all rostered staff, from doctors and other frontline workers to cleaners and security staff who make sure our hospitals run smoothly, are not charged for parking at New South Wales public hospital car parks. Following the announcement, hospitals across New South Wales implemented a number of measures to ensure access was available to accommodate free parking for our workers. The free parking supports healthcare workers and is intended to ease the burden on hospital workers during COVID-19. The initiative has been widely used by healthcare workers across New South Wales hospitals. It has given healthcare workers more accessible transport options while responding to COVID-19. I am proud to be part of the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government, which is delivering for our frontline services in this unprecedented time.

The Government has also liaised with local councils to see how they can support hospital staff during COVID-19, whether it be by removing timed parking around hospitals or exercising discretion with parking fines. I commend local councils that have assisted by improving car parking for staff around our hospitals. The temporary free car parking for New South Wales healthcare workers at New South Wales public hospitals is continuing, given the ongoing response to COVID-19. Supporting healthcare workers through this response is important. I thank the member for Wallsend for moving this motion to recognise the support provided by the Government to our healthcare sector during this pandemic.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (12:40:22): By leave: I thank the House for permitting me to contribute to debate on this motion. I acknowledge and thank the member for Wallsend for moving this very important motion, which allows members in this Chamber to debate a topic that each of us can appreciate. For many months members have had hospital staff raise their concerns with respect to parking and access to hospitals. Indeed, in the current pandemic we all appreciate that those staff members are now provided with free parking. I note that the member for Wallsend brings some fantastic motions to this place. I congratulate her on her incredible efforts, not only for her electorate but also for the entire State.

This motion acknowledges not only the collective effort of the State Government, the Opposition and the various general managers, management and staff of all our hospitals across our State but also our unions—the Health Services Union and the Nurses and Midwives' Association, the members of which advocated for free parking at New South Wales hospitals. In conjunction, there has been a campaign to work with councils to ensure that, where possible, free parking is provided outside hospitals and hospital staff are not fined unnecessarily as they support our communities during this very difficult period. I acknowledge that collective effort in this instance.

I note that paragraph (3) of this motion calls on the Government to ensure that we continue free parking at hospitals. I understand that there is no end date in place at this stage. It is important that all members continue to pressure the Minister to ensure that free parking continues for as long as possible. That is critical. We respect our hospital workers—not just doctors and nurses but cleaners, specialists and support staff, who ensure that we survive this very difficult and unprecedented period we face in this State and our nation. I also acknowledge the general manager at Bankstown Hospital, Peter Rophail, and all the staff and union organisers there. I acknowledge Federal shadow local government Minister Jason Clare and Federal shadow health Minister Chris Bowen, who both advocated for councils to provide additional free parking to support the State Government initiative to provide free parking in public hospital car parks.

I remind the House that my electorate is still waiting for its \$1.3 billion new hospital, which was announced pre-election. An expression of interest process has just been completed and a little map has been drawn that indicates the boundaries of Stacey Street, the Hume Highway, Canterbury Road and Henry Lawson Drive. We have the map and we have the expression of interest process; we just do not have the money or the new hospital.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The member for Bankstown should talk to the member for Shellharbour to see how long it takes to get a hospital.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (12:44:48): By leave: I put on record my appreciation of the work done by the frontline workers in our health system. I particularly mention the health workers in the electorate of Myall Lakes and the great work done by all the staff at the Manning Base Hospital, from the nurses and doctors through to security, domestic and ancillary staff. I give a shout-out to the general manager, Jodi Nieass, and the medical director, Dr Osama Ali, who are doing a fantastic job with the hospital. The New South Wales health system is the largest in Australia and amongst the best in the world. More than 145,000 staff members are employed across 15 local health districts. The electorate of Myall Lakes is in the Hunter New England Local Health District. Its CEO, Michael DiRienzo, has just finished—or I am hoping he has finished—a clinical services plan for the \$100 million stage two redevelopment of Manning Base Hospital. That clinical services plan is also looking at a public hospital at Forster.

Not only does the State have 15 local health districts, it also has three specialty networks and 228 public hospitals, with dedicated teams attending to more than 1.9 million admitted patients on average each year. The Manning Base Hospital in the great electorate of Myall Lakes has over 30,000 presentations a year. Since we came to government we have completed the \$40 million stage one redevelopment of the Manning Base Hospital, which includes new oncology, renal dialysis, medical imaging and—importantly—a new free car park, which was great to see. Since we came to government we have increased the recurrent funding for the hospital. It has gone from just over \$50 million a year to about \$100 million a year. That means we have employed more specialists, such as two oncologists, a new anaesthetist, a new emergency specialist, a new psychiatrist and a new obstetrician, amongst others, as well as more nurses.

We are not only putting in the bricks and mortar, with \$40 million delivered, but also providing more services. I am going on a tour of the new medical imaging facility on Monday. The two go together. We do not just want bricks and mortar; we also want a better service. That is what we are providing. As I said, the hospital is looking after an ever-increasing number of presentations. Only about 2.5 per cent of those 30,000 presentations get referred to further specialist treatment at the John Hunter Hospital in the electorate of the member for Wallsend. Any way you look at it, in health we are doing fantastic things.

I note the Government's COVID response. NSW Health has received an \$800 million funding boost, \$60 million for out-of-home accommodation for health workers, \$25 million for medical research and free parking for health workers. Members are speaking about that in this debate. The response has seen one of the highest testing rates in the world, additional ICU capacity—doubled and working to double again—the establishment of acute respiratory and COVID-19 clinics and a \$388 million elective surgery blitz. The response has also removed restrictions to allow pharmacies to operate 24/7 during this time. Sometimes members forget about that. I commend the member for Wallsend for her motion.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (12:49:10): By leave: I support the motion moved by the member for Wallsend. I am continually amazed, although not surprised any more, at how connected the member is with her community. She continually brings motions that are relevant not just to her community, but also to many of us. This morning's motion is one such. For a long time now, along with my colleagues representing the electorates of The Entrance and Gosford and the Federal member for Dobell, I have stood shoulder to shoulder with our healthcare workers on the Central Coast advocating for free parking. Gosford Hospital currently is the only hospital that charges for parking and, like the member for Tweed, Wyong hospital is getting an upgrade. Part of that upgrade is a car park but, unfortunately, because we are included in the Sydney metropolitan area, that will have a charge. I am 100 per cent with the member for Tweed in saying that we want to keep parking at Wyong free for staff.

Wyang hospital is isolated and does not have good public transport links, so staff are pretty much forced to drive and park there not just for convenience, but also for safety. For a long time we have argued that charging staff for car parking is almost like a tax on their jobs or a reduction in their salary, because their wages do not rise to compensate for the cost of parking. We welcomed the Government's decision in April to introduce the free parking period. Like other members, I focus squarely on paragraph (3) of the motion, which calls for the free parking scheme to continue. I know the pressure is on the health Minister because he wants all his money going into health services, and I think we all agree with that. New facilities and infrastructure cost money. But staff do not have a choice; they have to go to work every day.

I think the Central Coast Local Health District employs about 7,500 staff members. That is a significant number of people. It is one of the biggest employers, if not the biggest single employer, on the Central Coast. Andrew Montague and his team do their best to keep up with our growing population and with some of the more complex needs that our area has, not just in acute health care, but also in general community health care. They do a great job. They are under pressure all the time, as are all of our hospitals. As our population ages, those pressures do not go away. From the time that Labor was in government—and all governments experience this—I know that keeping up with the necessary funds is very difficult because the more our health technology improves, the more

expensive it gets. The equipment costs more and more, but we are seeing the results of that in people living longer and having better health outcomes.

Parking might seem like a little thing to some people, but as I said to our health workers, when their wages are capped where they are at the moment—they will not get their 2.5 per cent rise—having to pay for parking puts extra pressure on their family budgets. I congratulate the health Minister and the Government on the decision to introduce free parking but, as other members have done, I draw the House's attention to paragraph (3) of the motion, should continue in perpetuity.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (12:53:26): By leave: I thank the House for granting me the opportunity to make a contribution. I congratulate the member for Wallsend. It is difficult to disagree with much of what the member for Wallsend comes up with. She is a wonderful member. As I said last week, she is the wisest person sitting on the benches opposite and we should always listen to her. This is an opportunity for me to support her motion. My electorate contains a number of hospitals, including those at Gloucester, Singleton, Muswellbrook, Scone, Merriwa, Denman, Murrurundi and Quirindi. None of those have paid parking for staff, which in some respects is a very fortunate position for our staff to be in. However, there are other challenges that they face. Since this Government came to office in 2011—and certainly in my time—it has made significant contributions to upgrading the various hospitals in my electorate. We have upgraded, in two stages, the Singleton Hospital and provided more services so local residents can get the care that they need as close to home as possible.

Muswellbrook Hospital has received major upgrades in two stages, including the emergency department and the extension of other facilities within that hospital. I continue to support the community and lobby the health Minister for stage three upgrades, and I will continue to do so until we get confirmation that that will go ahead. Recently, upgrades to the Scone hospital were completed, and upgrades to the Gloucester hospital were also completed fairly recently. Those upgrades create a situation in which our local community members can receive care as close to home as possible, with upgraded technology. The clinical staff working within those hospitals have the ability to obtain live, real-time advice from specialists right around the hospital network, which is critical when people need that clinical assistance as soon as possible and they do not have the opportunity or the ability to travel to another area.

We are in the process of upgrading the Murrurundi hospital under a particular program. In fact, it will almost look like a new hospital; for all intents and purposes, it will be a new hospital. That is currently under construction. The people of Murrurundi are very excited about that upgrade nearing completion—as are the staff, who are committed to our community. From memory, that upgrade will be completed about midway through 2021, so we are not too far off. Over the years we have seen major upgrades to the Merriwa and Denman hospitals as well, under the Government's multipurpose service model. I congratulate the Government and the member for Wallsend. More importantly, I congratulate and thank all of our medical staff in the Upper Hunter.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:57:40): By leave: I record my support for this motion, by which the House appreciates all the indispensable frontline workers in New South Wales hospitals, recognises workers' morale has been improved by the implementation of free parking for staff at hospitals and urges the Minister for health to continue the successful free parking scheme for all New South Wales hospitals. I thank the member for Wallsend. The motions she brings before this House are always thoughtful. They reflect her professionalism and dedication to her task and her care for her area, as well as her care for the people of New South Wales. In my own region, the Central Coast Local Health District is the single biggest employer in the region. I acknowledge its work and particularly the work staff are doing in the current pandemic situation, with the pressures it has imposed upon them and their families. The temporary free parking arrangements have been widely welcomed by the workforce. I acknowledge my eight colleagues on the Central Coast. We have been campaigning very hard because until recently, parking at public hospitals on the Central Coast was free. Recent redevelopments have seen the introduction of paid parking for staff, patients and visitors.

The community showed a tremendous amount of support and backed our campaign against paid parking in public hospitals. We have to recognise that a contribution is appropriate; however, for many people that contribution can be regressive. People do not choose when they are going to go a hospital. Workers in hospitals, given their shift work, often cannot choose alternate means of transport to get to work. If the cost of parking at a public hospital is too great, it can be regressive for somebody like my father, who has retired from the workforce but was formerly a cleaner at the Mater Hospital in Newcastle. Parking fees have a greater impact on the income of cleaners at a hospital than they do on a surgeon employed at the same place. That needs to be borne in mind when considering the setting of fees and arrangements for parking at public hospitals.

I acknowledge the work of the HSU in representing its members and the wider community in terms of appropriate arrangements for parking at public hospitals. I mention officials Brad Ernst on the Central Coast and Adam Hall, who regularly visit our area. We love our hospitals on the Central Coast. We fought hard to stop those

public hospitals being privatised by the current Government. I thank the member for Wallsend for moving this motion. I commend the motion to the House.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (13:01:14): By leave: I congratulate the member for Wallsend for bringing this motion to the attention of the House and for providing members an opportunity to speak about the work performed by our healthcare professionals and what the Government has done to support our healthcare professionals during COVID-19 this year. We can all agree that 2020 has turned out to be a year that we did not expect at the commencement of a new decade. We had bushfires continuing into the new decade, flooding, a global pandemic and now a recession, the worst almost in living memory, that has hit not only New South Wales and Australia but globally. There are significant challenges that our community is facing but this Government is well skilled and committed to face them head on.

I commend the Liberal-Nationals Government which, in responding to the very quickly moving situation of the global pandemic, has acted quickly, efficiently and creatively to support our healthcare professionals. In other sectors of our community, the Government has acted to soften the impact of isolation and the forced closures of businesses in an attempt to reduce the community transmission of COVID-19. I want to thank everyone who has done something to protect our community. They could be people working in a paid profession, working at home or educating their children through online learning. Whatever they have done to protect this community from the global pandemic, I thank them.

On 17 March 2020 the New South Wales Government announced \$2.3 billion funding to protect jobs and the community, of which Health received \$700 million. A lot of that Health funding boosted the capacity, skills and resources of our healthcare system in order to prepare for what was really an unknown at the time. The money went towards an increase in intensive care unit capacity, the purchase of additional ventilators and medical equipment and the establishment of extra testing clinics. I commend Nepean Hospital for establishing pop-up COVID-19 testing clinics throughout the community. It also advertised the clinics very well, with signs on all the major roads indicating where the community could access the pop-up clinics for testing rather than burdening the hospital.

The Government also responded to support for our hospital staff by providing free car parking and support for accommodation as the uncertainty over the safety of our healthcare professionals was in question. Hospital staff who were concerned they would bring the virus into their home were given the opportunity to stay in hotels or other accommodation to keep their families safe. The Government responded in a number of ways. I congratulate the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government on its response in this unprecedented and fast-moving global pandemic. I most certainly express the appreciation of the House for our valued allied healthcare professionals who have acted valiantly in their dedication to keeping our community safe. They really are the heroes of the story. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (13:05:26): By leave: The New South Wales healthcare system is the largest in Australia, with more than 145,000 health staff employed across 15 local health districts, three specialty networks and 228 public hospitals. Each year our dedicated teams tend to more than 1.9 million admitted patients. I will start by expressing my personal thanks to our healthcare heroes for their ongoing efforts in leading the State's response to COVID-19. It might be a bit strange for a Liberal member of Parliament to do so but I acknowledge the leadership of the Health Services Union [HSU] and its members and delegates, some of whom I have met at St George Hospital on two or three occasions.

Every day of the year staff arrive at more than 200 healthcare facilities to provide support, care and often life-saving intervention for our loved ones. NSW Health responded quickly to COVID-19 following the declaration of a pandemic with a rapid response from the Chief Health Officer, Dr Kerry Chant, to the contact tracers—who have done an outstanding job in New South Wales—and public health units through to our doctors, nurses and other frontline healthcare staff. Everyone has been outstanding. A diverse and multi-skilled team of professionals is providing essential healthcare services for the people of New South Wales during the pandemic. The New South Wales Government appreciates the effort of our frontline healthcare workers during this time and acknowledges the stresses experienced in responding to COVID-19. Our healthcare professionals are among the best in the world and it is critical that our frontline workers can access their place of work as easily as possible in this unprecedented period.

To support New South Wales healthcare workers during this time, the Government has arranged accommodation and free parking. Free parking at New South Wales public hospital car parks has been available to healthcare workers since 10 April 2020. This initiative was intended to make life easier for our doctors, nurses, allied health workers and other hospital staff, including cleaners and security, who make sure our hospitals run smoothly. The Government has undertaken a number of measures to support New South Wales healthcare workers during this time, including measures that maintain access to the workplace, such as the provision of

accommodation and free parking. I am proud of the way that both the Government and the community have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I note in particular the extensive additional investment in Health to get us through this challenging time. On 17 March 2020 the Government announced \$2.3 billion to protect jobs and the community. Health received \$700 million from this fund. This money was dedicated to increasing the capacity of intensive care units, preparing for the scale up of COVID-19 testing, purchasing additional ventilators and medical equipment and the establishment of extra testing clinics. The New South Wales Government has been liaising with local councils—certainly that is the case with the Georges River Council—to ascertain how parking options can be expanded for hospital staff during this period. For example, it may be possible to introduce timed parking around hospitals. I thank the general manager of Georges River Council, Gail Connolly, and the council's outstanding mayor, Kevin Greene, who assisted by improving access to suitable car parking for healthcare workers around New South Wales public hospitals. I acknowledge the member for Wallsend who moved the motion and commend her for bringing this important subject to the attention of the House.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (13:10:15): In reply: I thank the 12 members who contributed to debate on the motion: the members for the electorates of Tweed, Shellharbour, Albury, Newcastle, Goulburn, Bankstown, Myall Lakes, Wyong, Upper Hunter, The Entrance, Mulgoa and Oatley. The number of members who participated in this debate represents the gratitude of every member of the House for all the staff in all the State's hospitals, from the busiest Newcastle and Sydney hospitals to the hospitals in the most remote, rural and regional areas of New South Wales. The members of this House appreciate the work they do. I send a quick thank you also to the Minister for Health and Medical Research. No-one would question how hard the health Minister works. He has worked exceedingly hard.

Bravo to the member for Tweed for a very gracious speech. Members, especially Labor members, will support him in his quest to have free parking at the Tweed Hospital. The member for Shellharbour also applauded the health Minister and referred to the vital support we need to provide to low-paid workers, especially low-paid workers in our hospitals. The member for Albury and the member for Goulburn referred to the immensity of the healthcare system with its 145,000 staff, which shows how important healthcare workers are, and referred to the diversity of roles for hospital staff and their importance in our community, with which I agree. The member for Bankstown referred to the collective efforts of our communities, our workers, unions and councils, as well as the Government, that have been imperative in making this difficult time as successful as possible. In particular, the member for Bankstown praised the Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital.

The member for Newcastle highlighted the importance of parking. He declared it is something that is overrated but it can drive us nuts if you cannot find a parking space. Opposition members look forward to the completion of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass providing better access to the hospital. The member for Myall Lakes expressed appreciation for the Manning Base Hospital, which does a wonderful job, and in common with all members of this House and the community, he looks forward to the future Forster hospital. The member for Wyong referred to the Gosford Hospital and referred to the isolation of the Wyong Hospital. He emphasised the importance of parking for hospital workers because they are forced to use their cars if they cannot use public transport to get to work. Accessible and free parking around hospitals, especially for isolated areas, is a real necessity.

The member for Upper Hunter reminded me that country electorates have many hospitals. In his case there is a hospital in Gloucester, Singleton, Scone, Muswellbrook, Merriwa and Murrumbidgee. The electorate of the Northern Tablelands also has many hospitals. The member for Upper Hunter referred to how pleased he is with the upgrades to the hospitals at Singleton, Muswellbrook, Gloucester and Scone. The member for The Entrance referred to the extensive area served by the Central Coast Local Health District and the hard work of the staff. The member for Mulgoa referred to the challenges we face in 2020. The member for Oatley aptly described health workers as "healthcare heroes", which is what they are. During the debate all members who participated spoke about how much they love the Health Services Union and the Nurses and Midwives' Association. That is wonderful. We love them all. I thank the Government for supporting this important motion. We all want to say thank you to our healthcare workers. They all deserve our praise, especially in this difficult time. Bravo to them all. I urge all members to support the motion.

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

Motion agreed to.

*Bills***BETTER REGULATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2020**

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with an amendment. I order that consideration of the Legislative Council's amendment be set down as an order of the day for a future day.

*Motions***NATIONAL AUSTRALIA BANK URALLA BRANCH**

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: I seek leave to amend notice of motion (general notices) No. 1245 by inserting at the end of paragraph (3):

- (4) Expresses concern at the contempt shown by the "big four" banks to many other communities across New South Wales by closing branches.

Leave granted.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (13:15:02): Accordingly I move:

That this House:

- (1) Condemns the poor conduct of the National Australia Bank [NAB] which during COVID-19 pandemic has shut its face-to-face service delivery at its Uralla branch and has failed to communicate with the Uralla Shire Council and the community about plans to reopen the branch.
- (2) Notes the crucial importance of the NAB branch to the local economy in Uralla and its customers that travel from rural properties and those that cannot bank online or on mobile devices.
- (3) Calls on the NAB to reopen and resume operating its Uralla branch and not use the COVID-19 pandemic as an excuse to close another rural branch.
- (4) Expresses concern at the contempt shown by the "big four" banks to many other communities across New South Wales by closing branches.

Debate interrupted.

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

*Bills***SUPERANNUATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2020****Assent**

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Governor notifying Her Excellency's assent to the bill.

*Question Time***ICARE**

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:17:39): I direct my question to the Premier. Will the Premier inform the House why she failed to act when the Treasurer's icare agency awarded over \$18 million of contracts without tender to a company that does election printing for the Liberal Party, donates to the Liberal Party and is run by a former president of the Liberal Party?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:18:09): I acknowledge the question from the Leader of the Opposition. While it was not ruled out of order, I say to her that just because she made a number of implications and assertions in her question, that does not mean I accept those implications and assertions. However, I am pleased to respond.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition has asked the question. She will cease interjecting and listen to the response.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I stress once again that I do not accept the implications or assertions in the question. However, I will say that, appropriately, a statutory review of the organisation is being undertaken by an eminent legal expert. That process will provide the Government with any recommendations, if necessary, in relation to any changes that are needed.

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING POLICY (KOALA HABITAT PROTECTION) 2019

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (14:19:07): I direct my question to the Acting Deputy Premier. Will the Acting Deputy Premier inform the House if National Party members of Parliament supported property developers undermining the Government's koala planning policies?

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (14:19:37): I will first take a moment to acknowledge the Deputy Premier. I will start by wishing him, on behalf of everyone in this place, a speedy recovery. As members of Parliament we work irregular hours, we spend hours away from our homes, we spend time away from family and friends and regional members do not have the luxury of going home each night to our families. It is not easy to ask for help. I commend the Deputy Premier because he has done that. Politicians are not immune to mental health issues. The Deputy Premier has put up his hand to say that he needs some time out. I know that everybody in this place wishes him the very best for a speedy recovery.

I acknowledge the comments made in this place. We should make sure that we are okay and that we look out for one another. This is an irregular environment and can be quite bruising from time to time. We all agree that is part of politics but we must respect that we are also individuals. I know that comments in this place wishing the Deputy Premier the best have been well received. In particular, the member for Lakemba wrote on his Twitter account a special message wishing the Deputy Premier the best for his recovery. I wanted to place that on the record today.

In relation to the question, we are looking at a State environmental planning policy that will protect koalas and will allow the koala population in New South Wales to thrive while also allowing regional communities to thrive. Landholders and farmers will be able to undertake the activities they do each and every day. As a government, we will have robust discussions on matters that are important to our communities. We are elected to represent our communities and that is exactly what the National Party members do and will continue to do. We will stand up and fight for them. The Liberal Party is no different. On this side, we will not play your muddy, dirty, grubby games. We will stand up for the communities we represent. I am confident we will achieve a balanced outcome.

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING POLICY (KOALA HABITAT PROTECTION) 2019

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (14:22:33): I direct my question to the Minister for Planning. Will the Minister inform the House whether he considers it appropriate for the member for Myall Lakes to make representations on the State Environmental Planning Policy (Koala Habitat Protection) on behalf of Ray Stack, a property developer, a major Coalition donor and a director of the first company to be convicted of illegal land clearing resulting in the deaths of koalas?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (14:23:01): I thank the member for Port Stephens for her question, which makes a number of allegations and assertions. I do not necessarily accept the premise of any of those assertions. I simply say that in relation to the role of members of Parliament to make representations on behalf of their communities, that is ultimately something that we are all in this place to do. If any of us has constituents who have concerns with any element of government that relates to public policy and who ask us, as their elected representative, to make representations on their behalf, then we have a role to bring those concerns to the attention of the appropriate authorities. After all, that is what members of Parliament do. We listen to our communities and we listen to their concerns and we pass them on so that they can be addressed in the appropriate forum. I believe that is something that all of us in this place do and we shall continue to do because that is precisely—

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The Minister was asked whether he considered it appropriate to receive representations on behalf of a developer, a donor to the party and a gentleman who was the director of a company that was the first company convicted of land clearing that resulted in the death of koalas. I have the letter that was sent to him from Mr Bromhead, on behalf of this developer.

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that the Minister is being generally relevant to the question.

Mr ROB STOKES: The member for Port Stephens has just restated her question with a slightly different construction. She asked whether it was appropriate for me to receive representations. What an utterly ridiculous thing to ask. Of course my role is to receive representations from local members of Parliament. That is part of the job of a Minister. The assertion that it was somehow inappropriate for me to receive a representation is outrageous.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I will hear the point of order, although I gave you a good go last time. I do not want to hear the same point of order.

Ms Kate Washington: It is Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that the Minister is being relevant.

Ms Kate Washington: The question is whether or not the Minister considers it appropriate for the member for Myall Lakes to be making representations on behalf of developers.

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

Mr ROB STOKES: I am a little confused, because I have now been asked three separate questions relating broadly to the same issue. I assume this means it is the end of question time because the Opposition has used up its quota by taking points of order.

Ms Kate Washington: It is because you won't answer the question.

Mr ROB STOKES: I have answered it in several different ways because you keep asking me a different question. Back to what I understand was the question, which was whether it is appropriate for me to receive such representations, of course I will receive representations. That is the role of a Minister. I receive representations from all members and I ensure that they are dealt with in the appropriate manner.

PAYROLL TAX

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (14:27:02): I direct my question to the Treasurer. Regional New South Wales has been suffering the combined impacts of drought, fires, floods and COVID, and as a result business and employment in many sectors has suffered. With the need to generate more jobs and economic activity in the regions, will the New South Wales Government consider a five-year pause or—better yet—a complete abolition of payroll tax in regional areas?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:27:35): I thank the member for Barwon for his question and for his interest in the economy. It has been a very tough few years for people in regional New South Wales. When it comes to payroll tax, we want to do everything we can to alleviate the burden on businesses, particularly during the pandemic. We want to ensure that they retain as much cash flow as possible to keep as many people employed as they can during this time. As the member for Barwon knows, we have come through not only bushfires and drought, as he has said, but also the COVID pandemic. New South Wales is in a much stronger position than other jurisdictions because of our strong fiscal and economic management in the past.

Mr Clayton Barr: You sold everything.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The member for Cessnock interjects, but I note that at the last election the Labor Opposition ran on a platform of increasing taxes on small businesses.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It ran on a platform of opposing the increase in thresholds for small business. We had a policy in the budget prior to the last election to increase the payroll tax threshold from \$750,000 to \$1 million. Earlier this year we brought forward the increased threshold from \$900,000 to \$1 million to ensure that more businesses fell out of having to pay any payroll tax at all and that all businesses pay less payroll tax. To the question, which is a good one about regional New South Wales, it is something that I have considered and will continue to consider as we approach the budget and as we move forward.

The Government's position to date has been to have a consistent payroll tax regime across the State. That means that, unlike other jurisdictions, we have increased that threshold. I have had a particular focus on our border communities and I have had a number of representations from them. One issue that arose in the Thodey review of federal financial relations was that having different payroll tax regimes across the country provided difficulties, particularly in regional border communities. I think the Board of Treasurers should focus on that.

Since the pandemic we have made a number of changes regarding the deferral and waiver of payroll tax. In addition to increasing the threshold to \$1 million, which we brought forward, we announced \$450 million for the complete waiver of payroll taxes for businesses with payrolls of up to \$10 million—and a number of those businesses would be in regional New South Wales. That is for the remainder of this year. In the stage two announcement that the Premier and I made we deferred payroll tax for businesses with payrolls over \$10 million for six months, and we have deferred up to a total of \$4 billion. Those businesses with payroll tax of \$10 million or less also received an additional three-month waiver on the payroll tax relief provided in the first package.

We will continue to do everything that we can to alleviate the burden on businesses, whether that is in metropolitan Sydney or regional New South Wales. We are all in this together and we want to make sure that businesses have the capacity to keep as many people working as possible during this time. Governments cannot make these decisions just when disasters like bushfires, droughts or a pandemic occur. To the member for Cessnock's point, the tough decisions that we made on asset recycling incentives prior to the pandemic has allowed us to invest productive infrastructure and has driven economic growth. We also cut taxes prior to the pandemic and that has put businesses in this State in a much better position than those around the country.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: That has ensured a strong foundation so that moving forward in this budget, and budgets further down the track, we can continue to alleviate the costs of businesses right across our State.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:32:34): My question is directed to the Premier. In the past week the Chief Government Whip's office has been raided by ICAC, a member of the Coalition has defected, there have been major breaches of both Cabinet confidentiality and the Ministerial Code of Conduct, and the Premier was found to have personally changed the guidelines of a quarter of a billion dollar grant fund to benefit Coalition electorates. Does the Premier really call this strong and stable government?

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Cessnock that he is on very thin ice.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:33:36): While I acknowledge the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition, I do not agree with the imputations in it. When families, communities and individuals look at what is happening around Australia and the world, I hope and believe they have confidence that the New South Wales Government has steered them through one of the most difficult times in the history of our State. It has been a difficult period for every single citizen. I was just mentioning to Minister Marshall that it was August last year when we went to Glen Innes and observed the devastating bushfires that started in northern New South Wales. Then over the summer period we witnessed one of the most devastating bushfires in the history of our State. It was a catastrophic event that did not have a definition until after it had occurred.

Then immediately from Australia Day, our State was on high alert and went into emergency mode to deal with the COVID virus. It has been a difficult time. It has stretched and put pressure on all governments around the nation, especially ours. I thank the agencies, individuals and frontline workers who have supported our communities during this time. The measure of a successful government is how it supports communities, how it improves and ensures quality of life, and how it keeps people safe and in jobs. Pleasingly, last month we recovered 50,000 jobs lost during the pandemic. But every member of my team is concerned about the impact in March when JobKeeper is no longer with us, given that hundreds of thousands of workers potentially will be unemployed.

I assure the community that every single member of the Government, whether they are a backbencher or a Minister, has come together—as I know members of the other place have—to make sure that we provide communities with the best information possible to support them at this time. This has been and remains the focus of the Liberal-Nationals Coalition, a government that I am proud to lead. We will continue to support the people of this State, we will not get distracted and we will not let them down when they need us most.

The SPEAKER: I will clarify something from the chair, because it is in my capacity as Presiding Officer to do so: Independent Commission Against Corruption officers did not raid Parliament House yesterday. ICAC acted in accordance with protocols that are long established and they were given permission to enter Parliament House.

Committees

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE VALUER GENERAL

Reports

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH: I table the report of the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer General entitled *Thirteenth General Meeting with the Valuer General*, dated September 2020. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**Reports**

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES: I table the report of the Committee on Children and Young People entitled *2020 Review of the annual reports and other matters of the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People and the Office of the Children's Guardian*, dated September 2020. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**Reports**

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: I table the report of the Committee on Transport and Infrastructure entitled *Electric buses in regional and metropolitan public transport networks in NSW*, dated September 2020. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

*Business of the House***SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sitting to postpone the commencement of private members' statements to permit the consideration of the Legislative Council amendment to the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Bill 2020.

Motion agreed to.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

Artarmon Village Amenities Block

Petition requesting the Government cause the construction of a permanent amenities block at Artarmon Village to provide comfort and private ablutions for the citizens, workers and residents of New South Wales who attend Artarmon Village, received from **Ms Gladys Berejiklian**.

*Bills***BETTER REGULATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2020****Consideration in Detail****Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendment.***Schedule of amendment referred to in message of 24 September 2020*

No. 1

GOVT No. 1 [c2020-132A]

Page 18, Schedule 7. Insert after line 7—

7.3A

Residential Tenancies Act 2010 No 42

Section 228A Definitions

Omit "15 October 2020" from the definition of moratorium period.

Insert instead "26 March 2021".

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (14:40:08): I move:

That the Legislative Council amendment be agreed to.

It gives me great pride to welcome the passage of the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 in its current form. An important role of government is to ensure that legislation remains up to date, and that provisions are fit for purpose and are in line with the original policy intent. The bill achieves this by ensuring strong consumer

protections by inserting specificity into powers, clarifying legislative intent and reducing uncertainty, clarifying and streamlining regulatory requirements and removing unnecessary red tape.

The Government amendment passed today in the other place will ensure a key COVID-19 tenancy measure is able to continue. The Government is seeking a six-month extension to the measures put in place to help residential tenants and landlords disadvantaged by COVID-19. We are committed to this extension as the pandemic remains ongoing and its impacts continue to be felt across our community and in the economy, which is now in recession. There remains a need for the Government to provide stability to the residential tenancy market, support parties to continue tenancies and occupancy agreements where possible, and limit any unnecessary social movement to minimise health risks while the public health orders are in place.

The amendment will allow for COVID-19-impacted tenants to apply to terminate a fixed tenancy agreement early in situations where a landlord will not negotiate, or where it is necessary to avoid financial hardship. The Government amendment will ensure that COVID tenancy measures can extend to 26 March 2021 in their entirety. This extension, along with the other moratorium measures, demonstrate the Government's commitment to supporting tenants and landlords through these unprecedented times. I thank my team, which has done an outstanding job making sure that the most vulnerable in our community are looked after. I thank Cormac O'Bryne for his efforts in conducting research for the bill. I commend the amendment to the House.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (14:42:44): I offer the support of The Greens for the amendment. It is essential that we see the extension to pandemic protections put in place for renters in New South Wales. Many thousands of people have been calling for an extension to and expansion of these rental protections. I acknowledge the work of the Tenants' Union for all that it has done to push and support the Government during this time to make sure that we have protections in place so that nobody finds themselves evicted in the middle of this pandemic. The Greens support the amendment, but recognise that the pressures and insecurities felt by renters existed before the pandemic, and they will exist afterwards. I urge the Minister and all those looking at these measures—which provide security for people during this pandemic, and which include the very important provision for ending unfair no grounds evictions—to deliver on these protections. As the pandemic continues and as we suffer through very tough and difficult economic times, those protections will be needed.

It is important to recognise the report published by the Tenants' Union supporting renters through the pandemic, which identified that many impacted renters are struggling to engage their landlord in good faith negotiations. I am sure that all members would have had interactions with people who are finding this stuff. We know that the power imbalance is not great. Some are not persisting after their initial request is either rejected or ignored, or are withholding requests altogether because they do not have the confidence to continue and feel that they will not achieve a reasonable rent reduction. It is also reflected in the small numbers of impacted renters making use of the formal negotiation processes through NSW Fair Trading, which I appreciate are great. We need more strength and support for these mediations in other jurisdictions.

I ask that this Chamber and the Minister, who I acknowledge is present in the Chamber, work to follow the recommendations of that report to strengthen and build confidence in the framework around the negotiation process by providing the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal with the ability to set fair rents when a landlord has ignored a tenant's request for negotiations or the negotiations have broken down. If we are not able to provide the tribunal with that power, what will the New South Wales Government do to ensure that the current process is fit for purpose and taken up appropriately by tenants?

The other key area is the issue of financial assistance. When these rental reforms were first announced the Treasurer joined the relevant Ministers to announce concessions around land tax. It was announced as a \$440 million financial support package but obviously the land tax waivers and rebates have not been picked up in the same way. We all know there are challenges around that. I am not making a bad reflection on the Government as I know the pressures that were on it at the time to navigate this space in the middle of a pandemic lockdown. But we are now through that initial crisis period and we need to consider the fact that many people in New South Wales have either formal or informal rent debt that is financially strangling them.

People may have continued to pay their rent but they may have taken out an extra credit card to do it and now they have a massive credit card debt and cannot meet the payments. They may have avoided paying their electricity bill and other bills because they needed to prioritise paying rent, and now they have no way to catch up because they do not have the casual work that used to allow them to pay for those things. I urge the Government to examine this issue and—I really hope this is possible—see where we can increase the financial assistance for renters. That could be done through looking at the Government's Rent Choice scheme and expanding the COVID response. Hopefully, the Treasurer and Minister Ward can look at whether there are options around that. The Government could expand the eligibility for private rental assistance, introducing a rent relief grant scheme or a no-interest loan scheme to provide no-interest loans of up to \$3,000 to handle housing and related costs and debts.

We know that this is a massive challenge for so many in the community. We know that people are doing it tough. This pandemic has shown that people are only a couple of pay cheques from being homeless. That is a scary reality for us all in this State. We need to do all we can to provide the necessary financial support. We must remember any money that is paid directly as financial assistance and support to families and people who rent in this State is money that will immediately be put back into our economy—whether for the purchase of takeaway food or other items—which will help us through this crisis. I urge Minister Ward, the Treasurer and the Premier to do all they can to offer a financial assistance package to support renters during this time.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (14:47:56): I offer Labor's support for the amendment. I congratulate Minister Anderson on moving the motion today. As we all know, one in three people in New South Wales rents their home. It is absolutely crucial that we do everything we can to keep a roof over those people's heads in this time of pandemic. The \$140 million rental hardship package was passed in May this year. Under that package tenants can apply for rent subsidies of up to \$2,500, which will be paid directly to their landlords as credit towards their rent. We wanted to make sure that in light of the impacts of COVID we allowed people to stay in their homes and ensure landlords were not left high and dry.

The Government, along with the Labor Opposition and the crossbenchers, ensured that tenants were protected. As the member for Newtown mentioned, this was critical legislation and it is very pleasing to be here today to reinforce it. We have one of the most expensive rental markets in the world and people are struggling to keep a roof over their head. That is why the extension of this moratorium is required. Only a few months ago the Labor Opposition called on the Government to extend it, knowing that October—when the original moratorium was to expire—was just around the corner. We on this side have urged the Government to step up, and we are very pleased that it has extended the eviction moratorium, which offers hardship payments to tenants and landlords regardless of whether they pay land tax.

As I said, around one-third of people in New South Wales rent. With only roughly 20 per cent of landlords paying land tax, many mum-and-dad investors would have been left behind had this measure not been in place. It was critical. As we know, many people are still struggling to find work and to pay their bills. We on this side certainly do not want to see them evicted from their homes. This is a good measure that will go towards assisting those people who rent and their landlords. We are very pleased to support the amendment.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (14:50:36): In reply: I note the valuable contributions in this place by the member for Newtown and the member for Swansea.

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

Motion agreed to.

Private Members' Statements

LIVERPOOL ELECTORATE PUBLIC EDUCATION

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (14:51:27): I report to the House serious issues concerning schools and public education in Liverpool. Urban development in new-release areas obviously increases the need for new schools, as it does for other sorts of infrastructure. In addition to this, State-imposed density targets apparently applicable to Liverpool but not to parts of Sydney's North Shore mean dramatically increased numbers of residents, including a significant number of families with school-age children, are living in existing suburbs. Thirty-storey apartment buildings in the centre of Liverpool are an example of this, as are multistorey apartment blocks in suburbs such as Cartwright and along Elizabeth Drive and Hoxton Park Road. This increases the demand on existing schools and requires the development of infrastructure.

Residents of south-west Sydney are concerned at the lack of concrete action to match the provision of education facilities with urban development and growth. The residents of Edmondson Park, for example, have grown tired of hearing the mantra of "early planning" proceeding for a school in their area. As recently as 1 September, I received an answer to question on notice No. 3634 confirming the closure and relocation of the Mainsbridge School for special purposes, currently located next to Liverpool West Public School. It is being moved to be part of an existing school at Warwick Farm. The answer said the Mainsbridge site is to be "repurposed in order to meet local needs". The answer revealed the Government does not have the slightest idea what that is to be as "a decision has not yet been made as to the best use of the existing Mainsbridge School". A departmental spokesman was recently quoted as saying the new primary school at Liverpool and a major upgrade at Liverpool West are currently in design stage.

Those proposals, especially the former, have been kicking around for years in government media releases, with precious little actually happening. For a government that has privatised everything it could to allegedly build infrastructure, Liverpool has not seen much benefit—apart from a new toll on that old road known as the M5 East.

One important aspect of this issue is that new-release areas are being developed to greater densities than planned for when master planning was done by State government departments. There have been more medium-density developments and more big family houses on small plots than originally envisaged by government departments. This makes the problem of the provision of public education facilities even more severe. Even if the Government had properly planned for extra educational facilities, it probably would not have been enough, granted what the Government's planning decisions have allowed to happen.

Another thing that makes it harder is the Government selling off land reserved for public education. In one notorious example in the Liverpool area, land reserved for acquisition by the Department of Education for a public school was sold to a private operator. The first the local council knew of this was when the proponent of an alternative development contacted the council. As council's letter to the education Minister said, "Council is concerned that the Department of Education is now not planning construction of a public school on the site specifically set aside for this purpose and that council wasn't made aware of this change in policy by the department directly but rather through the proponent." I do not have a problem with the private operator in this instance, it has behaved rationally and properly in accordance with its interest. I do have a problem with the State Government flogging off land that was reserved for a public school in an area where there is a shortage of public school places. When the council raised this issue with the relevant Minister, it received the standard non-response from a Parliamentary Secretary.

In practical terms, this has all meant that many schools in the Liverpool area are over-enrolled. There are more students than originally intended. The level of over-enrolment in some cases is quite staggering. As at April 2020 the current enrolment at Greenway Park Public School as a percentage of the enrolment cap is 147.5 per cent, with eight demountables; Hoxton Park Public School is 132.8 per cent, with six demountables; Hinchinbrook Public School is 121.8 per cent, with five demountables; John Edmondson High School is 119.4 per cent, with seven demountables; Liverpool West Public School is 118.5 per cent, with seven demountables; Liverpool Public School is 113.1 per cent, with seven demountables; and Green Valley Public School is 108.4 per cent.

They are not the only ones. Chipping Norton Public School is 121.6 per cent, Wattle Grove Public School is 139 per cent, Casula Public School is 150.5 per cent and Dalmeny Public School is 180 per cent. Dalmeny has 21 demountables and Casula 13. Even those smaller numbers are a matter of concern because they reveal a systemic pattern across the region. The pattern reveals a disinterest in the provision of public school education infrastructure in south-west Sydney. It reveals a shameful government negligence and neglect, which has meant that facilities have lagged far behind growth. It exposes a government that, when push comes to shove, treats the residents of south-west Sydney as second-class citizens. The situation has angered local residents who want to know when areas zoned for schools will have schools built on them to relieve overcrowding in existing schools. One resident with a child at a local school that currently has 1,035 students said:

We have a large school population and the school was only built for 500 students—we keep losing playground space to demountable buildings.

She said whole-school events were not possible and they had to be staged over several days. The school pick-up and drop-off is almost unmanageable and there are all the traditional problems with demountables. The problem is that the Government is not taking this problem seriously and is treating the residents of south-west Sydney as second-class citizens.

COUNCILLOR CARMELO PESCE

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (14:56:33): I acknowledge and congratulate Councillor Carmelo Pesce, whose five years as Mayor of the Sutherland shire drew to a close at the mayoral elections earlier this week. Carmelo was first elected as mayor in September 2015 and re-elected in 2016 and 2018. He is a lifelong shire resident who attended De La Salle Catholic College Caringbah and now lives in Sylvania. He is the epitome of a hardworking small business owner, owning a shopfitting business and three cafes around the Sutherland shire. His father still runs the barber shop in the middle of Caringbah.

During his time as mayor, Carmelo worked tirelessly for the local community, often around 60 hours a week in mayoral duties. Councillor Carol Provan describes Carmelo as, "the most recognisable face in the shire", largely credited to his dedication to serving the community. I add that he has the most recognisable set of teeth in the shire. The member for Heathcote acknowledges that as well. If there is any kind of community event occurring in the shire, odds are Carmelo will be there supporting it—whether it is surf clubs, charity balls and dinners, sporting events, community precinct meetings or helping to feed the homeless on Christmas Day. In the past year Carmelo opened four new playgrounds in Como, Heathcote, Menai and Kurnell; helped launch the council's 3K Trees 2020 project, which aims to plant 3,000 new trees in the shire; spoke at Cronulla's famous Australia Day celebration; spearheaded the Sutherland Entertainment Centre's upgrades; provided support to South Coast

regions during this year's horrific bushfires; provided the GyMEA "Gorillas" Junior Rugby League Football Club with \$654,000 in upgrades; and attended the 2020 seniors lunch, just to name a few.

I have been fortunate to work closely with Carmelo on many projects in the electorate of Cronulla, either driven by the State Government with council support or vice versa. They include: the Tonkin Oval boat ramp upgrades; the Lugarno Avenue small boat ramp launch; the new rail bridge at Gannons Road, widening possibly the worst bottleneck in the shire to four lanes; the very popular Walk the Walls festival in Cronulla and Caringbah over the past two years, which aims at getting rid of unsightly graffiti and displaying fantastic street art; joining in with the Five Million Trees for Greater Sydney initiative; upgrading Cronulla Park; the shared path along the waterfront on Prince Charles Parade at Kurnell; the Woollooware Bay shared park; and extra parking in the Caringbah CBD.

Carmelo has also been very active in the shire using recycled materials to build roads. The shire now aspires to zero net carbon emissions. He led the community during the Kurnell tornado. He was very active during the bushfires over the past five years, including the dreadful fires in the Menai region. Carmelo is an important person who brings the community together. Each year at Kurnell the council organises the Meeting of Two Cultures on the anniversary of Captain James Cook's meeting with the Gweagal people at Kurnell. This is an important community event that brings everyone together. He has been very active in the refurbishment and opening to the public of the Hungry Point Reserve at the bottom of south Cronulla.

Politically the council is finely balanced. It has seven Liberal members, seven Labor members and one Independent member. A mayor who is collegiate and brings people together is required when a small number of people from different political backgrounds have to work in close proximity to each other. Carmelo has done that and earned the respect of all councillors. He has brought a very diverse group of councillors together. I have enjoyed working with him. He is a very collegiate, hardworking individual who brings everyone together. He can be extremely proud of his five years as mayor. I congratulate the new mayor, Steve Simpson, who was elected on Monday night and has been mayor for a term before. I also congratulate the new deputy mayor, Michael Forshaw, who represents A ward, which is almost exclusively in my electorate. I wish them and all councillors well for the remaining 12 months.

MODERN SLAVERY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:01:13): I want to discuss a significant issue that impacts on a number of people in western Sydney, perhaps hundreds, and certainly thousands in New South Wales, and a number I know personally in the electorate of Prospect—that is, modern slavery. Slavery has reinvented itself into modern forms and continues to harm people, their families and communities in every country in the world, including Australia. It is not the same as poor working conditions or low pay, although such conditions underpin and are foundational to modern slavery. Modern slavery is an umbrella term that refers to situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, abuse of power or deception. Vulnerable people are targeted and controlled by debts, threats, lies, manipulation, violence, withholding of wages and identity documents by organised crime who prey on their hopes and dreams for opportunities and a better life.

Coming into the House today members may have seen a QR code on the seats. If they have not scanned and clicked on it yet, I strongly urge them to do so. The QR goes to the "Slavery Footprint", a website that not-for-profit project War on Slavery has brought to my attention. It is a survey that takes a mere five minutes to estimate the number of slaves who work for you in the New South Wales business supply chain. I did the survey and was horrified to learn that the lifestyle my family and I live is responsible for keeping an estimated 63 people enslaved. Consider this: the phone in your pocket, the tea or coffee you drank this morning, the clothes you are wearing, the jewellery you or loved ones wear and the tinned tuna in your kids' school sandwiches. All these things and so many more will have slavery in their supply chains.

In 2018 an estimated 40 million people were enslaved globally. As the ABC *Four Corners* program noted on Monday night, this amounts to the combined population of London, New York and Tokyo, and is close to five times the population of New South Wales. Of those 40 million, 72 per cent million are in our region; 71 per cent are women; and a quarter of them are children. In New South Wales alone, 25 million are exploited in supply chains providing for our privileged lifestyles. Every number is a man, woman or child whom we have a responsibility to protect. The people of New South Wales do not want to be funding this \$150 billion-a-year crime.

The New South Wales Modern Slavery Act 2018 needs to be enacted now. We need to hold government and business accountable for their domestic and international supply chains in the same way we hold them responsible for occupational health and safety. The supply chains of many business entities and the State Government are multinational, multi-tiered and involve the production of goods and services in high-risk environments, where workers experience vulnerability and the rule of law is weak and often insufficient in protecting workers' rights. Even in developed countries such as Australia, structural, economic and social factors

contribute to the exploitation or enslavement of people, especially migrants, new arrivals and people on temporary visas.

In spite of these challenges, governments have an obligation to protect workers from human rights abuses by third parties, including by business entities. Together, government and businesses have a shared responsibility to ensure that an effective remedy is provided to those persons whose rights have been breached or abused. Businesses, industry bodies and sector organisations can play a critical role in preventing modern slavery and improving remedies for victims by partnering within civil society to provide information and advocacy to governments, which in turn will improve their ability to manage the risk of modern slavery in their supply chains.

Transparency is the key to ending this crime against humanity. This Parliament and the New South Wales Government have the opportunity now to help end this crime. Parliaments talk about carbon offsets and reducing our carbon footprint, but what are we doing to offset our slavery footprint? How do you offset the number of slaves who are working for you? The New South Wales Government can start that offsetting by enacting the Modern Slavery Act. This Act received a unanimous vote in favour in 2018 and is the strongest legislation in the world. It will be world-leading legislation if it is brought into force. I thank the House.

HEATHCOTE ROAD BRIDGE

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (15:06:40): This situation is clearly a case of the tail wagging the dog. When the local member, the Minister, constituents and road users send a clear message that the bridge over the Woronora on Heathcote Road should be four lanes wide, the message should be listened to and heeded by Transport for NSW. Instead, we have been ignored. Earlier this year in a private member's statement I spoke of a cut-through in the saga of the Heathcote Road bridge over the Woronora. Sadly, I have been misled. Recently a member from the other place took it upon himself to make a private member's statement on the issue. I find that a bit rich. All the way through the Wran, Carr, Unsworth, Greiner, Fahey, Iemma, Rees and Keneally governments there was no action on the Heathcote Road and this bridge. I remind members that this bridge and road have been in what were the Labor-held electorates of Bulli and then Heathcote for over 30 years. Not one inch of pavement has been touched, so members of that party cannot take some kind of moral high ground that they promised it or thought of it first.

Although this outcome is not what anyone who has to travel along this road bridge wants, the works will make the bridge wider and subsequent climbing lanes on either side of the bridge will make it much safer for road users. All meetings and documents pertaining to the bridge have always led me to the conclusion that the bridge would be four lanes wide. Plan after plan was discussed at meeting after meeting. More than eight years of my life were absorbed with delivering this infrastructure. With mounting serious accidents and deaths, the NSW Centre for Road Safety installed speed cameras and lowered the speed limit on Heathcote Road from 100 kilometres per hour to 90 kilometres per hour. Yet there are still accidents and deaths.

Long before I was elected in 2011 I was advocating the need for a "southern gateway solution" to achieve a safe, streamlined road from Heathcote to Liverpool and from Heathcote to WestConnex and the M5 along New Illawarra Road, allowing road users to either head west or into the city and airport. If members have travelled south from the Heathcote electorate they will have noticed major infrastructure being delivered at Albion Park, Shellharbour and the Berry bypass. These are vital upgrades that allow—and in fact encourage—residents in those areas to drive rather than use the very efficient rail connections. The volumes of traffic travelling from the south are only increasing. In peak hours the traffic from the south eventually reaches Heathcote shopping centre and grinds to a sickening halt at Oliver Street. From there, it is bumper to bumper through Engadine into the city.

I ask members to imagine local residents and road users being able to choose alternative ways through and around the Sutherland shire from the south, rather than travelling through the heart of the Sutherland shire. Imagine travelling from the south of Sydney and having the option to cut across country to the M5 and being able to access roads west to Penrith, the Blue Mountains the new Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport in the western suburbs. Imagine travelling by car from the south and being able to travel from the Princes Highway at Heathcote to Liverpool along a safe, separated road with four lanes all the way. Over 1,500 respondents overwhelmingly supported my call for action to petition the Minister for four lanes on the Heathcote Road bridge over the Woronora. The 1,500 letters from respondents have been delivered personally to the Minister, and I expect a response in good time.

But the New South Wales Government should not have to do this alone. With the construction of the Holsworthy intermodal nearing completion over the next few years—and, as I mentioned, the Nancy-Bird Walton Airport—this road infrastructure needs to be upgraded to cope with the increased freight using these roads. I call on my Federal counterpart Craig Kelly, the member for Hughes, to join me in seeking joint funding from the Federal Government to assist with the southern gateway solution. I have sent a letter to Mr Kelly and to the member for Cook, and Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon. Scott Morrison. The letter outlines my plan and

pleads the case for a Federal-State approach to achieve the goal of futureproofing this road for generations to come. Members should stay tuned for updates.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:11:32): I congratulate the member for Heathcote on his ongoing enthusiasm and dedication to the people of his electorate. Nowhere is this clearer than in his ongoing representations with regard to the upgrade of Heathcote Road and Woronora Bridge. I drove through his electorate recently and completely understand why this road and bridge need to be upgraded. I again congratulate him on his excellent community engagement, working with his community and explaining what is required at both State and Federal levels. I know that he has written to his Federal member seeking his support. This is how good representation is done at a local level, with grassroots delivery. I know the member for Heathcote will be absolutely committed to getting it done for his community.

BAULKHAM HILLS ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (15:12:25): I inform the House of recent developments in the Baulkham Hills electorate flowing from the record infrastructure investments by the New South Wales Government that will positively change the lives of people in my constituency. As members will be aware, the Government is making the largest investment in public education infrastructure in the history of the State. This has provided School Infrastructure NSW with the capability to deliver once-in-a-generation school buildings, major upgrades and maintenance strategies to ensure that every school-age child has access to high-quality education facilities at their local public school.

The effort made by tradespeople, builders and department staff in the Baulkham Hills electorate has been incredible, with the \$16.2 million major upgrade of the Excelsior Public School and the \$15.5 million major upgrade at North Rocks Public School now complete. I am pleased to update the House that the final business case for the major upgrade planned for Matthew Pearce Public School has been submitted to Treasury. The major upgrade will remove demountables and provide more places for local students in permanent, air-conditioned classrooms and upgraded core facilities. The next step involves finalising concept options to decide the best way to foster the development of teacher and student personal learning goals as well as future potential growth. I do not doubt that the final master plan will reflect a commitment to and investment in design excellence and deliver an engaging and attractive learning environment that local students and their families will admire for generations to come.

Members will also be aware of the recent announcement by this Government to fast-track the delivery of new commuter car parks for public transport commuters as part of the \$3 billion Infrastructure and Job Acceleration Fund. The fund coincides with a time when the New South Wales Government is delivering the largest transport infrastructure program in Australian history. The new commuter car parks will deliver around 8,000 car spaces across all locations, with the final numbers confirmed following site investigations and early planning. This is in addition to more than 10,000 commuter car spaces that have already been delivered throughout Greater Sydney since 2011.

I have received an update from Transport for NSW about the delivery of accessible public transport infrastructure for M2 commuters in the Baulkham Hills electorate. I am pleased to announce that, subject to community consultation, planning approval and land availability, Transport for NSW will construct up to 100 spaces adjacent to the M2 at Winston Hills. That is expected to start later this year and the spaces will be open to commuters in mid-2021. In addition, Transport for NSW will construct initially up to 135 new at-grade spaces at the corner of Barclay Road and Perry Street in North Rocks, subject to community consultation, planning approval and land availability. This is expected to start in mid-2021 and will open to commuters by mid-2022. Transport for NSW has advised me that its current intention to deliver up to 135 spaces will allow additional levels of parking to be added if required in the future.

Transport for NSW will keep the community informed about opportunities to provide feedback on the plans as the project progresses. Not only will the new car parks benefit the community by making it easier to catch public transport, but also the fast-tracked projects will employ around 1,000 people per day across all the sites in engineering, construction and administration roles. By making it easier for the community to access public transport, the additional commuter parking will reduce congestion on the road network. I thank Liberal councillor Andrew Jefferies for the work he has done on my behalf, as well as on behalf of the community, to ensure that these projects are seamless and that the community are well consulted on them. I applaud the New South Wales Government on providing high-quality, critical infrastructure, which is proof positive of our commitment to keeping people in jobs and business, while also enhancing the liveability of our communities across the State.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:16:04): I congratulate the Minister, and member for Baulkham Hills on his record delivery of school and road infrastructure for the good people of Baulkham Hills. The Minister keeps on keeping on and delivering for his electorate, from one end to the other. It is also great to hear about the

fast-tracking of the car park and the extra parking spaces. Obviously commuter hubs are a very important part of infrastructure in Baulkham Hills, and it is great to know that the Minister has ensured the planning and fast-tracking of that infrastructure in consultation with the community. I congratulate the Minister on all that he is doing to deliver for school students and commuters alike in the great seat of Baulkham Hills.

DUBBO GOLF CLUB

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (15:17:00): Today I speak about the Dubbo Golf Club, which has survived the drought and the COVID-19 pandemic and has continued to thrive. Going back a few years, the club was in a dire predicament financially. But thanks to some hard work, some difficult decisions and some assistance from the State Government and the game's regulatory authority, Golf NSW, things have turned around and the club has a growing reputation in the industry. From 17 December to 19 December this year, the club will host one of six regional qualifiers for the New South Wales men's open tournament, less than 10 months after it hosted a hugely successful New South Wales women's open. The men's regional qualifier had been due to be held a couple of weeks ago but was postponed from that September date due to the pandemic. It will have \$50,000 in prize money.

I am proud to say that local player Lachlan Jones has been included in the field, along with Dubbo Golf Club pro Craig Mears. It is fantastic to have locals included in such an important tournament. It follows a trend set earlier in the year when very talented Dubbo junior Ella Murray, who was just 14 at the time, was one of more than 150 players to compete in the New South Wales women's open. In August 2019 I wrote to Golf NSW and requested a place in the field for Ella. About five weeks before the tournament I was delighted to meet her at the course and give her the news that she would be competing. Of course, the world was a much different place back in February, when the women's open was played, but I place on the record just how successful that tournament was and what it meant to Dubbo and the region.

It brought 156 players from 31 countries to Dubbo for the very first time. As I indicated, we were very lucky to get the tournament played before the COVID-19 outbreak reached its worst stage. To give members an idea of the significance of the event, Dubbo was on show to players and supporters from 31 countries right across the world, including France, England, Germany, Sweden, Slovenia, Norway, Thailand, Denmark, India, Argentina, the United States, Belgium, Spain, Austria, Mexico, Finland, Iceland, Canada, Singapore, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan, Italy, Russia and more. The amazing cross-section of talented women from all around the world put Dubbo on the world stage. We got to show off everything we have to offer, including the amazing Taronga Western Plains Zoo Dubbo.

Prior to the tournament commencing, some of the players visited the zoo. They fed giraffes and other animals and got up close and personal with the legendary Norman the koala, who has greeted thousands of guests over the years. After 72 holes of amazing golf, Sweden's Julia Engström was crowned champion thanks to a brilliant tee shot on the par-3 18th hole that went within inches of being a hole in one. The popularity of the win could be seen as other players ran onto the green to spray her with champagne when she dropped the final short birdie putt to secure the title. It was a great day. I was there for that win, and it was a special moment not just for Julia but also for the entire community. It is worth noting that Julia also recently claimed the French ladies' open, but I am sure that her first win on the tour in Dubbo will always be a special one for her, with great memories of our region.

The women's event had some extra personal significance for me because in August 2018, on the day it was announced the event would be held in Dubbo, I was preselected as The Nationals candidate for the electorate of Dubbo and went to the course that day. I am proud to say that the New South Wales Government provided an enormous amount of support to ensure the event was a great success. A total of \$1.3 million in funding was provided to the Dubbo Golf Club to install a new dual-line irrigation system that provides better coverage of the course while using less water, as well as a disability lift for the clubhouse, which has now made it fully accessible. This was a once-in-a-generation project that will benefit the club and the city for many years to come. One of the most amazing things about events like the tournament is the way that people band together to get things done.

The club's general manager at the time, Rod Archer, who recently moved on to new pursuits, and operations manager Laken Carrett deserve high praise, as do president Niall McNicol, club captain Deb Murray and the board, who led the way. Lots of people behind the scenes made the event a real success, including course superintendent Michael Wherritt. Wherro and his greenkeeping team ensured that the course was in immaculate condition. Club members provided billeting for the vast majority of players. A dedicated band of volunteers did a mountain of work. Marshalling, ball spotting, scoring, car park control—you name it, they did it. It truly was a wonderful event that showed Dubbo and the wider region in a really positive light. It led to Dubbo Golf Club being selected to host one of the six regional qualifiers for the men's open, which I mentioned earlier.

This continued access to major events, coupled with an increase in membership throughout the pandemic, has established Dubbo as a major hub for golf in New South Wales. I look forward to the men's qualifier in mid-December and many more major events in the years to come.

The SPEAKER: I commend the member for Dubbo. I have visited Dubbo zoo with him and he is a great ambassador for the area. Next time I will have to visit the golf course.

ROCKDALE ELECTORATE ROAD SAFETY

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (15:22:19): I bring to the attention of the House a very significant issue hurting my community: the impact of antisocial behaviour and car hooning along the Botany Bay foreshore and throughout the electorate of Rockdale.

Mr Adam Crouch: Shame!

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It is a big shame. Anybody who has spent any time at Brighton-Le-Sands will know that for decades the area has been a magnet for souped-up cars and motorbikes. However, in recent years this behaviour has become more widespread and is impacting suburbs along our foreshore, such as Kyeemagh, Monterey, Ramsgate and Sans Souci, as well as suburbs further inland, such as Rockdale, Arncliffe, Banksia and Bexley. It has damaged roads, posed a danger to pedestrians and other road users, and caused incessant noise that keeps local residents up at all hours of the night. This issue is having a serious impact on the lives of people in my electorate, and it deserves attention from this Government. Over the past few years we have achieved a number of small victories, but it is clear that more needs to be done.

A few years ago former police Minister the Hon. Troy Grant came out to personally receive a 10,000-signature petition from my local community and to see just how bad the problems are along our foreshore. When he saw the issues we face, he committed increased resources from our local area command and the highway patrol to combat those issues. But the police cannot be everywhere at once and we need more permanent solutions. I have been proud to help deliver traffic calming on major local roads, such as Moate Avenue at Brighton-Le-Sands. Recently we successfully pushed to close off two problem car parks in Kyeemagh at night, but it seems like every time we make progress another problem appears.

I have written to successive roads Ministers identifying a number of major intersections that are sorely in need of speed and safety cameras, particularly at the corner of The Grand Parade and Bay Street, and The Grand Parade and Ramsgate Road. It has been incredibly insulting every time I have received a response rejecting these requests, despite the fact that these cameras would provide real benefits to my local community and raise revenue for the Government. I understand that Bayside Council has recently again made formal requests to the Minister for cameras to be installed at these two locations. I ask the Minister to actually consider this request with some common sense, rather than letting some bureaucrat with no knowledge of the local community make the decision, and recognise that this is a special case that deserves a response.

These are complex problems, and they require all levels of government to cooperate if we are going to combat the issues. The Environmental Protection Agency is responsible for noise pollution, but it has little to no capacity to enforce the law. Transport for NSW manages our State roads, but it seems to have little interest in how those roads are actually being used as long as vehicles are moving fast enough and nobody crashes. The NSW Police Force is responsible for issuing infringement and defect notices for offending motorists, but it has many other priorities and cannot always be there to deal with anti-social behaviour. Our councils have the management of our local roads, but are significantly restricted in the way they can manage these. What all this means is that there is a constant passing of the buck—nobody has overall responsibility to manage these issues—and as a result it is very difficult to get these agencies to work together to get anything done.

Our laws are also outdated and inadequate to address these problems. It used to be that when a defect notice was issued, car hooners would have to rush to a mechanic to have their mufflers reinstalled. But the increased availability of electronic mufflers means that even this trivial step no longer needs to be carried out, with offending vehicles becoming compliant again at the flick of a switch. Police need to be given the power to issue on-the-spot fines for vehicles that deliberately cause excessive noise, as well as a wider range of powers to confiscate cars for repeat offenders. This is a real problem in my community and a large number of parties need to come to the table if we are going to do something about it. I implore the roads Minister to seriously consider the request on his desk right now, to apply some common sense and to take action to help the people in my electorate of Rockdale.

CAMDEN ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (15:26:59): The Community Building Partnership Grants are a way in which the New South Wales Government invests in infrastructure projects that deliver positive social, environmental and recreational outcomes, while promoting community participation, inclusion and cohesion

within our local communities. The 2019 round of the Community Building Partnership was a wonderful opportunity to help the many fantastic community organisations that continue to make the Camden electorate a better place. The community spirit within every school in the Camden electorate is awe-inspiring to witness. A number of schools benefited from the Community Building Partnership Grants for projects that foster an even better school environment.

Aspect, or Autism Spectrum Australia, received \$10,000 to fund a meeting room for parents and therapists at Aspect Macarthur School at Cobbitty. I offer my best wishes and congratulations to Aspect Macarthur School and Mr Shahar Burla, the senior philanthropy executive who brought this fantastic funding opportunity to my attention. The P & C of the Yandelora School at Narellan were granted \$25,000 for shade sails. Those shade sails will allow the school, which caters for students with moderate to severe intellectual and physical disabilities, to hold a lot more outdoor lessons and activities. I congratulate the Yandelora School on receiving this grant, particularly P & C president Steven Hooke, and principal Jacqueline Lockyer and her team.

Mater Dei School at Cobbitty received a grant of \$20,000 for a new vehicle for young people with disabilities. I have visited Mater Dei School on numerous occasions and seen firsthand the benefits this vehicle will give young people with a disability to access community and work experience programs. I congratulate chief executive officer Mark Raue, director of development Mrs Catherine Jeffcoate and the rest of the teaching, support and administration team at Mater Dei School on having been awarded this grant. The Camden Primary School's P & C received a grant of \$25,000 for a playground upgrade to create a nature play space. I had the pleasure of visiting its opening earlier in August where I saw firsthand the benefits of the nature play space. I congratulate the Camden Primary School P & C president Hayley O'Donnell, principal Jason Hawker and his team.

Mount Annan Christian College received \$25,000 for a college play space, which was built in the design of a pirate ship. Its success with the students was clear to see when I visited the school to officially open the play space. Well done to Mount Annan Christian College, principal Gabi Korocz, head of operations David Chehade and their team. I also congratulate the Leppington Public School P & C, principal Christine Easter and her wonderful team on being awarded \$20,000 for a synthetic grass children's play space for the students. The Bringelly Public School P & C will undertake a facelift of Bringelly Public School with its \$25,000 grant. I congratulate the P & C president Guerino Di Mascio, principal Sharyl Scott and the team on this exciting revamp for the school.

The Elderslie Public School P & C was awarded \$21,000 for shade sails, covered tables and chairs. I acknowledge P & C president Tracey Petruszenko, principal Melissa Clarke and her team for their advocacy and I congratulate them on receiving this grant. Likewise I acknowledge and congratulate the Bellfield Group from Bellfield College at Rossmore on receiving a grant of \$20,000 for a covered walkway cantilever pergola between the junior and senior campus. I particularly congratulate Bellfield Group chief executive officer Dr Sam Jebeile, business support officer Rachel Chomapoy, head of junior school Jennie Harold, head of senior school Mouina Ramadan and their team. As I said earlier, the community spirit within every school in the Camden electorate is amazing, and with a number of new schools on the way I look forward to seeing it continue to grow. It was my pleasure to take part in the 2019 Community Building Partnership grants for these schools and I congratulate all successful applicants.

KOGARAH WAR MEMORIAL POOL

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (15:32:12): I speak in defence of an important part of the St George community: the Kogarah War Memorial Pool. The Kogarah War Memorial pool at Carss Park has been an institution in my electorate since 1965 and generations of local kids have learnt to swim there. Like over 10,000 locals who live near Carss Park, I signed the petition to save the pool from a proposed closure foreshadowed at the time by Georges River Council. My colleague the member for Rockdale also signed it.

Importantly, I note that when the New South Wales Government went ahead with its plan to merge Hurstville and Kogarah councils, the then Premier promised the people of New South Wales lower rates, enhanced and expanded public services and better representation. This was supposedly due to the magic of economies of scale where we were supposed to see increased services in our local communities. Instead, many residents are watching as local facilities close, in particular, this pool. The effect on the community of closing the pool—and I am sure that the member for Rockdale would agree—has been overwhelmingly negative against the council's decision.

The pool had been paid for by multiple generations of ratepayers over four decades and it was not for this council to permanently close it. Indeed, it was the responsibility of the council to repair it and to ensure its continued use. Local would be aware that a leak in the structure resulted in leakage into the Georges River about 12 months ago. The response to that occurrence should have been an immediate remediation program at the site. After all, when something is broken you fix it. When the council has an asset that requires fixing, it should be

fixed. Instead, we have seen an extraordinary sequence of events whereby the council has announced the permanent closure of the pool and a very expensive ratepayer-funded study into an alternative pool at another location.

Eventually a decision was made to build another aquatic centre that would cost something in the order of \$70 million within a stone's throw of the closed facility. The situation now is that we have a council with no money to pay for a pool that it is advocating for on the site of a beautiful park that it proposes to destroy in defiance of the wishes of nearly the entire community. It would be of interest to the House to know that this community aquatic centre also serves as a war memorial. Following the Second World War our founding fathers looked for practical constructions to honour our war dead. There were already obelisks and structural war memorials in most suburbs throughout our cities and towns, and libraries, boulevards, pools and schools were their legacy to us. Frankly, no-one has the right to tear them down.

Today I signed a pledge to save the Todd Park and the Carss Park pool. In doing so I join more than 2,000 of my fellow citizens who have signed the pledge since it was launched just a few months ago. The signatories include many high-profile sports people who have brought honour to the St George region and Australia, including Olympic gold and bronze medallist Michelle Ford, Sonny Bill Williams, Dick Caine who trained 17 Olympic and world champions including Michelle Ford and Susie Maroney, Ironman and triathlon world champion Greg Welch, two-time world triathlon champion Emma Carney, Wallabies player Phil Kearns, world boxing champion Anthony Mundine and Janelle Elford—to name just a few. Those world-class athletes stand together with 2,000 mums, dads, grandparents, teachers, volunteers, coaches and residents who are united against the proposal by the Georges River Council to demolish the pool.

The pledge is an initiative of the Carss Park Pool and Todd Park Association—an organisation that brings two passionate community groups together with a single common goal. The first organisation is the Save Carss Park Pool, which is led with energy and commitment by Elise Borg and Natalie Mort. For just over a year they have pleaded with the St George council to reopen the pool. The second organisation is the Protect and Preserve Todd Park Association, which understandably opposes the destruction of the open space, playing fields and bike tracks at the park where construction is proposed. The construction is unwanted, oversized and unnecessary. It is just too expensive. I thank Karina McDougall and Dima Chmeisse for rallying their community behind this most important issue. The community is not going away. Carss Park Pool cannot close.

RAISE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (15:37:14): I speak again about Raise Youth Mentoring, or simply Raise. Raise is a valuable service for young people who struggle with a range of personal issues, both at school and at home. Mentors are selected by Raise to provide safe spaces for open discussion about issues that concern these young people. This allows them to talk to an adult who is not family and access valuable caring support from outside established family and social environments. Mentors are selected to match each child's needs and the outcomes of all the relationships are rigorously evaluated by the organisation.

Raise Youth Mentoring has been shown to provide positive outcomes for both mentors and mentees. Most importantly, the mentees improve their engagement with school or employment and become more involved in their communities. Raise's recently released 2019 *Evaluation and Annual Report* highlights its statistically significant impact in terms of measures like help-seeking, resilience, coping strategies, goal setting, confidence, academic achievement, employability skills and hope for the future. Importantly, 100 per cent of its school partners want to run the program again.

Raise continues to execute its growth strategy across New South Wales with the number of programs increasing from 50 schools to 80 schools and from 750 young people to 1,200 young people. It currently operates at four schools in my electorate of Davidson. The schools are Davidson High School, Killara High School, St Ives High School and Lindfield Learning Village, where I plan to attend a Raise student graduation ceremony in November. This year Raise remains committed to providing social and emotional support for young people during what we all recognise as a period of great uncertainty and upheaval. I continue to support Raise because it fulfils a need for many young people for external guidance when they are navigating their place in their communities and in the wider world.

Over the years my staff and I have been involved in a number of Raise events. I have to say that I have been very impressed with the sensitivity and care displayed by everyone who has been involved in the program. Under the leadership of Raise founder and CEO, Vicki Condon, I again commend Raise for continuing its important work with young people as they maintain a strong and committed presence in schools and communities throughout New South Wales. I know that Raise is partly funded through the New South Wales Government. I know some of that funding is coming up for re-evaluation in December. I can only put on record my appreciation

for what they continue to do in my community and what I observe they do in other communities in New South Wales. I urge the State Government to continue supporting that great work.

HUMELINK TRANSGRID

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (15:41:22): The HumeLink TransGrid proposal is a major energy infrastructure project to secure the future of electricity for the people of New South Wales. When I was first elected to Parliament I spoke of my intention to always act in the best interests of the communities I represent and to ensure that any concerns they may have are addressed in a fair and equitable manner. The community need for this infrastructure is significant. I think it would be fair to summarise that the affected landholders are in agreement with the objectives of the proposal. However, the proposed route to affected properties and landholder concerns also must be considered. I have met with some of those potential landholders to listen to their concerns. I note the Minister for Energy and Environment, the Hon. Matt Kean, has spoken on this matter recently and assured that no final approval has been given for the route for the project. The Minister was quoted as having said:

We have one of the most robust planning systems here in New South Wales to look for every opportunity to maximise the positives and minimise the negatives of the route designed to ensure that genuine consultation takes place with local communities.

The purpose of my speaking today is to once again emphasise the importance of meaningful stakeholder engagement in this process. The towers are significant in size and will travel across prime agricultural land. It is imperative that landholders have their say in the process. The past 12 months have dealt some tough blows to our farmers and rural landholders through drought, bushfires and now COVID-19. Despite those limitations, particularly those applying to group gatherings, I call on the HumeLink team to follow the health advice, of course, but also to continue on the path of engagement, despite the challenges of the pandemic.

Despite their personal concerns, landholders within the proposed corridor have insurmountable local knowledge that should not be underestimated. I thank all those who have contacted my office with their concerns. I assure them that I have forwarded every single one of their concerns to the project team for consideration and action. I met with the Minister. I received a thorough briefing from the project team. I stand with my colleagues—Joe McGirr, who is the member for Wagga Wagga, and Justin Clancy, who is the member for Albury—to ensure that the consultation moves forward in a timely and meaningful fashion.

I am advised that the HumeLink team continue to refine the route and project development. A technical and environmental survey has just begun as well as discussions with affected councils and community leaders. Further, I am advised that landowner groups have put forward alternative route options for consideration. Community consultation sessions have been advertised for October and November 2020. I very much look forward to hearing about the outcome of the discussions and I encourage all those potentially impacted to come forward and have their say.

TAFE NSW TEACHERS

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:44:56): I stand here today on behalf of TAFE teachers across New South Wales, and in particular those from my electorate of Blue Mountains, to plead with the Premier, the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, and the Government on their behalf. This Government is ideologically obsessed with privatisation and does not care about workers. Every group of workers in TAFE NSW has had their enterprise agreement settled, even managers. The Government skulked away from the good-faith agreement while teachers were turning themselves inside out. The negotiated enterprise agreement must be immediately put to a ballot of TAFE teachers and related employers. The Government must stop pattern bargaining. I am a very proud NSW Teachers Federation member and I am disappointed that the Minister and TAFE management have rejected the federation's request to bring the proposed enterprise agreement to a ballot that would enable a swift and just conclusion.

It is absolutely critical that there be acknowledgement of some facts. I note them here for the record. At present, more than 70 per cent of TAFE teachers are insecurely employed. The creation of extra permanent TAFE teaching positions is urgently required to attract the best from industry to teach the next generation of students and to assist in upskilling people post-COVID. Permanent positions in TAFE will attract and retain teachers in metropolitan, regional and rural communities. Increased job security and salary increases will help the New South Wales economy rebound from the COVID-19 downturn. TAFE teachers, communities and future generations have already suffered through the devastating impact of a fine public education institution being gutted by this Government.

Long-term temporary and casual employees have not been honoured or appreciated by this Government. The last time teachers had a pay rise was in November 2018. TAFE management gave themselves a salary increase, but those who struggle with ever-increasing workloads and crazy assessment loads, those on the front line, have not been looked after. We are losing good people as it is too difficult to work for TAFE under these

conditions. What does it look like from the student's perspective? TAFE is losing an incredible wealth of knowledge and experience with demoralised and departing teachers. Many people feel that small colleges, in particular, are being set up to fail, with cumbersome processes and barriers being put in place to reduce the number of students across courses and units. If we consider youth unemployment in a future post-COVID world, I query the level of support and investment provided to technical and vocational education and training, and schools.

TAFE teachers are vital to lead a skills recovery out of COVID-19. TAFE needs to be funded adequately and it needs to be at the forefront of the economic recovery post-COVID-19. Section 3 of the Productivity Commission's Green Paper notes this. I urge all members to read the document. TAFE teachers should be valued by this Government as the professionals they are. I again ask the Premier and the Minister to honour the negotiated agreement bargained in good faith, improve job security and employ extra permanent teachers. Whilst they are at it, they should get rid of the contested funding model and return TAFE to its trusted recurrent and increased funding model leading the world in vocational public education.

I thank the organisers and teachers in the TAFE system; they are the champions of TAFE. They remind us each day that TAFE is too good to lose. Those I work closely with include Annette Bennett, Rob Long, Phil Chadwick and Maxine Sharkey. I appreciate all the teachers and students I have spoken to in recent times, particularly those from the Wentworth Falls and Katoomba campuses in the Blue Mountains. They are all worthy of recognition. They deserve to be cared for. Stand strong and stand together, and I stand with you.

PACIFIC HIGHWAY

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (15:49:31): I am pleased to update the House on the progress of the Pacific Highway upgrade. The Pacific Highway upgrade is now 90 per cent complete, with new sections opening nearly every week. Only a couple of weeks ago another major milestone was met when the villages of Woodburn, Broadwater and Wardell were bypassed with the opening of the 34-kilometre upgraded section between Woodburn and Pimlico. This has been long awaited by the residents of those villages. It was appropriate that Richmond Valley Mayor Robert Mustow and Ballina Deputy Mayor Eoin Johnston, joined Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack, member for Page Kevin Hogan, and me to celebrate the occasion.

Yes, it is acknowledged that the Commonwealth and the New South Wales Government are funding the \$5 billion upgrade but the important role of local councils in advocating for the upgrade for decades cannot be understated. They have witnessed countless fatalities in their local government areas and have tirelessly represented their communities in calling for the highway to be upgraded to a twenty-first century standard. I give full credit to the councils for investing in much-needed infrastructure in the bypassed villages to ensure that visitors are still attracted to the local businesses and that they survive, and in fact thrive, after the bypass is commenced.

We know that Woodburn has been a bottleneck every school holidays and, whilst the bypass will make it safer and quicker for highway travellers, it will also mean fewer customers for the takeaway businesses that rely on this traffic flow. I acknowledge the investment by the Richmond Valley Council and the Commonwealth and New South Wales governments in funding a much-needed upgrade to Riverside Park, Woodburn. The upgrade includes new playground equipment, toilets and a new visitor information centre and function room. Richmond Valley Council was well ahead of the game and completed those improvements well over a year ago. Motorists will have an opportunity to experience the upgrades whilst driving through Woodburn.

Similarly, Richmond Valley Council and the Government made significant infrastructure improvements in the village of Broadwater. Thanks to the contribution of \$1.13 million, Richmond Valley Council was able to invest in a six-kilometre shared pathway from the village of Broadwater to Broadwater Beach, as well as undertaking some improvements at Broadwater Community Park. The improvements included the upgrade of barbecue shelters, a new youth play space featuring a basketball semi-court and skate park, drainage upgrade and toilet renewal. These improvements are done to sustain these villages once they are bypassed and to improve the lives of the local residents. Travellers will be encouraged to visit the newly bypassed towns, with large signs to be installed at their approaches.

The \$5 billion Pacific Highway upgrade is the largest rural road project in Australia. It has injected millions of dollars into the economies of the towns and villages along its route and created jobs for locals. At its peak, more than 3,000 jobs were created, with a significant number of them being for locals. Over the next two weeks a further nine kilometres of dual carriageway is set to open between Maclean and Mororo. Once this section is fully opened, the Woolgoolga to Ballina project will have delivered 106 kilometres of dual carriageway this year alone. The Pacific Highway upgrade is continuing to deliver for road users, Australia's essential freight industry and local economies. The most important benefit for all road users from the Pacific Highway duplication continues to be safety, with fatalities more than halving since work began in 1996.

The new divided highway will provide smoother, faster and more reliable journeys for all road users, while locals will benefit from the safety designs such as left-in left-out intersections for safe and convenient access to the new motorway. This project continues to deliver not just for through traffic, but also for locals who are able to more speedily and safely access nearby businesses and services. This has been a signature project for the Northern Rivers, and I thank the Commonwealth and New South Wales governments for their investment and the numerous individuals who have campaigned for decades for a new, safe highway for their communities.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:54:13): I acknowledge the great work being done by the member for Clarence in regard to the multibillion-dollar upgrade of the Pacific Highway. For many years he has been instrumental in campaigning to get it funded. It was interesting to hear about the vital work being done on the bypasses for small towns, how important they are and how the signage of them will form an integral part in the growing and maintaining of that community spirit. People can actually get off the highway and go to those communities when they are well signposted. I acknowledge that this has been a great effort between the State and Federal governments. The Richmond Valley Council, the State Government and the Federal Government all worked together to deliver for that community. This \$5 billion project will provide 3,000 jobs during its construction, most of those being filled by locals. It will provide over \$1 million worth of infrastructure investment in local businesses as well. I congratulate the member for Clarence.

SWANSEA ELECTORATE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (15:55:17): I have raised the state of the public transport network in the electorate of Swansea in this Chamber on a number of occasions, but the Minister for Transport and Roads and the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads continue to ignore the concerns of the community I represent. My office has been contacted by constituents from the suburbs of Cams Wharf, Catherine Hill Bay, Nords Wharf and Murrays Beach who are concerned about the lack of transport services available in their communities. The only bus service is route 99, which operates twice per weekday between Lake Haven and Charlestown via Catherine Hill Bay. On Saturdays there is only one northbound service and two southbound services, and on Sundays and public holidays there are no bus services at all.

These communities are experiencing rapid population growth as a result of large-scale residential developments over recent years, including the Beaches estate at Catherine Hill Bay and the Murrays Beach estate. Several other residential developments are either well advanced or in planning, including ones at Middle Camp, north of Catherine Hill Bay, Nords Wharf and Pinny Beach. Lake Macquarie City Council has forecast that the population of these communities will triple by 2036 as a result of the many young families that have moved into the area and continue to do so.

I have been contacted by many parents deeply concerned with the lack of public transport services available, which is creating significant difficulties in getting their children to and from school. There are no morning school bus services to Swansea High School or any bus services to or from local catholic schools. As a result, parents and guardians are required to transport students either to a bus stop on the Pacific Highway or to the school itself. In April 2018 I provided the former Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast and Hunter with a petition with more than 500 signatures from Murrays Beach community members, yet the Government has failed to address their concerns.

The short-sightedness of the Government in privatising the Newcastle Transport Network has only further complicated the issue. These communities, despite belonging to the Lake Macquarie local government area, currently fall within the contract region for Busways, which principally services the Central Coast local government area. These communities should fall within the Newcastle Transport Network, and I have written to the Minister to make that recommendation on a number of occasions. The privatisation of the Newcastle Transport Network has not delivered the world-class transport system that the region was promised. Instead, it has delivered a system with reduced connectivity and increased travel times.

Ever since Keolis Downer axed the route 350 bus service in January 2018, my office has been inundated with complaints from commuters about the additional travel time, particularly during peak hours. The route 14 bus service, which replaced the 350 service from Swansea Heads to Newcastle, has increased travel times due to the indirect route it takes meandering through quiet residential back streets in Adamstown Heights, The Junction and Merewether. The 7.04 a.m. route 14 bus takes one hour and 27 minutes to complete the trip from Swansea Heads to Customs House, and the 7.33 a.m. bus takes one hour and 35 minutes. The previous 350 bus service completed this journey in one hour and 21 minutes. The community has spoken. It wants the reintroduction of express bus services between Swansea Heads and Newcastle during the morning peak and between Newcastle and Swansea Heads in the afternoon peak. It is time for the Government to stop turning a blind eye to the concerns of the local Swansea community and address the glaring flaws in its ill-considered privatisation of the Newcastle Transport Network.

*Petitions***JERVIS BAY ROAD FLYOVER**

The SPEAKER: I take this opportunity to explain the process and rationale behind this unique debate. It is unique because it enables the public to directly bring their concerns to the attention of this House. The intent of this procedure is that the petition debate will start with a speech from a member, which in most cases will be the member who lodged the petition, followed by up to four other members, and then followed by a Minister in response. To conclude the debate the first speaker will speak in reply. After all members have spoken the House will vote on the question that the House take note of the petition. This question, in most cases, will be determined on the voices and be passed; however, if this is challenged by a member it may proceed to a division where the bells are rung and members vote on the motion to take note of the petition by moving to the appropriate side of the House.

The question is that the House take note of the petition.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:00:55): It gives me great pleasure to have been asked by the Vincentia Matters group to introduce this petition of more than 14,000 signatures to the Parliament for debate. Vincentia Matters is an apolitical community organisation which represents residents from the bay and basin region of the South Coast. They have been campaigning for a road upgrade at the Jervis Bay Road and Princes Highway intersection at Falls Creek for a long time, and I commend them for the way in which they have steadily and consistently gathered support for their cause. I was fortunate enough to visit the intersection in question with representatives from Vincentia Matters, including the secretary Liz Tooley, among others. I acknowledge and thank Michelle Miran for the work she has done to bring this issue to the attention of the Parliament. She has always been an energetic grassroots campaigner and I commend her commitment to her community. As Liz Tooley outlined to members of Parliament in written correspondence, the intersection is notorious for accidents and congestion.

While the State Government has announced an upgrade, it has not committed itself to one particular form of upgrade or another at this point in time. The community is determined to see a flyover built at the intersection and that is something residents, businesses and visitors all agree on. The community is speaking loudly and clearly, with one voice. It is a cause that enjoys broad support across the region. The Shoalhaven, Huskisson, and Vincentia chambers of commerce along with community groups in Huskisson, Hyams Beach, Vincentia, Sanctuary Point, St Georges Basin and Tomerong all agree. I also note the support of Federal member for Gilmore, Fiona Phillips, who has assisted in gathering support for the petition.

It is important to note the volume of work that was done before the petition was put to the community. Vincentia Matters prepared submissions and presentations to politicians, Transport for NSW bureaucrats, local government and public meetings of residents over a period of many years. Over that time, a consensus emerged. Across all levels of government and across the political spectrum, the consensus is that the intersection must be fixed with a grade-separated interchange—in other words, a flyover. The local media, both in Shoalhaven and in Wollongong, have been incredibly supportive as well. I have stood on the corner of Jervis Bay Road to speak to the local television news about this flyover proposal and it was clear from the local journalist that the feedback they receive is very supportive of the proposal.

The statistics speak for themselves. This stretch of road has one of the highest concentrations of vehicle movements on the highway between Nowra and the Victorian border. It is a high-traffic stretch of road and I am told that some 42,000 vehicles per day move along Jervis Bay Road—queuing and congestion is rife. Of course, queuing and congestion leads to impatience and impatience often induces bad behaviour. While we might hope that individual motorists make good decisions, the fact is that with tens of thousands of vehicles travelling along the road each day bad behaviour creeps in at the margins. It is unfortunately a simple mathematical reality. In that way congestion is not just an inconvenience, it is a very serious safety concern. It is incumbent on us to improve the road, not just as a way to free up traffic flows but also to reduce crash risk and make it safe.

Of the options available, it stands to reason that we should choose the most efficient and safest one. Transport for NSW has proposed traffic lights, a roundabout or a flyover. Overwhelmingly, the community favours a flyover and that is why we are here debating on this petition. Traffic lights would exacerbate congestion and queueing at a roundabout on an unbalanced intersection would solve nothing for those entering the highway from Jervis Bay Road. The flyover option would be consistent with other road infrastructure in and around the region. It would provide a long-term solution which would not be rendered obsolete by any traffic volume growth over time and it is the safest option. I commend the petition to the House. I congratulate the members of Vincentia Matters and the hundreds of community members who have pursued this campaign for many years. I implore the Government to support them.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (16:05:52): I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for her eminently sensible contribution on the petition. I believe the member for Keira and I were at a public meeting together before Christmas last year where, in a bipartisan manner, we said that we wanted to work together on a solution to the intersection. I thank him for that. Since then, as well as prior to that meeting, a great deal has happened regarding funding for the Princes Highway, with a multibillion-dollar investment from the Government. There is the Berry bypass, for which the member for Kiama was an advocate for such a long time. There is the Albion Park Rail bypass and the Nowra Bridge project in my electorate, which is now underway. There is the Burrill Lake Bridge, which is a massive project which is now completed, and Termeil Creek Bridge. We have invested an enormous amount into the Princes Highway and we are committed to continue that spending.

I accept what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is saying; the intersection needs to be improved and we are trying to find the best option. As we speak, Transport for NSW is undertaking the studies to advise on whether a roundabout, a flyover or lights will be installed. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition pointed out, neither of us are engineers and we do not know the correct and safest option. But if that is a flyover then the Government will build it and fund it, just as it has funded every other expensive project on the Princes Highway to date. It is disappointing that some of my comments were taken out of context by members of the local media who said that because I expressed some of my objections to the flyover, I was in favour of a roundabout. But some of those objections were recounted to me by Transport for NSW itself. It cited potential problems around land acquisition, as well as environmental and Aboriginal heritage issues. I simply reiterated that advice to the media and was not advocating for any particular proposal.

The Government's job is to look at the evidence and decide which is the best and safest option. The Jervis Bay Road intersection has been a really complex problem for a long time. Increasing numbers of drivers, including many tourists, are trying to turn off the highway to get to the beautiful areas around Jervis Bay, like Vincentia or Huskisson. Then when they try to get back onto the highway during tourist season—especially to turn north—it is really dangerous, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said. Despite this, for years no improvements have been made to the Princes Highway. The Government has been playing catch-up since 2011. For years it has advocated for these kinds of projects to be completed and for something to be done so that money can be invested into the Princes Highway, a highway that has claimed the lives of so many family members and friends.

I know that the Minister for Transport and Roads is not present in the Chamber but I know that he has advocated for as long as I have for a solution to the Jervis Bay Road intersection—we were elected in the same year. No-one can silence the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services when advocating for the Princes Highway. No-one can silence him on anything, really! The Jervis Bay Road intersection is a strange boundary anomaly because it is actually in the electorate of Kiama but the area further down the road towards Jervis Bay is my electorate, so people tend to get confused. If members are confused, I have a couple of maps that outline where the boundaries are. Members get confused from time to time whose electorate they are in and whether they need a visa, but we all work together. The member for Keira demonstrated that when he spoke about Princes Highway funding before Christmas.

Rest assured the Government will come up with the safest option. If that means a flyover, it will be funded and it will be built. But we are not at that stage. We currently have a design consultant looking at all of the best options. Towards the end of the year a decision will be made and then construction will begin, because that is what this Government does on the Princes Highway. We will not wait for decades and allow more people to die. For the first time in a long time, we will actually do something. I was elected to Parliament in 2003 and for such a long time I sat in opposition while nothing happened on the Princes Highway. That was until 2011, from which time projects like the brilliant Nowra Bridge project began. I commend the petition to the House. I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for her advocacy on behalf of Vincentia Matters. I know that the Government will come up with a good solution, and it will fund it.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (16:11:10): I support the petition and I acknowledge the comments from the member for South Coast. The Jervis Bay Road area is a beautiful part of New South Wales, home to a lot of holiday houses owned by people from my electorate who spend an enormous amount of time there.

Mr Gareth Ward: And they are negatively geared to the wazoo too, by the way!

Mr RYAN PARK: They managed to find their way down—you said it! The Jervis Bay Road has always needed additional improvements and upgrades, and that will always be the case whenever this Opposition is in the Parliament. The Princes Highway needs the same kind of investment that the Pacific Highway has received over the past 20 or 30 years. It is time for governments of all political persuasions to prioritise that road corridor. As the member for South Coast says, unfortunately all of us know someone who has had a serious accident or, even worse, a fatal accident in or around that area. There have been improvements around that road corridor under successive governments that have included the Oak Flats to Dunmore bypass and the Kiama bypass, as well as

Memorial Drive in my electorate of Keira. There have also been investments in small projects like the Sea Cliff Bridge and the interchange at the bottom of Bulli Pass. These projects are not just on the Princes Highway but are also spread along the road corridor that snakes through the Illawarra and South Coast. But this intersection is bad.

I had the opportunity to attend a meeting last year where I made a commitment—and I will offer the same here today—that we have a duty as elected members to address these issues. This is especially true for members who live in those communities, as is the case for both the member for South Coast and the member for Kiama. It is true too for members who visit these areas, as the member for Wollongong and I do, and as do perhaps some of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's constituents. We have a duty to work together to make sure that the road corridor gets improved. That is what members of Vincentia Matters, led by the great work of Liz Tooley, would expect of all of us. When I have spoken with her she has made it clear that she is advocating for the best outcome for the people in and around that area. There is nothing wrong with that. That is what all of us would love our communities to do. Sometimes we are really pushing them to give that advocacy. So I acknowledge Liz and Vincentia Matters, but I also acknowledge my colleagues on the other side because this issue has been one on which wherever possible we have tried to not play politics.

The reality is that all of us want to see improvements on that road. I am not an engineer. As the member for South Coast said, she is not an engineer. Thank goodness—that is right, member for Wollongong—or things would be falling down. There was some concern at some stage that the flyover option may have been taken off the table. I am very glad that the member for South Coast has made sure that that flyover option remains on the table and the Government is actively considering it. I also understand that there are some challenges with the flyover, being some stuff with some houses and businesses on the west side of Falls Creek. These are issues that have to be thought through.

From a transport background, there are some concerns about another set of lights there. That would make things very difficult on an already busy road corridor, particularly over the next four months to six months as the summer season comes. I hope this debate shines a light on the need for all of us to be strong advocates for the Princes Highway in the same way that a lot of our colleagues before us, particularly those from the North Coast, were very strong advocates for the Pacific Highway. In the true spirit of trying to get things done regardless of who is in power, this is an opportunity to work together, to work with groups like Vincentia Matters and to try to reduce the road fatalities and accidents that occur on that stretch of road.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)
(16:16:16): When it comes to the Princes Highway I do not need a briefing note. It is something I feel incredibly passionate about. As members of the House would be aware, one of the main reasons I stood for election to Parliament was to fix the Princes Highway. At the outset I thank the petitioners, the people who have signed the petition and the people who have worked diligently to collect signatures for it to make sure that everyone is aware of the views that the community wishes to express on this important issue. In the time that I have been in this place the best arguments I have had are the ones that have been bipartisan, the ones that build coalitions, the ones that bring people together and the ones that seek to obtain an outcome.

It might shock some members of this place, although I am sure not all, to know that members of the public often do not care what level of government delivers projects. They do not care what side of the Parliament does it, although certainly there is advocacy on both sides about important things. What they actually care about is outcomes. Communities in my electorate have wanted outcomes when it comes to the Princes Highway and I have been very fortunate—in fact, blessed—to have had the opportunity to be a local member and to stand up on issues I think are important.

Members of the House would have heard me speak ad nauseam from the dispatch box about the Princes Highway. I feel passionately about it, as I am sure other members do too. I acknowledge the member for South Coast, who is present in the Chamber. She has been a passionate advocate for the Princes Highway, as has the member for Bega. I also acknowledge the various roads Ministers who have supported us in our campaigns: Duncan Gay, Andrew Constance, Melinda Pavey and, indeed, Paul Toole, who is an outstanding roads Minister. He has certainly made himself available, as has his office, to discuss these matters with me when I have sought to raise them. Certainly previous road Ministers have too.

I have raised issues about projects in the past. I am frequently on the ground looking at the projects the Government is delivering. Projects such as the Albion Park Rail bypass, the Berry to Bomaderry upgrade, the Gerringong upgrade and the Shoalhaven River bridge are going to make a real difference. I have attended funerals of people who have died on the Princes Highway. I remember what the highway has been like and the devastation that has caused, not to mention the permanent disabilities people have suffered because of extraordinary accidents. For so many years we have had an undivided highway. I am proud of the fact that we are seeing investments that are changing lives and saving lives. The many lives that are being saved through these investments are important.

I am not surprised that, when a survey was done of what was in the best interests of locals and what locals wanted, 62 per cent said safety was their priority. I am not surprised to hear that. Over 30 per cent said that reducing congestion was important for this intersection. Knowing that particular part of the world well, I can understand why people would want that. Just to make it clear: What the Government has done in relation to this project is, firstly, made an election commitment of \$1.5 billion for that section of the highway further south. The first part of that upgrade will be this particular intersection.

At the moment the Government and the department are considering three options. One is traffic lights, one is a roundabout and one is a flyover. All of those things will rightly attract different views from the community. I appreciate that and I am sure the member for South Coast does too. I have certainly heard that firsthand at the meetings we have attended, in phone calls and emails I have received, and indeed at the public meetings the member for South Coast, the member for Keira and I have attended. Those three options are rightfully being assessed. As the member for South Coast rightly said, we are not road engineers. We need to listen to the experts.

I make the point that it would not matter at this point who was in government. I would hope that whoever the government of the day was that it would seek expert advice based on the evidence to make the right decision. I have had these fights with bureaucracies up and down the Princes Highway further north in my electorate and I am sure we will have some very robust conversations now, but I want to assure the community that the approach the Government is taking to this intersection is the same approach it has taken to other projects—evidence based, seeking to do the greatest good for the greatest number.

I would simply put out the call to the Commonwealth to continue to partner with us. The Pacific Highway was mentioned earlier. That has an 80:20 funding split, 80 per cent Commonwealth and 20 per cent State. I want that deal, as does the member for South Coast, for the Princes Highway. I can tell you what: I am going to continue to take up the fight. I do not care who is in The Lodge; I want a fair deal for my community. It is time the Federal Government invested more than it has. It has partnered with the New South Wales Government on the bridge. That is great, but one swallow does not a summer make. I want to see more investment from the Commonwealth, but I also want to see safer roads for our community. That is what we will always fight for.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:21:22): I thank the members who have contributed to the debate. I am sure Ross Popplewell and Liz Tooley, respectively the Chair and Secretary of Vincentia Matters, who have been busily collecting more than 14,000 signatures over a period of five weeks during a pandemic, with social distancing, would welcome the fact that members have come into this place today and genuinely put forward a view that we should be working together to get the best possible solution for that community. It is always difficult to prioritise which road upgrades should come first and what engineering solutions should be utilised when those road upgrades are prioritised.

In bringing this petition to this place today Vincentia Matters has been able to clarify and confirm that all of the options, including the flyover—the preferred option of Vincentia Matters and the petitioners—are still being actively considered. Vincentia Matters and the petitioners would also welcome the fact that members are willing to work together on a solution. Not many members of this place may be aware that over the past 12 months all of the Illawarra MPs—Illawarra Labor and Illawarra Liberal MPs—have been working together on a solution around Shellharbour Hospital. We have been working quietly and diligently in the background with health infrastructure, the Minister and others to come up with a solution. The solution was announced recently and it was a new hospital on a greenfield site that will commit to and build on the health infrastructure in the Illawarra in the long term. That is the sort of approach we need to take with this situation. I welcome the fact that both the member for South Coast and the member for Kiama have done that and it has been repeated on this side as well.

Over the next few weeks of school holidays and in fact over the next few months there will be many thousands of visitors returning to the South Coast to holiday, probably more than ever before because this year we probably will not be able to travel internationally, so people will be looking for holiday options. It is difficult to find an engineering solution for this intersection. I can think of only one other place like it and that is at the bottom of Mount Ousley at the entrance to Wollongong. If someone was building a road or an intersection today and someone came up with the idea that is currently there, they would be marched out of the room. They would be gone because no-one would come up with this as an option for the future. Now we must concentrate not on what has been done in the past and how we got to this place, but how we make sure that the thousands of people who use this intersection every day, the thousands of visitors who come to the South Coast on holiday—they should stop in Wollongong more often—and enjoy the amenity, are safe and comfortable using this road. There have been 15 accidents over the past five years at the intersection, including six major incidents. Literally week in, week out there are many minor traffic accidents. We should do everything in our power to stop that and work with communities to come up with the best solution.

I appreciate that the Vincentia Matters petitioners are actively backing the flyover. It is supported unanimously by Shoalhaven City Council. The member for Gilmore, Fiona Phillips, backs it as well. She is

fighting every day to ensure that there is a better deal from the Commonwealth for the Princes Highway. It should not become a Federal-State financial relations whipping boy to sort out the problem. The Federal Liberal Government and the State Liberal Government should get together and work out a deal. Over the past few years the Pacific Highway has been upgraded and over the next few years safety improvements will happen on the Princes Highway as well. I end with the comments of one resident, who said:

Basically their consideration for an intersection like this, where numerous vehicles come out of Jervis Bay Road at high speeds, is they recommend you should avoid 90-degree interaction between vehicles.

It makes sense that that would happen. The resident continues:

The only way to do that is to put in a flyover.

I think there is general support for providing the safest, best solution and I trust that will be to the satisfaction of all residents and users in the future.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (16:26:35): On behalf of the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, I acknowledge the petition brought to the House by the member for Swansea and the contributions from members on both sides of the House. They have been working together collegiately to come up with a good outcome for their citizens and the area. I acknowledge the 14,000 signatories to the petition. It is a terrific effort to get 14,000 signatures, especially during COVID. I notice that visitors in the public gallery are socially distancing, which is a shame. I am advised that the Princes Highway is a critical link between Sydney and the Illawarra region and the New South Wales South Coast down to the Victorian border. It supports communities, businesses and tourism, providing vital connections between towns and regional centres. That is why since 2011 the Australian and New South Wales governments have invested \$2.5 billion upgrading the Princes Highway to create safer and more efficient journeys along the South Coast of New South Wales.

That is why we are delivering the Jervis Bay Road intersection upgrade as our first priority under the \$1.5 billion package announced at the 2019 election. Community consultation is core to the way the Government does business. The Government went to the community for their feedback on three options: a flyover, which is a grade separation; roundabouts; and traffic signals, as mentioned by the member for Kiama. The community was asked about its priorities and values regarding the three options. Two-thirds of respondents—nearly 62 per cent—told us they valued safety most, with 33 per cent prioritising reduced congestion. This is all about safety. People want an intersection that makes their journeys safer, smoother and more reliable, and that is what we want to deliver. That is why we will make sure we get this right.

There is a process to go through. The design of road safety upgrades is done by the experts, not by the politicians, and we need to let them do their work. I acknowledge the passionate advocacy of the community in supporting a flyover option, and we value that. But we will not pre-empt this process by committing to a specific design before the work is done. I assure the community that we will not go for a cut-price solution when it comes to road safety. If the experts come back and tell us that a flyover is the best option for improving safety and easing congestion, that is what we will deliver. The Minister looks forward to updating local members, the community and the House when the report is received from Transport in November.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:29:25): In reply: I acknowledge and thank members representing the electorates of South Coast, Keira, Kiama, Wollongong and Clarence, and the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Roads and Infrastructure for their contributions. All members know how difficult it is to get 10,000 signatures on a petition, and in this instance the community pulled together 14,000 signatures. As the member for Wollongong said, that was achieved in just five weeks during a period of COVID restrictions. It is important to note the breadth of support for the project, with over 200 businesses, shops, schools and hospitals supporting the petition. I am told that people had the petition in staffrooms and on counters.

Community organisations throughout the bay and basin villages also got behind the petition. The members who represent that community know how passionate their residents are and how they got together to ensure this very important matter came to the Parliament. The New South Wales Parliament is advocating on behalf of this community and it appears to me that we are in fierce agreement that safety is the paramount objective and we will work together to achieve that outcome. I congratulate the community again. It is not easy to get signatures; people are obviously very passionate about this issue, and they are to be commended. I recommend that members support the petition.

Petition noted.

*Private Members' Statements***GEORGE GREENTREE**

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (16:31:54): I commend and thank Hawkesbury local Mr George Greentree for his devotion to the nurturing of the careers of young cricketers in the Hawkesbury area. During most of his life Mr Greentree has personally assisted countless young cricketers and those who show an interest in cricket and has helped them to achieve their best. I have no doubt that this mentoring during those vital years as an individual's personal growth and development blossoms aids these youth in excelling beyond the cricket field to life in general. The Greentree family has had a strong association with the Freemans Reach Cricket Club since its formation in 1916. Mr George Greentree continued his family's association, having first played in the under 13s as a six-year-old. He went on to become secretary of the club at the age of 14 and since then he has served as either secretary or president. He has served as secretary of the club for 21 years and is currently in his twenty-fifth year as president.

Mr Greentree is currently Senior Vice President and Administrator of the Hawkesbury District Cricket Association and has been on the committee for most of the past 42 years—I am exhausted reading this. There is one, amongst many examples, that I share with members to make clear to the House what an outstanding man Mr Greentree is. Mr Greentree was contacted by the mother of a 10-year-old cricketer by the name of Paul, who had been knocked back from playing with clubs due to blindness in one eye. Mr Greentree and the Freemans Reach club welcomed Paul with open arms into the under-13 team. Paul was a left-handed batsman and was blind in the right eye. I am not a cricketer but I understand that has some challenges.

George advised and guided him through the process of becoming a right-handed batsman so that he could see the bowler and his delivery. Through George's mentoring and Paul's strong commitment, Paul ended up opening the batting for the second-grade side. Paul is one of countless people who have had the pleasure of being mentored by Mr Greentree. Amongst them are many who would go on to play in the elite leagues. Ben Cohen, Damien Alderson, Jason Hopkins and Kym Daley played first in Sydney grade cricket, with Kym going on to captain the Australian deaf cricket team.

Mr Greentree's value to the Hawkesbury community and sport has not gone unnoticed. He was awarded Cricket NSW Volunteer of the Year 2011-12 and life memberships with Freemans Reach Cricket Club and the Hawkesbury District Cricket Association. Proudly on show in his office are 26 premiership caps from Freemans Reach teams that he has captained, coached or managed, among other sporting memorabilia. I have no doubt that there will be many more items to add to that collection as the years move on. I thank Mr Greentree for all that he adds to cricket in the Hawkesbury area. The sport of cricket is better off because of his service and dedication.

BALLINA ELECTORATE WATER SECURITY

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (16:35:13): Today I speak about concerns raised by many members of my community regarding a proposed dam at Dunoon and other matters that I raised in my submission to Rous County Council's *Future Water Project 2060*. I commend Rous County Council for the reports on this project, as they were incredibly detailed and easy to read. I also acknowledge the breadth of vision of its study, in the sense that it speaks to the next 40 years. However, many of the proposed projects put to the community as models for securing water into the future are outdated ways of looking at water conservation on a warming planet.

The Dunoon dam proposal also threatens Aboriginal heritage and 55 hectares of subtropical rainforest, as well as seven hectares of warm temperate rainforest. A number of precious water gums so old and tall they may set a new record for size have been discovered in the area where the proposed dam will be located. Countless flora and fauna species will be destroyed by the dam, and it does not address the challenges of a warming planet. Members know that water security and water scarcity will be some of the biggest challenges facing our communities into the future. The projection of global warming of only 1 degree Celsius in the report scenarios and an uncertain time frame for reaching that level of warming are a major concern; I believe it risks all the datasets outlined in the work.

According to the 2019 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] report entitled *Global Warming of 1.5°C*, global warming is predicted to reach 1.5 degrees Celsius between 2030 and 2052 if it increases at the current rate. Rous County Council's *Future Water Project 2060* takes as its basis the same scientific logic as the CSIRO's Murray-Darling Basin Sustainable Yields Project, which used daily historical data from 1895 to 2006—a period during which global warming was on a much less steep trajectory. The report states that projections around water supply are premised on climate warming of 1 degree Celsius. Given IPCC projections, this seems to be a fundamental underestimation of global warming and hence brings into question the accuracy of the data around supply yields.

On a warming planet, dams are becoming increasingly ill-equipped to deal with potable drinking water demand, primarily because as a society we are using a precious resource for household purposes that are simply not warranted. Why do we use best-quality drinking water for all our household needs, instead of using potable water only for drinking? If Rous County Council were to supply the 12 per cent that must be potable then 88 per cent of Rous's supply could be non-potable. With a bold education program, we could wean ourselves off drinking, shower and bath water as well. Ballina Shire Council is already leading the way, with dual reticulation in new subdivisions and by supplying suitably treated water. For future development, Rous County Council could support urban water users to manage their own supplies with roof water tanks, stormwater harvesting and recycled water for non-drinking purposes. Why is Rous not looking at working further with councils to subsidise water tanks and water recycling for people on low incomes and then charging a premium for potable water?

The report also explores the feasibility of desalination sites in three locations in my electorate: Byron Bay, South Ballina and Lennox Head. The report proposes a single plant location in Byron Bay, located on the parcel of land adjacent to the existing sewage treatment plant. I am very persuaded by this proposal for a number of reasons. Critics of desalination plants argue that they are a very expensive capital investment in the short term and are only utilised as a last resort when water runs out. Interestingly, in the last drought we saw desalination plants being used across the country, and both the Adelaide and Sydney desalination plants are currently being expanded to double their capacity.

On a warming planet, with IPCC predictions of a greater than 1.5 degrees Celsius temperature rise, desalination plants are truly going to stand the test of time—no matter the scenario. Dams are an outdated way to think about water yields on a warming planet. I encourage Rous to look at what it can do to incentivise people to manage potable water at their property sites, as has been done in Sydney and all over the world. The demand for water is likely to be far higher than predicted by these reports. I put it to members that the cost of the proposed dam—\$220 million in capital costs and over \$400 million in maintenance—is not the right investment. We should be looking at reverse osmosis immediately.

JOEL EDGERTON

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (16:40:20): I acknowledge the wonderful contribution of Joel Edgerton and his fabulous career so far in the world of entertainment and his charitable works. While I was mayor I initiated the Blacktown City Hall of Fame, which recognises significant national or international contributions of people associated with Blacktown. Joel Edgerton is one of the inaugural inductees. Joel is an accomplished actor, writer, director and producer. More importantly, he is an inspiration to all the budding film students and artistic people of Blacktown City and across western Sydney. Joel has achieved what many people dream of, going from filming in his backyard to Australia's small screen and then onto the big one—Hollywood. His story is so inspirational. He is proof that people can successfully pursue their dreams and ambitions.

Joel was born in 1974 in Blacktown Hospital to Michael and Marianne, who was a Dutch immigrant. I note the wonderful contribution of the European migration to the Blacktown area from the 1940s to the 1980s. Building local community halls and clubs encouraged the performing arts through dance, song and paintings. Since 1996 Joel has performed in 48 films, including *King Arthur*, *Star Wars* episodes II and III, *Ned Kelly*, *The Thing*, *Exodus: Gods and Kings* and *Red Sparrow*, and we are awaiting the release of *The Green Knight*. Joel has appeared in 12 television series, including *The Secret Life of Us*, as well as eight different stage productions, mainly with the Sydney Theatre Company. When not acting, he has been director, writer or producer of 11 other films. His 24-year career has been action packed, but there is more—some 12 film awards and 50 nominations in Australia and across the world.

Joel is important to Blacktown and western Sydney because he demonstrates the value of a good local education. He attended Hills Grammar and studied drama at the University of Western Sydney and Nepean Drama School. His brother, Nash, is also a very talented producer, stuntman and coordinator. Joel is a very passionate person who believes in giving it his all. He once stated, "I just don't want to do crap movies ... I want to do stuff I'm proud of and want to talk about." Joel's career had a rocky start. He went to drama school and someone told him that he would never be an actor because he had a lisp. Obviously this terrified him at the time, but he ignored that advice and went on to great success.

An inductee to the Blacktown Hall of Fame also requires philanthropic endeavours. Joel is an ambassador for The Fred Hollows Foundation and is a passionate supporter of its work in developing countries and in Australian Indigenous communities. Joel has been to Ethiopia and has raised money for the foundation, which assists in tackling the horror eye disease trachoma—a leading cause of infection-related irreversible blindness. We are proud of Joel, as he inspires us all. He started by making movies as a kid in his backyard in Prospect with his brother, Nash, using their father's video camera. Joel would act, Nash would direct stunts and they would share the writing and directing duties.

From these humble beginnings, Joel has gone from mucking around in the backyard with Nash at the age of 10 through to making blockbuster, mega-budget massive movies in Europe. Any kid, or adult—or parliamentarian—would dream of that success. Joel Edgerton is truly a legend. He grew up in Blacktown and made it to international significance as an actor on stage and screen, writer, director and producer. He highlights the importance of family by working with his brother, Nash. He honours his parents' legacy and gives to charity. We are all proud of him and we are inspired by his achievements. That is why he is an inaugural Blacktown City Hall of Famer and I am proud to speak about him in this House.

POVERTY

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:45:06): Australia's first recession in almost three decades and worst economic downturn since the Great Depression will force more people into poverty and erode conditions for those who are already doing it tough. The fallout of the massive economic contraction has so far been cushioned by income support, including the JobSeeker coronavirus supplement, JobKeeper, eviction moratoriums, rent reductions and mortgage loan deferrals. But those vital lifelines are being wound back. Without adequate intervention, thousands of people will suffer and New South Wales will become a place of deep inequality. People on JobSeeker are among the poorest in our community, with eligibility tests excluding all but those with the most meagre means. The social services sector has argued for years that the JobSeeker rate of about \$40 a day is grossly inadequate to live on. It has not kept pace with rising rents or other costs of living, forcing many to go without basic needs like food and heating.

Before the pandemic, around 700,000 people were on JobSeeker; that number has now more than doubled to 1.5 million. Australia's economy could not have worn that level of poverty, which led the Federal Government to add \$550 to fortnightly payments through the coronavirus supplement. The supplement has reduced the disruption for the newly unemployed and given JobSeeker recipients much-needed relief to pay for basic necessities. It has not made them well off, but has reduced the stress of poverty and kept people afloat. Anglicare Australia's recent *Rental Affordability Snapshot* report identified that even with the coronavirus supplement, only 1 per cent of rentals are affordable for JobSeeker recipients. While rents at the higher end of the market have dropped, the bottom end has not changed. Meanwhile, the larger number of people now on lower incomes has made the bottom end of the market more competitive, making things worse for people already in poverty.

This week the JobSeeker rate will be cut by \$300 a fortnight, leaving less than 0.4 per cent of homes in reach for single parents and 1.5 per cent for couples with two children. If payments are cut again in December as planned, there will be no homes in reach for people who do not have work. Around a million children are now dependent on a parent on JobSeeker, and the impact on them will be devastating. Those on the lowest incomes have been hardest hit by the pandemic. Jobs that require face-to-face interaction, such as waiting, sales and customer service, are lower paid and generally cannot be done at home. The *Sydney Poverty and Inequality Partnership Report* by the Australian Council of Social Services and the University of New South Wales found that the gap between those on the highest and the lowest incomes widened by six times what it was before the pandemic. If the coronavirus supplement is removed, that gap will be even wider.

Many workers have been kept employed through JobKeeper payments, but there is no guarantee that their employers will survive the pandemic, a grossly smaller economy or post-pandemic social and work trends. Come March we will likely see more people transfer to JobSeeker. Following the final reduction in the JobSeeker rate, mortgage holidays and the moratorium on residential evictions for rental arrears will be lifted. In the coming months more people will be forced from their homes, competing for the bottom end of the rental market and joining social housing queues. The Government has housed 1,200 rough sleepers during the pandemic, but the causes of rough sleeping continue and threaten to boil over into crisis. A social and affordable housing investment boom is needed urgently. Before the pandemic, homelessness services argued that we need to build 5,000 additional social housing units every year over the next decade to keep up with demand. That is more important than ever and also would support construction jobs.

The New South Wales Council of Social Service is calling for a 20 per cent funding increase for specialist homelessness services to help women and children leave violent households, and for essential community services to address additional needs. It recommends health-led multidisciplinary teams on public housing estates to coordinate tenant care and support for the most vulnerable. Job creation must target those who are most affected by unemployment, including women and young people. The pandemic has exposed critical needs in health, aged care, disability and child care. I commend the commitment to training and reskilling those who have lost jobs and businesses. Ongoing support for retooling and innovation is needed. The virus has exposed and widened existing inequality. Addressing poverty must be the focus of the next State budget, and the Government must advocate for the Commonwealth to retain the JobSeeker coronavirus supplement permanently. If we let poverty prevail with wider homelessness, it will impact on the economy and drag the rest of the country down. I call on this House to make addressing poverty a priority.

JOHN AND JOY DONSWORTH

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (16:50:18): I congratulate John and Joy Donsworth of Revesby, who are celebrating their sixtieth wedding anniversary today. John and Joy were married at the Methodist Church at Thornleigh in 1960. John was born on 11 July 1938 and was the third child of Mary and Nendick Donsworth. As one of the first families to settle in Revesby, the Donsworth family history is documented in author Andrew Molloy's wonderful local history books, which I have previously mentioned in this House. Andrew Molloy writes that the Donsworth family migrated to Australia in 1907 via Melbourne and first lived in Leichhardt until around 1910, when they purchased a farming property in Revesby. James Donsworth and his stepsons, who included Nendick Donsworth, often walked from Leichhardt to Revesby to prepare the property and a small house prior to the family moving there. They later purchased a horse and sulky, which meant the trip was only two hours. They moved to Revesby in 1911 and the home still stands today.

When John was born in the Crown Street Women's Hospital, the only telephone in the Revesby area was at the corner of The River Road and Doyle Road. His sister Noelene was the one who walked down to the public phone to ring the hospital and was given the news that she had a new baby brother. John was the last descendant in the Donsworth family in the Revesby district. His grandparents on his mother's side, the Steer family, lived next door and moved to Revesby from Albury in 1911. After settling in Revesby, the family started a market garden and poultry farm on The River Road. John's grandfather opened a grocery store—also on The River Road—which was operating from before World War I. John's grandparents were involved with the Revesby Congregational Church from 1913.

When John was old enough he was often seen walking down the street alongside his grandfather with his own walking stick. His grandfather was a very keen fisherman who had a special place called Mickey's Point along the Georges River. Incidentally, it was my husband's favourite fishing spot in his youth. John always wanted to go fishing with his grandfather, who would never take him because he would talk too much and frighten the fish away. John was known to fill his grandfather's boots with shell grit or let down the tyres on his pushbike and hide his bike pump to stop his grandfather from going fishing without him. From an early age, John and his family attended Padstow Congregational Church, which was then known as the Padstow Independent Church. John went through Sunday school, and in his late teens became a Sunday school teacher and continued teaching until around 1998.

John started school in 1943 at Revesby Public School, which was opposite to where he and his grandparents lived in Beaconsfield Street. After finishing high school at Campsie boys' high, he became an apprentice carpenter and joiner with a local builder. The work involved cottage construction and commercial buildings. At the end of his apprenticeship, John was called up to be in the last compulsory intake for National Service training. Following that, John got a job with the public works department in Sydney in 1959. In 1960 John married Joy. They adopted Glenn in February 1968 and then adopted Ruth in September 1970. Their family was completed when Lynn-Marree was born in February 1972. They were blessed with grandchildren Cameron, Courtney, Joshua and Makayla.

During John's time with the government, it commenced building a new multistorey government headquarters in the heart of the city. John was involved in working on that building, known as the State Office Block, which became the tallest building in the Southern Hemisphere at the time. When the building was finished, it housed six government departments with 2,000 public servants, plus the Premier's department. A position was advertised for an assistant building manager, to which John was successful in being appointed. Going from tradesman to administration work was a big career change for John. He was later appointed to the position of building manager for the State Office Block.

Joy was born in January 1939 to Doris and Thomas Williams in Grafton. Her earliest recollections are of being placed in an orphanage at the age of three with her little brother and sister. The orphanage in Grafton was run by the United Protestant Association. At the age of four, Joy was taken down to Newcastle by train and given to a middle-aged couple, whom she learned to call Mum and Dad.

Joy was fostered by the Taylor family. They had three adult sons and three adult daughters. The Taylor family were Methodist, so Joy attended the Sunday school and church services as she was growing up. Joy joined the Christian Endeavour movement and took an active part. After three years in Newcastle, Joy's foster dad was transferred to Sydney, as the soap factory where he worked in Newcastle closed down. They found rented accommodation in Concord and settled down for a few years before moving to Pennant Hills and then Thornleigh.

At the age of 17 Joy left home to commence nursing at Canterbury Hospital. She loved nursing but never finished her four-year course because of sickness. Whilst nursing, she nursed a lady who told Joy that she had found her future husband for her. She said her roommate had a single son named John and that she was going to introduce them. She told Joy that she was a very good matchmaker and had been successful in the past. Joy told

her that she would pick her own future husband and did not need anyone's help. Her patient was not going to be put off and went ahead with her arrangement for Joy to meet John. A couple of years later John and Joy did marry. Congratulations John and Joy, I hope you enjoy your celebrations today for your sixtieth wedding anniversary.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:55:15): Last week, with the publication of the latest unemployment figures for New South Wales, we saw the Treasurer quoted in a number of articles attempting to spin the figures into a good news story. In the electorate of Newtown a lot of people are now unemployed and many more are underemployed as a result of this pandemic. It is not acceptable that this Liberal-Nationals Government is now putting its energy into misrepresenting the true impacts of this crisis rather than implementing immediate measures to address them. At first glance the figures did appear to show that the level of unemployment in our State was not as low as expected, but the Treasurer and his team are certainly smart enough to know they need to look closer.

The latest data show that the job growth evident in the top line figures was entirely driven by a surge in non-employees, that is, self-employed people, owner-managers, who themselves have no employees and who work in an unincorporated enterprise. In short, that is a surge in gig workers. Let us not beat around the bush. Gig work sucks. By its very nature, it is insecure work with little to no wage or workplace protections and a completely unequal business model where mega corporations profit from the exploitation of individuals. For almost everyone, gig work is a last resort. The term "gig economy" arose in 2009 at the height of the global financial crisis as many workers lost permanent, full-time employment and turned to sporadic, casual and freelance work or gigs.

Let us be very clear, a drastic growth in gig economy employment is not a win; it is a failure. For the most part, apps and platforms that facilitate gig work use a cloak of innovation and progress to reintroduce archaic and outdated labour practices, circumventing minimum wage rates and removing employee safety nets. By classifying their workers as independent contractors, these mega corporations absolve themselves of any responsibility for providing access to standard employment entitlements and conditions. Someone always pays for cheap capitalism and that is the riders and the drivers, those who are exploited by this profit-above-all-else business model. These companies shirk their responsibility to pay fair wages and conditions and governments let them get away with it. California has finally taken up the fight to regulate this exploitative industry, and we need to do the same here.

I want to thank and give a shout-out to the Transport Workers Union [TWU] for shedding light on the reality of gig workers in this State, for supporting those forced into this type of work and for advocating strongly for protections. I have seen members of the TWU engaging with delivery drivers' bikes along King Street and I give them credit for being committed to organising and building union power for these workers. We can talk all we want about the freedom of working for yourself but that is not what being a gig worker is for the vast majority. Working for yourself is one thing but having no choice and being exploited is an entirely different thing.

Nobody chooses a job where they have no protections, no sick leave, no recreation leave, no superannuation, no set hours, no award rates, no access to workers compensation. Nobody gives up those things willingly. There is no question that COVID has exacerbated existing inequalities in our society. Pushing hundreds of thousands of people into insecure and underpaid work is another example of something that governments need to be taking up. The electorate of Newtown has about double the amount of 20- to 34-year-olds than other areas in New South Wales. We have a huge number of young people and students, international and domestic, along with new migrants on temporary visas. Those people are the most vulnerable and at risk of exploitation by the gig economy. These are the people who have been most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and are the most likely to have missed out on any government crisis support.

Many international students or people on other temporary visas have had no choice but to rely on getting money as gig workers because governments have failed to do the humane thing and offer financial support to them during this pandemic. Now, as more and more people face the loss of work and are at risk of going into increasing debt, we need to be calling out the neo-liberal spin and demand that this Government take firm action right now to ensure a just society where no-one is too poor to be able to live. Securing wages and conditions for workers is protecting wages and conditions for everyone in this State. But it is not just about workers' rights. We need to be pushing for universal housing and a basic guarantee of income, addressing systemic racism, prioritising community care and wellbeing and making sure that we act to limit the impacts of the impending climate emergency.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (17:00:17): I thank the member for Newtown for highlighting the pressing issue of unemployment caused by the COVID-19 crisis, which is a concern shared by every member of this House as well as State and Federal governments. I state the principle that governments can do so much through infrastructure programs and increasing activity to directly employ people. But 90 per cent of the people in our community will be employed by the private sector and that is why the bulk of the energy of governments has to

go into protecting companies and keeping them viable and in business so that people can look forward to a future where they can earn their own living.

RANDWICK CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL CARDIOLOGY SERVICES

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (17:01:03): I bring to the attention of the House the continuing crisis of paediatric cardiac surgery at the Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick and the incompetence of the Minister for Health in his handling of this long-running issue. This is not the first time I have brought this critical issue to the attention of this House and to the Minister. Fourteen months ago I told the House the harrowing story of Cooper Lowe, who was only 10 days old when he was transferred to the Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick with undiagnosed myocarditis. Soon after arriving, Cooper went into cardiac arrest and required CPR for 26 minutes. Without the extraordinary measures then taken by the cardiac surgical team present at the hospital, Cooper would not have survived.

Since the Sydney Children's Hospital Network was formed, the cardiac surgery practice at the Sydney Children's Hospital has been slowly undermined and progressively underfunded. Whether by design or apathetic administration, a gradual shift in allocation has seen all elective cardiac procedures removed from the Randwick hospital and passed to the Westmead campus—a pattern that the doctors of the Sydney Children's Hospital Randwick have been fighting against for years. The Sydney Children's Hospital is a tertiary paediatric referral hospital. This hospital, one of four within the Randwick health precinct, provides a complex and comprehensive range of services in paediatric and adolescent medicine and surgery, treating children with conditions including cancer, trauma, HIV/AIDS, congenital abnormalities, disabilities, heart disease and respiratory disorders.

The removal of an essential surgical specialty like cardiac surgery puts the status of this wonderful institution at significant risk. Whether it is your child, your niece, your nephew or the child of a friend, paediatric cardiac services at the Sydney Children's Hospital at Randwick are crucial in providing world-class health care for our most seriously ill kids. The full removal of these services could cost lives. In conversation with doctors from the Randwick hospital, I have heard stories about transfer times between the Randwick and Westmead hospitals of over 12 hours and about the removal of a newborn child from its mother, who is receiving treatment at the adjacent Royal Hospital for Women in Randwick, in order for the child to receive treatment in Westmead. It is an unthinkable scenario for mother and child as well as a father who is torn between visiting hospitals across the city.

The Minister has been aware of this issue for years and has routinely refused to take a position, allowing dysfunctionality to endure. After perennially dodging responsibility, the Minister revealed that the recommendations of the Henry Review into Paediatric Services in New South Wales would provide the ultimate direction for paediatric cardiac services. In what seemed to be the end of this enduring crisis, on 24 January the health Minister announced that cardiac surgery would be returned to the Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick. The clear directive of the Henry review was that cardiac services needed to be run in parallel at the Sydney Children's Hospital as well as at the Children's Hospital Westmead. That directive was accepted and announced by the Minister for Health. However, eight months since the review's release and the Minister's public commitment to return cardiac surgery to the Sydney Children's Hospital, not a single surgery has been completed or even scheduled. Doctors from the hospital now find themselves having to again call on the Minister to deliver the promised return of full cardiac services to the hospital as concerns grow for the safety of seriously ill children and for the future of the hospital.

When the decision was made in January it was long overdue. Since then the Minister has again sat on his hands for eight months and done nothing to speed up the process. The Minister has shirked any responsibility to follow through with this commitment and instead has created more bureaucratic hoops to be jumped through. I am reliably advised that the new committee that was formed to implement the Minister's January directive appears to have been filled with committee members who are open and vocal about their opposition to the Minister's decision to restore cardiac surgery at Randwick. To frustrate the situation further, the terms of reference for the committee's operation do not include the words that the Minister used in his January announcement, which allows for clouding of the committee's clear goals.

It is simply not good enough for the Minister to renege on his commitment. The Minister is leading a dysfunctional process. Every day it continues the lives of seriously ill children are put at risk. Children in our community and across New South Wales deserve the best health services possible, not delays and indecision from the Liberal-Nationals Government. The fact that this issue has still not been fixed is a disgrace and shows a complete failure of leadership on behalf of the health Minister. The staff at this wonderful hospital deserve better. The community that has fought for this hospital deserves better. Sick kids in New South Wales deserve much, much better. I call on the Minister to fulfil his responsibilities as Minister and follow through with a public commitment to restore cardiac surgery to the Sydney Children's Hospital at Randwick.

AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:06:06): I draw to the attention of the House planning and related land conflict usage, which is a matter of grave concern to my community. I raise the issue in my capacity as both the local member for Maitland and the shadow Minister for Primary Industries. What is happening in my electorate is happening throughout the State. Despite the protestations of this Government, nothing has been done to address the problem. After some 18 months, recently the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales appointed an Agriculture Commissioner. The role of the Agriculture Commissioner is to be the person who implements the Government's Right to Farm Act, particularly in the space occupied by these land-use conflict issues which, as we all know, was not the intended end result of the legislation. However, that is what the Government stated its purpose to be. In addition to that, the Agriculture Commissioner was to be an advocate for farmers.

There is a lovely media release stating that the Minister had appointed Mr Daryl Quinlivan, who was the former Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, to that role. Mr Quinlivan has been in that role for some six weeks, during which time we have had a massive crisis concerning the State's borders. One would think that with his experience of dealing with the heads of other States' agriculture departments, he would have been an ideal person to step up as an advocate for people in the agriculture sector affected by border closures. Last night I spoke about how that is impacting one business in particular in my electorate. Today that business owner was informed that, with all the new agricultural codes associated with the Victorian border, his application would have to be made again, despite having waited for 13 days for his initial application to be progressed. When the floodgates open after midnight tonight and when applications go live on Service NSW he will join the big queue of every farm owner who is trying to get their business people back into New South Wales. During the past two weeks of his life in which he was preparing information for the Government to address the border closures that were put in place by this Government, his efforts were futile and for nothing. Very helpful!

But I digress. In my electorate I have had land-use planning conflicts causing farmers to experience significant run-off from houses. My electorate is one of the fastest-growing local government areas in the State. That has had a significant impact on a community that basically is settled at the floor of a valley. Now that all the hardstands, house roofs and concrete have taken up natural space, the water level has risen incredibly. That would be a perfect problem to raise with the Agriculture Minister. Can people do that? No. A quick check of the Department of Primary Industries [DPI] website to find the Agriculture Commissioner shows only a media release announcing his appointment. There is no pathway for farmers to communicate their problems and have them addressed. As the shadow Minister for Primary Industries I have received representations concerning land-use planning conflicts from farmers in Nelsons Plains in the Port Stephens electorate and Tamworth and Gidley in the Tamworth electorate because the person who has been appointed by the Government six weeks ago to do that type of work is not available.

I wrote to the Agriculture Commissioner through the director general of DPI to raise this issue with the Agriculture Commissioner because I had no other method of approaching the commissioner. I received a response a week later, which is probably the fastest response I have ever had from the Department of Primary Industries, which stated:

Thank you for your letter dated 4 September 2020. The Agriculture Commissioner and I are aware of the matters raised and have been in contact with Port Stephens Council.

That concerned the issue I raised on that date. The letter also states:

It is appropriate that correspondence received by a departmental staff member, or a contractor directed by a staff member, from a Member of Parliament be sent on to the Minister's office.

That letter raises two key questions: Why can we not find out where the Agriculture Commissioner's pathway is? How do we contact him? It also speaks of the fear of the farming sector. The very important words of the department's response are, "a departmental staff member", which I assume would be Mr Hansen as director general, "or a contractor directed by a staff member". That is the similar problem we had with the NSW Land and Water Commissioner and drought coordinator, who was sacked last November but who, 10 months later, is still on the DPI website as the contact person. We have no pathway to contact the Agriculture Commissioner, who has no teeth.

NORTHERN RIVERS WATERSHED INITIATIVE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (17:11:15): I support the Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative that is embraced by our whole community and was endorsed on 8 February 2019 by the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation [NRJO] of councils. The initiative was long overdue and is in need of urgent attention and urgent funding. In summary, the initiative is concerned with the repair and restoration of our river system, notably the

Richmond River. In the words of the NRJO, it is a holistic approach to the management of water within the catchments that will adopt best practice approaches to catchment management modelling, natural flood mitigation, improvements in stream bank condition and river health that also will contribute to reduced flood risk within the catchments.

Floods are a feature of the Northern Rivers area. The area has some flood mitigation but it still has a long way to go. We have constructed flood mitigation and we can also have natural flood mitigation. The Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative speaks to what we can do with natural improvements. Obviously the question is: Why do we need it? A recent eco-health assessment of the Richmond River overall rated the river to be overall a "D", "D-minus" in some places and even an "F" in the Wilsons River, which is part of the whole catchment. It is one of the worst in New South Wales and it has been like that for quite a long time. The assessment goes on to state, "Whilst not as degraded, the Tweed, Brunswick and Evans rivers systems face similar challenges."

That leads to compromised economic and social values within the catchment and estuarine systems. Climate change is also projected to bring more hot days, bushfires, droughts and intense storms to the Northern Rivers that will place further strain on water resources and bring in more extreme weather events. The New South Wales Government's sea level policy states that sea level rise is inevitable and it establishes planning benchmarks to be adopted in New South Wales. There is a lot more that the policy says about that but out of that will be the sea level rise in the Richmond River, which will bring about a whole lot of other things such as erosion and it will have implications for drainage and flooding.

What will it do? It will improve soil health, riparian restoration, catchment management revegetation, agronomic best management practice, redesign flood plain drainage to meet contemporary standards, a sustainable agriculture reform package that may include buybacks, and a scientific framework for landscape design and monitoring. Some of the councils that form the NRJO go beyond my electorate, but we are looking at an holistic approach across the entire catchment, include: Kyogle Council, Lismore City Council, Richmond Valley Council, Ballina Shire Council, Byron Shire Council, Tweed Shire Council and Rous County Council. Rous County Council will have a lot of carriage of the initiative.

The initiative was designed in collaboration with the Rous County Council chair, local industry, university, community and government representatives. It also embraced a range of initiatives to address river health—new ones and those that already existed, including flooding in the Northern Rivers catchments. It has been reviewed by the Rous County Council internally and there has been a lot of other consultation. What are they asking for? Preliminary scoping of the scale of work needed to address this initiative. It indicates a budget in the order of \$150 million over 10 years to 15 years would be required to carry out the necessary changes across the landscape. A report has been commissioned by the Government to decide who is going to manage the process. We are still waiting for the answer. I commend this initiative to the House.

COOGEE ELECTORATE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (17:16:22): I bring the attention of this House to the dire need for greater investment in public education in the Eastern Suburbs and the urgency for action from this Government. There are seven fantastic public primary schools in the Coogee electorate and, according to data from the Department of Education, six of those seven schools are at or over capacity. In previous years the growth in public school enrolments has reflected the fantastic work being done by our local school principals and their wonderful staff to provide a first-class education and schooling environment in our local public schools. In speaking with our local school principals it is clear that they are facing a major increase in enrolment applications for the 2021 school year as local families begin to feel the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and Australia's first recession in almost 30 years.

We know the worst of the economic impacts of COVID-19 are yet to come, and it is a certainty that more local parents will be turning to public education for the 2021 school year and beyond. Firstly, this will put a huge strain on the already stretched facilities and staff at our fantastic local public schools. Secondly, this guaranteed increase in public school enrolments will place a spotlight on the significant gaps in secondary public school education in the Eastern Suburbs. There is no co-educational public high school in the Coogee electorate. The closest co-educational public high school is Rose Bay Secondary College in the Vaucluse electorate which, according to recent data, is already at 103 per cent of capacity. In conversations with local parents, these numbers may be an underestimate of the squeeze for classroom space at Rose Bay Secondary College, with several parents at the school indicating that the school could be up to 110 per cent capacity for the new school year.

Rose Bay Secondary College is unable to take any students from out of area. Many of my constituents in the Coogee electorate have written to me to discuss their anguish. Their children are not able to be enrolled at Rose Bay Secondary College and they have no co-educational public high school option within reach. The closest co-educational high schools in the Coogee electorate to the south are at Matraville and Mascot, and to the west

are at Redfern and Alexandria. The next closest option is the Inner Sydney High School, which is already at enrolment capacity and will be unable to take out-of-area enrolments. There is no existing dedicated public school bus services to connect local suburbs with the senior campuses of Alexandria Park Community School, Matraville Sports High or JJ Cahill Memorial High School.

In June I asked the transport Minister how students from my electorate, especially those in the suburbs further north, would access these out-of-area high schools without school bus services. I was also interested in how much time the Minister expected students to commute in order to get to and from school. I encourage all members to read the transport Minister's answer. He helpfully directed me to the trip planner page on the Transport for NSW website. Potentially the Minister was trying to avoid publishing the commute times requested in the question and answer paper. I took his advice. I will happily inform the House of the commute times as produced by the trip planner. For students from the Coogee electorate to travel to their closest co-educational public schools that are taking out-of-area enrolments at 7.30 a.m.—for example Matraville Sports High School—students will spend the following times commuting one way: 57 minutes from Bondi Junction, 58 minutes from Clovelly, one hour and three minutes from Bronte, and one hour 17 minutes from Tamarama.

To get to JJ Cahill Memorial High School and Alexandria Park Community School the travel times are roughly the same. Using this data, the Government would be asking local students to travel on average one hour and two minutes and to make three changes of transport every weekday in order to get to school. The Government is clearly failing families and students in the Eastern Suburbs by not providing adequate access to public education. It is a fairly straightforward problem to solve. Firstly, invest in a co-educational public high school in the Eastern Suburbs. As the local population and the demand for public school enrolments both continue to increase, there is no question that a new co-educational high school will be needed.

Secondly, fast-track the upgrades to Randwick Girls' and Randwick Boys' high schools. These great local schools have fantastic students, brilliant staff and a rich history but are being let down by their facilities. Now is the time to follow through on the promise of major upgrades to both schools. Thirdly, introduce special school bus services to help students commute to co-educational high schools in 30 minutes or less. Our public schools need champions in this place. The right to universal public education is one of the most important issues we should be discussing in this place. I call on this Government to take action, to invest in public education in the Eastern Suburbs and across all of New South Wales.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (17:21:29): There are so many victims of abusive intimate partner relationships. When we talk about victims we tend to identify with 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 or ex-intimate partner. Not surprisingly, the abuse and deaths almost always involve coercive controlling behaviours. I have been talking about this for a long time. Those behaviours follow 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. They 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 away from them on 3 March 2019 by an ex-intimate partner. The murder case exhibited what we now know as the classic signs of a coercive controlling behaviour. Nithya, Preethi's sister, told some of her story to the Illawarra *Mercury*. I will recount some of her story and her journey going forward. In that article Nithya said:

I lost my sister to intimate partner violence and it was obviously the most difficult thing my family and I have ever gone through—and it will never be okay ... It's the main reason for me to advocate for the Trauma Recovery Centre—it gives me a sense of meaning and purpose in life to try and prevent this happening to others.

Both Nithya and her family are supporting the Illawarra Trauma Recovery Centre, the first of its kind in Australia, through their advocacy and financial support. Nithya also said:

Also working in psychiatry, I know there's so many gaps in the system.

This is supported by Dr Karen Williams, who works as a psychiatrist in the Illawarra. Dr Williams is also reported in that article. She said:

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

Dr Williams 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. Nithya acknowledges that the "majority of perpetrators are men, and victims women" but acknowledges that men can be victims too. She goes on:

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 we can change the way that society views and deals with domestic abuse. Nithya believes:

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 she knew her sister's stance on violence. The article in the *Illawarra Mercury* goes on to say that she "doesn't believe Preethi's former boyfriend had been physically violent during their relationship, but said he had shown signs of coercive control". It is this type of behaviour that the bill, which is named in Preethi's honour, hopes to eradicate. The article states that Nithya believes Preethi's former boyfriend's "first act of physical violence after he met up with Preethi on the night of her murder was his 'final act of control'".

Community Recognition Statements

FABINOX WELDING ACADEMY

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (17:26:38): As our State works towards recovery from the economic downturn caused by COVID-19, it is important to recognise the pivotal role which local businesses can play. One such business in Riverstone is Fabinox Welding Academy, headed by CEO David Lortan. Emerging from the foundation of an existing metal fabrication business, the Fabinox Welding Academy was officially opened on 8 September 2020 and aims to fill a training gap in the State's economy. According to the Commonwealth Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Australia will require an additional 30,000 welders to be trained from 2020 to 2027.

Recognising this need, Fabinox has shown great initiative and willingness to invest in the future of young Australians. David's view is that among the 360 registered training providers in New South Wales, there is no facility or provider that can match the offering that he is now able to provide in a full-time mode in Riverstone. The academy offers a certificate III in Engineering—Fabrication Trade as well as a range of short courses, such as a construction white card. I am proud to acknowledge the initiatives of small and medium businesses like Fabinox Welding Academy. I commend David Lortan and his team for creating opportunities for young people.

THE GLEN

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (17:27:46): In 1994 the Ngaimpe Aboriginal Corporation registered and set up The Glen. The Glen is a well-recognised drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre based in Chittaway in my electorate. The Glen is passionate about delivering a best practice, high-quality, culturally appropriate drug and alcohol residential rehabilitation service for men and has been doing this for over 25 years. It has always known that there is a need to offer something similar for women who also suffer from drug and alcohol addiction. The Glen has recently purchased land and is proceeding through the development application process to implement a culturally appropriate women's service. It is determined to do this right and develop a first-class service to assist women. In April 2019 the Federal Government committed \$9 million to make this women's service a reality. The hard work has begun and three separate committees of dedicated women are undertaking planning for the centre around legal, property and operations. I wish The Glen well in developing and delivering a culturally appropriate service for women.

STEVEN GRANT

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:28:48): Steven Grant is a life member of the Central Coast Volunteer Rescue Association Squad. Unfortunately, he is facing the biggest challenge of his life, having been diagnosed with a terminal brain tumour. This has been consuming his life. Steven very proudly joined the Rescue Association on 14 March 2012. He has spent countless hours serving others and has attended many serious and testing rescue situations. Diagnosed with the cancerous brain tumour five years ago did not stop Steven from being actively involved in his Volunteer Rescue Association Squad. I also acknowledge his incredible wife, Dale, who has been a constant support to him through these incredibly trying and difficult times. Steven and Dale have dived through so many challenges over the past five years. Sadly, Steven's cancer has progressed. I thank him for

his generous service to the community. I am sending my thoughts to his wife, Dale, and their family at this difficult time. I know that all members of the rescue association very much appreciate the friendship and mateship they have enjoyed with Steven.

UNSW RUGBY CLUB FOURTH GRADE TEAM

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (17:29:57): I congratulate the UNSW Rugby Club fourth grade team which defeated St Pats in the grand final, securing victory 10 points to five. This group of misfit old boys agreed to come back for one last shot at glory and, oh my, did they achieve it. It has been six long years since UNSW Rugby Club fourth grade last won a premiership and this group of battlers deserved the win. While the victory was an all-in team effort, a special shout-out must go to Pat Bourke who scored UNSW's only try and also to Spook, the skipper, who converted the try and kicked a penalty to secure the win. Finally, it would be remiss of me to not mention that taking the field on the day was a former member of this place, the former member for Heathcote the Hon. Paul McLeay, who played loosehead prop for St Pats. Sadly for Paul, he was out-scrummed by my little brother Francis, the loosehead prop for UNSW. A huge shout-out to the boys, who I have been assured are still celebrating today.

TRIBUTE TO DR RUSS DICKENS, OAM

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:31:00): I acknowledge the passing of former Blacktown City councillor Dr Russ Dickens, OAM. Dr Dickens was first elected to Blacktown City Council in September 1980 and served the community as an Independent until October 2016. Dr Dickens served Blacktown as mayor for one term in 1987 and was elected deputy mayor three times between 2012 and 2014. He was a passionate western Sydney man who helped the local ratepayers of Blacktown as a councillor. He also worked in animal welfare and animal research, alongside his daily occupation as a veterinarian. Dr Dickens established the Blacktown Veterinary Hospital in 1966 and was a founding member of the Australian Koala Foundation. He volunteered for many organisations such as the Salvation Army, Rotary and the Blacktown Animal Holding Facility. Dr Dickens was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in 1992 for his animal research. I extend my condolences and that of the House to his wife, Lorina, and their children, family and friends during this time.

NATIONAL POLICE REMEMBRANCE DAY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:32:01): Tuesday 29 September is National Police Remembrance Day. On this day we reflect on the sacrifices that our NSW Police Force officers make and remember the brave officers killed in the line of duty. Since its founding in 1862, the NSW Police Force has added 273 names to the Honour Roll. Our NSW Police Force officers continue to put themselves in harm's way every day to ensure our safety. They run towards the danger so that we do not have to. I offer my deepest condolences to the families of all our NSW Police Force officers who have died in the line of duty. We honour their memories and commit to supporting the families that they have left behind now and into the future. Thank you to all of the officers of the NSW Police Force for your service to our State.

CAMDEN & DISTRICT NETBALL ASSOCIATION UNDER 14S TEAM

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (17:32:55): I congratulate the Camden & District Netball Association under 14s team for being crowned the Elite Sports Team of the Year at the twenty-second annual Wests Sports Council Awards. The awards recognise teams and individuals and celebrate their achievements in grassroots sport and community spirit. The Camden & District under 14s netball team has built a strong bond and has a high collective commitment to achieve and outperform its competition. The team is made up of exceptional young players, many of whom have played together for over two years. Many in the team have also been selected to represent Camden District Netball Association at the annual New South Wales State titles, which is a testament to the calibre at which this team plays. This is an outstanding achievement for these girls and, I hope, one of many in a long and successful career in netball.

SWANSEA ELECTORATE HEALTH WORKERS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (17:33:47): I recognise the sacrifices and dedication of the Swansea electorate healthcare workers during the global pandemic. They have put themselves at great risk on the front line tackling the COVID-19 pandemic. Our State is indebted to those workers. Without the efforts of the nurses, doctors, GPs, paramedics, aged-care and disability workers, cleaners and hospital administration staff, our State would not have been able to continue functioning. As we continue to fight the virus, I acknowledge the contact tracers and those running testing clinics. It is important that we all do our bit by maintaining good social distancing practices to repay the hard work and sacrifices of those workers. I thank all the healthcare workers for their dedication in looking after the sick and vulnerable at this time of crisis. It must also be said that the families of those workers have also made sacrifices, and I thank them as well.

HOLSWORTHY ELECTORATE HSC STUDENTS

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:34:55): I send my best wishes to all the Holsworthy electorate students who will soon be sitting their HSC exams and practical assessments. This year is unlike any other, with COVID-19 and the bushfires at the beginning of this year, but I know that they will give the final assessments and exams their all. While they are focused on their studies, it is important that they look after their mental health and wellbeing. I encourage them to keep talking and to stay connected with friends, family and teachers, stay active and take breaks for exercise and, importantly, ask for help if needed. I send my best wishes to all of those students for the exams and their future endeavours.

RUTHERFORD ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR PREVENTION

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:35:40): I thank Lee Lester, Renee Meister and Salvatore Cocco, who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to address antisocial behaviour in Rutherford. I acknowledge hardworking community workers and public servants from the local police and the education, housing, and communities and justice sectors. I also acknowledge non-government organisations such as Hume Housing, Maitland Community Drug Action Team, as well as Maitland Mayor Loretta Baker and Councillor Henry Meskauskas. As local residents, Lee, Renee and Salvatore have all stepped up to find solutions to reduce negative behaviour and work towards positive outcomes and pathways for young people. I know that their efforts are appreciated by all residents, shopkeepers and workers in the area. Lee started a petition to bring debate on these issues to the Parliament, Salvatore is working hard collecting signatures and Renee has re-engaged passionately with the youth so that they can connect positively with their community without stigma. I thank them for all their work towards resolving these issues in a positive manner.

TAREN POINT PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (17:36:43): I acknowledge the Taren Point Public School community for their resilience throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Although only small, Taren Point Public School has plenty of heart. When COVID-19 began to impact our schools, teachers and staff worked hard to ensure that learning packs were developed and school laptops were provided for students who required them, ensuring equitable access for all. Given typical Mother's Day activities were also disrupted, staff compiled DIY card packs for students and secretly contacted their fathers to collect them so that mums would be surprised. Above all, the school worked hard to keep its close-knit community informed during this unprecedented time.

I commend Principal James Nobbs for leading the school through the pandemic, and his dedicated staff for adjusting so readily. I also recognise the student leadership team, including school captains Emily and Ayden and vice captains Chloe and Antony, who have been holding virtual assemblies and who featured in a number of videos to promote events around the school. I commend the Taren Point Public School community for their efforts in supporting our little learners through this difficult time.

INDIANA COOPER

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:37:44): I congratulate Indiana Cooper from Gundagai on being awarded a scholarship from the Southern Sports Academy 2021 athlete with a disability program. This fantastic program will financially support Indiana to access higher levels of competition, coaching or purchase any sporting gear she may need. It will also provide her with a range of academy apparel and a gym membership in her home town, as well as other benefits. Indiana is already a national silver and bronze medallist and a State gold and silver medallist in athletics and cross-country. She is working hard to achieve her goals of making the national all-schools team in 2021 and qualifying for the 2022 Commonwealth Games. I congratulate Indiana and I cannot wait to see what she achieves.

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL, TOUKLEY

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (17:38:35): Kindergarten students from St Mary's Catholic School at Toukley have received free tennis racquets from the ANZ Tennis Hot Shots Racquet Roadshow. More than 30,000 students across 800 schools in Australia received brand-new tennis racquets as communities return to sport and find ways to be active during COVID. A virtual video call to schools from Australia tennis legends Todd Woodbridge and John Fitzgerald will inspire students to pick up their racquets and swing into action. Since 2015, 170,000 racquets have been delivered to schools like St Mary's by ANZ. The students are excited to receive the new racquets and learn a new sport that not only improves their physical strength and balance but also helps with other activities off the court. Principal Kevin Williams will be very impressed with his kindergarten St Mary's students.

EMPIRE BAY RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:39:39): I acknowledge the excellent work of the Empire Bay Rural Fire Brigade, one of the oldest rural fire brigades on the Central Coast. Last year I had the pleasure of visiting the brigade with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services when we presented it with funding to enable it to secure a thermal imaging camera. I am delighted to inform the House that this thermal imaging camera is already being put to good use. Unfortunately, there was a house fire in Killcare Heights a few weeks ago and the Empire Bay Rural Fire Brigade was dispatched to respond. The brigade used the thermal imaging camera, which played a significant role in saving time and effort, to secure the property. I thank Simon Funnell, captain of the Empire Bay Rural Fire Brigade. Simon and his team do fantastic work for the community by just getting on with the job.

WAVERLEY OLD BOYS SOCCER TEAM

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (17:40:31): I congratulate the Waverley Old Boys soccer team on making it to the grand final, which is being played against the "Dirty Reds" Drummoyne this weekend at TJ Millner Oval. Their results so far, and the fact that they made it to the grand final, is testament to the quality of their play over the course of the season, and to their teamwork and camaraderie. The last time the Waverley Old Boys won the big dance was back in 1991, so it is fantastic to see them make it to the grand final this year. I congratulate skipper Callum McKenzie and the rest of the team, as well as club president Ted Shelton, on the season far. I wish them good luck in the grand final this weekend—although I am sure they will not need it.

WESTMEAD HOSPITAL ART INSTALLATION

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:41:09): I speak on the latest art instalment at Westmead Hospital, in the electorate of Seven Hills. The expression of culture, creativity and passion is a welcome addition to the new Central Acute Services Building at the hospital. Over the past five years, the Government has spent more than \$1 billion on performing upgrades and providing new infrastructure at Westmead Hospital, with a further \$700 million allocated to the Children's Hospital at Westmead, to ensure that both are equipped to meet the needs of the future. Part of the funding is dedicated to the construction of a welcoming environment for patients and visitors. That includes the installation of *Mudinga* by local artist Nicole Monk, which enlivens the level one Cultural Gathering Place Garden at the new building. The sculpture depicts a spear bursting through the water, generating a ripple effect and sending fish scurrying. The Westmead Redevelopment project has been deliberate with its art installations, with many designed by Indigenous Australians, who represent an important part of the history of the electorate of Seven Hills.

DARKINJUNG LAND, KARIONG

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:42:08): I have been afforded the incredible privilege of speaking about local Aboriginal cultural knowledge. Knowledge for Aboriginal people is handed down in pieces, in layers like the rings of an onion skin, and put back together. Elders, aunties and ancient ancestors have a bond with this land that can never be broken. Proud Aboriginal man Phil Pulbrook's late mother and aunties passed down stories to him of this land for other women to preserve. The Darkinjung land at Kariong is a woman's place. It is a sacred women's ceremonial fertility site that men cannot visit. It is only due to our colonial history that a man must now speak about such an important site because his mum, his aunties and ancients were involved and it is law. It is wrong that men should be made to speak of such things and I acknowledge that Phil feels sick. I encourage women from communities who know, as well as people from all walks of life, to speak up. This is forever. This land must be protected long into the future. We must learn from what happened in The Entrance that money should never be a consideration. Earth is mother, is Mother Earth.

LURNEA HIGH SCHOOL

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:43:27): I thank the students, teachers, staff and school community of Lurnea High School for their efforts in assisting victims of the Beirut explosion. As many members will be aware, the explosion was devastating for the people of Lebanon and for the many friends and family of those impacted who now live in Australia. Although this was a devastating situation, it often brings out the best in humanity. That is exactly what we saw at Lurnea High School, with the school community jumping into action to provide supplies for the people of Beirut. They were able to provide many boxes of food and supplies, and raised over \$1,000 towards the cost of the next shipping container to be sent to Beirut. I thank the Lurnea High School community for their efforts in assisting victims of the Beirut explosion. Acts like these make me so proud of my community.

MAITLAND CROQUET CLUB

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:44:21): Maitland Croquet Club is one of many community groups in Maitland working to contribute to the social fabric of our community in difficult circumstances.

Pre-COVID, Maitland Croquet Club had 62 active members who played Monday to Saturday every week of the year, with the exception of Christmas Day, Anzac Day and Easter. The youngest member of the club is 33 years old and the next youngest is 44 years old. The group provides an important opportunity for exercise and fellowship for the mature members of our community. The club recently obtained a grant of \$267,100. As patron of the club I had the honour of turning the first sod on the program of works with Maitland's mayor, Councillor Loretta Baker. The grant will help extend the club room and the covered verandah for spectators, provide new equipment storage and two unisex bathrooms with showering facilities and remove the existing shipping containers. When complete the club facilities will be able to host State and national events. I acknowledge club stalwart Wal Mills and the rest of the club members for their hard work to achieve this outcome.

JANNALI HIGH SCHOOL

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (17:45:25): I congratulate the newly elected school captains of Jannali High School on their appointment. To be democratically elected by their peers demonstrates these individuals' skills and achievements in areas of leadership, communication and integrity. These students should be incredibly proud to have been chosen by their peers. I urge them to make the most of this fantastic opportunity to develop the qualities that shape community and professional leaders in life after graduation. I congratulate school captains Paris Alcorn and Noah Lewis and vice-captains Natasha Pochleitner and Finn Butler on their successful appointment as captains for 2021. I extend to them my best wishes for their final year of high school. Although we are currently navigating unprecedented times I trust that they will capably lead their peers through what will be their most important year of schooling thus far. I extend my best wishes to this group of fantastic student leaders as they continue to exemplify that Jannali High School is "The place to succeed".

JESSICA HAGAN

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (17:46:21): I congratulate Jessica Hagan from Wyong Hospital Pharmacy on being nominated in the Caring for the Coast Awards and on being successfully awarded the Emerging Leader Award. The Caring for the Coast Awards 2020 recognises Central Coast individuals and teams who go above and beyond with outstanding contributions and achievements. Jessica is the deputy director at Wyong Hospital Pharmacy and earned the award for being an inspiring leader who is dedicated to supporting the development of others. Jessica works closely with the teams and has a strong focus on patient care, which has constantly improved their consistency, reach, quality, efficiency and productivity. I say well done to Jessica Hagan for being an outstanding individual and team supporter in the Wyong Hospital Pharmacy. Our frontline health workers have done an amazing job in protecting our community through the COVID-19 pandemic.

GRACE KRAUSE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:47:12): I bring to the attention of this House the achievements of Grace Krause from Temora, who has been awarded a scholarship under the Southern Sports Academy 2021 Individual Athlete Program. Grace qualified in three events for School Sport Australia: the 12-years girls' 100 metres, the senior girls' 200 metres and the senior girls' long jump. In 2019 at the NSW Primary Schools Sports Association she ran the fastest time for the girls' 100 metres and was the most successful Riverina athlete at the NSW PSSA in 2019, a remarkable achievement given the calibre of sportspeople that region produces. She is now working towards her goal of medalling at the Australian All Schools competition. I congratulate Grace on her achievements so far and for receiving this scholarship.

NATIONAL SERVICE AND COMBINED FORCES ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:48:07): I thank those once-young men and women from Maitland and surrounding districts who were called to serve during National Service. Chosen to serve, they did so with distinction during one of our most challenging conflicts. Whilst all service personnel are intrinsically impacted by their service to some degree, the Nashos—particularly those who served in Vietnam—sometimes became the target of anti-war sentiment, became disengaged from their communities and felt devalued by their country. It took a long time before they were afforded the respect, support and acknowledgement that they had earned and deserved. Recently I humbly accepted the invitation of the Maitland and District Branch of the National Service and Combined Forces Association of Australia, fondly known as the Nashos, to continue as their patron. The Maitland Nashos—particularly president Fred Goode, OAM, JP; secretary Denese Hume; and treasurer Elaine Mudford—work extremely hard to ensure that all of their members are supported and that their service is appropriately commemorated. I thank them again for the honour of continuing to serve as patron of their organisation.

BLACK SUMMER BUSHFIRE CITATION

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:49:10): I welcome the Premier's decision, announced last weekend, to award emergency services personnel involved in the Black Summer bushfires a special bushfire citation. We

know that volunteers do not do what they do for recognition. They do it for our community and to serve others. I thank everyone from the Central Coast from the Rural Fire Service, Fire and Rescue, the SES, and all other government and non-government agencies for what they did to protect people and property. We know that pretty much every rural fire brigade on the Central Coast went to respond to bushfires in the Hawkesbury, the North Coast, the South Coast and beyond. Hundreds of Central Coast residents will be receiving their bushfire citations shortly. I congratulate them on being honoured and recognised in this unique way. As I have said previously, these people are running towards danger when other people are running in the other direction. They do it not for recognition but because they want to keep communities safe.

GENNY MURPHY

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:50:16): This evening I acknowledge the incredible contribution of one of my constituents, Genny Murphy. Amidst the uncertainty and fear of COVID, Genny recognised that the senior population of her local area would no doubt be experiencing feelings of isolation and difficulty getting their usual essential items. Rising to this challenge she decided to call as many of the over-70s as she could. Over the course of the months of lockdown, Genny spoke to more than 6,000 seniors in the Gosford electorate, checking in on their welfare, linking them up with local grocers and acting as a new friend to chat to for the many who were living in lockdown alone. My office received dozens of calls from those who had spoken to Genny, remarking that the kind gesture had meant so much to them in a time when friends and family were distant. Genny made all of these calls from her granny flat in Woy Woy, where she herself was isolating as someone over the age of 70. Genny's tenacity in continuing with these calls for the duration of lockdown highlights just how much she loves and cares for her local community. I love Genny. She is an absolute champion human.

WESTMEAD HOSPITAL

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:51:15): I acknowledge the fantastic work being done by Westmead Hospital staff in the Seven Hills electorate to develop locally made lifesaving ventilators during the coronavirus pandemic. In association with the University of Sydney, Westmead Hospital clinicians were part of an \$800 million New South Wales Government investment to help increase services and equipment as our country fought COVID-19. After countless hours of development, hospital staff and researchers produced the CoVida ventilator. Further research is being done to improve the current model and produce more. This initiative not only provides lifesaving equipment for western Sydney residents but of course also boosts local jobs and provides opportunities right across the State. This pandemic has inspired waves of innovation in our local communities and the greater Western Sydney Local Health District as we all rise to the challenges it has presented. Although this has been a difficult time for families across the nation, I am proud of the Seven Hills electorate healthcare workers, researchers and innovators who have used their skills and knowledge to improve the lives of Australians in need.

LIONS CLUB OF MAITLAND

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:52:25): I salute the tenacity of members of the Lions Club of Maitland for organising and hosting this year's N3 District Convention in November. The N3 District covers the New South Wales Central Coast, the Hunter region and surrounding areas. Our Lions N3 District supports a range of activities including the Youth of the Year Quest, the Lions Australia Diabetes Foundation and the Big Red Kidney Bus. This help is vital, so we need to ensure we help them to continue this work through donations and other support. Pre-COVID, the Big Red Kidney Bus made it possible for people on haemodialysis to enjoy a holiday. I hope this much-loved service and those who rely on it to take a break are able to resume travels in 2021. This year the N3 District Convention attendees will be severely restricted due to COVID-safe practices but they will continue undeterred. I thank members of the Lions Club of Maitland for stepping up to the challenge and for searching for new ways to continue their good work in spite of the obstacles that now exist. Our community is eternally grateful.

OUR BIG KITCHEN

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—I rise today to recognise the work of Rebbetzin Laya Slavin of Our Big Kitchen, a community kitchen in the heart of Bondi. Our Big Kitchen helps people come together and volunteer their time to prepare meals for those in need, and last year, they made and distributed over 80,000 meals to disadvantaged Australians in need. Our Big Kitchen also works with other organisations to minimise food waste, and promote sustainable food production. At the beginning of the year, they also held a bushfire relief volunteering day which I had the pleasure of attending. Our Big Kitchen distribute goods to shelters across New South Wales, including to those housing people sleeping rough, to domestic violence shelters, and to organisations helping asylum seekers, all of which are services that have been pushed to the limit during the COVID-19 health crisis. For Mother's Day, Our Big Kitchen put together gift baskets which were donated to mothers in women's shelters, together distributing over 100 baskets. I would like to take this opportunity to thank

everyone at Our Big Kitchen, from their volunteers to their organisers, and to everyone that has donated a product to this fantastic cause.

SIOBHAN O'TOOLE

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—So many people across our community and the world are affected by cancer, which is why I today would like to take this opportunity to thank a member of our Eastern Suburbs community, Siobhan O'Toole, for her efforts in fundraising for the St Vincent's Hospital Cancer Exercise Prehab program. Siobhan is a cancer survivor who is now dedicating her efforts to helping cancer patients use exercise to endure and recover from their chemotherapy treatment and reduce the chance of a recurrence of the disease through increasing access to the same exercise program that helped her get through her treatments! Siobhan has already raised more than \$60,000 for a Cancer Exercise Prehab program, which could see up to 200 Patients a year get access to free exercise programs. Siobhan was recently nominated as a Westfield Local Heroes finalist for Bondi Junction, and I was like to officially extend my congratulations and my thanks to Siobhan for all of the work that she does.

LISMORE YOUTH KOORI COURT EPETITION

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I wish to congratulate the students of The Living School in downtown Lismore who recently presented to my office their ePetition calling for the establishment of a Youth Koori Court in the Lismore district. The Northern Rivers region has a disproportionate number of Indigenous youth in contact with the justice system. Youth Koori Courts incorporate culture in the process and have been successful in reducing contact with the justice system. These students came to me concerned about the alarming rate of Aboriginal deaths in custody in NSW and I share these concerns. I congratulate students Finn Holleman, Diego Singsby, Jamie Paddock, Ludo Morwitzer, Lara Fox, Lani Fox, Oscar Nissen, Mika Rodwell, Amelie Osta-meier, Ayla Cornell-Black and Indiana Campbell. I would particularly like to congratulate Griffin Lee, who gave a moving speech on Aboriginal deaths in custody and racism. I thank Living School Principal John Stewart, volunteer teacher Eddie Lloyd and staff for encouraging students to be active on important social issues. The Court is also a recommendation of Lismore City Council's Crime Prevention and Social Justice Committee. I encourage everyone in our community to sign the e-Petition, which is available on the NSW Parliament website.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADERS FOR FINAL YEAR OF THIS TERM

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—Four local councils in my Electorate of Lismore have met to elect who will lead them during the final year of this term, extended from four to five years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In Tweed Shire, former Mayor Cr Katie Milne has stepped down and I want to pay tribute to her steady leadership of that council for the past five years. I congratulate her successor Mayor Cr Chris Cherry and newly-elected Deputy Mayor Cr Reece Byrnes, and wish them and their fellow councillors the best for the year ahead. Kyogle Council's strong leadership team of Mayor Cr Danielle Mulholland and Deputy Mayor John Burley remains unchanged. The same goes for Tenterfield Shire Council, where Mayor Cr Peter Petty and Deputy Mayor Cr Greg Sauer were re-elected unopposed. Lismore City Council has a popularly elected Mayor in Cr Isaac Smith but he has a new Deputy Mayor in Cr Neil Marks, who replaces Cr Darlene Cook. COVID-19 has thrown many challenges at the local government sector, and all of our councils have adapted in their own distinct ways. I stand ready to assist them with State-related issues as they arise.

CASTLE HILL RSL CRICKET CLUB

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the Castle Hill RSL Cricket Club, within my electorate of Castle Hill. Since cricket was first played in the Hills in the 1850's, with Castle Hill losing outright to Kellyville in the first recorded fixture, the game has been a regular part of summer in the area. The Castle Hill RSL Cricket Club have gone above and beyond being just a sporting club in recent years, charitably supporting the McGrath Foundation's Pink Stumps Day, as well as the Hills' Relay for Life. It was recently my pleasure to provide a defibrillator to the club, ensuring the appropriate medical equipment is available should the players need it. They received \$3,113 from the NSW Government for this purpose, as part of the \$300,000 provided to my electorate in the 2019 round of the Community Building Partnership Grants. I would like to thank all involved with the continued running of the club, including Carl and Leanne Spears, Andrew Johnson, Lance Soles, Michael Hungerford, Joann West, Ben Bridie, Matthew Sheedy, Glen Mackay, Darius West, Sebastian Ward and Jake and Warwick Stinson.

DURAL PUBLIC SCHOOL P&C ASSOCIATION

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the work of the Dural Public School P&C Association within my electorate of Castle Hill. P&C Associations are critical within the whole of NSW as they advocate for the betterment of school infrastructure and the school community. In recent years the Dural Public P&C have assisted in acquiring 40 Laptops for Year 6 classrooms, alongside

C-Reader Pens. This is on top of their usual contributions in running the canteen, uniform shop, Mother's and Father's Day stalls, discos, cakes stalls and more. The Association also runs the Biennial Dural Country Fair, which is always a hit within the community. It was recently my pleasure to assist them in their most recent project, building a permanent sun-safe shade structure over where the children eat. They received \$20,000 from the NSW Government for this purpose, as part of the \$300,000 provided to my electorate in the 2019 round of the Community Building Partnership Grants. I would like to thank all involved with the P&C, notably the President Cara Miceli.

COMMUNITY HUBS AUSTRALIA

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I would like to recognise and commend Community Hubs Australia for adapting and continuing its operations throughout the COVID-19 pandemic this year. Community Hubs Australia is a not-for-profit organisation that provides assistance to migrants, refugees and international students, with the goal of helping culturally diverse people integrate into Australian communities. Community Hubs focus on reaching migrant women who have pre-school children, and connect these families with each other, with their school, and with other local support services available to them. They operate predominantly from schools, and as a result their operations have been particularly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. I acknowledge and thank Community Hubs Australia CEO Dr Sonja Hood, and Community Hub leaders Ajla Sameen and Maheen Nafees Khan of Bankstown Public School, Mecca Laalaa and Francesca Marinos of Bass Hill Public School, Lina Mourad of Chester Hill Public School, Sanjalin Krishan of Villawood East Public School, Christine Mallia of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School and Isabel Tong of Yagoona Public School, as well as all the volunteers for the support they provide to the diverse families in their local communities.

VIETNAM GENERALS MONUMENT

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I am pleased to inform the House about the recent unveiling of the Vietnamese Generals Monument in Bankstown by the Vietnamese Community in Australia NSW Chapter (VCA). The new monument is located in close proximity to The Boat People Monument at Saigon Place, which I committed to building as Mayor of Bankstown in order to recognise and celebrate the contribution Vietnamese-Australians have made in shaping the Bankstown community. I would like to acknowledge the President of VCA NSW Mr Paul Huy Nguyen and the executive for organising for this important monument to be erected as a permanent commemoration of the role played by the Vietnamese Generals in leading the fight in the pursuit of freedom, democracy and human rights for the Vietnamese people. We are fortunate to have a large and thriving Vietnamese community in the Bankstown area and the settlement of Vietnamese people in Australia continues to be one of our great success stories. I am proud to offer VCA my continued support, and I take this opportunity to congratulate VCA for dedicating the Vietnamese Generals Monument, and commend them for their tremendous contribution to our local community.

MORTGAGE NAVIGATORS—EARLWOOD

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury)—Congratulations to Mortgage Navigators Earlwood on their 21st Anniversary. I would like to thank Mortgage Navigators for their contribution to our community. From supporting and sponsoring local events, including being a major organiser of a fundraiser for bushfire victims held earlier this year, Mortgage Navigators has always been a community first business. The significant contribution and success of Mortgage Navigators has been recognised through various forums and awards. In 2020, Mortgage Navigators was nominated as business finalist in the Canterbury Bankstown Business awards and nominated as the Best Residential Broker in the Adviser Better Business Awards. Mortgage Navigators has also been nominated and the runner up for the Best Sole Operator- Residential Mortgage Broker at the prestigious Fast Gala Awards Night. I would also like to offer a special congratulations to George Massouridis the Principal and Founder of Mortgage Navigators. His excellent service and brilliant management of the business has helped it grow into one of Sydney's leading finance brokerages, with terrific and professional staff supporting loyal customers. I would again like to congratulate Mortgage Navigators on their milestone and thank them for their many years of service to the local community.

BERESFIELD AND TARRO PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Congratulations to Beresfield and Tarro Public Schools who were the recipients of the 2020 Department of Education Secretary's Award for Outstanding School Initiative. Together with local schools at Woodberry, Black Hill, Thornton and Millers Forest, Tarro and Beresfield received the award for their Strong Start, Successful Learners Transition Support program. The program assists early childhood centres to better understand the transition to school process. Working in partnership with the Transition Support Teacher, the process provides both school transition teams and early learning centres with the opportunity to begin looking at children and their needs much earlier, therefore facilitating their transitions over a longer period of time. Strong connections between partner primary schools and local service providers has successfully resulted in

'bridging the gap' from Pre-K to Kindergarten, allowing all children to get the best start to their education. Carolyn Wilson, the cluster Transition Support Teacher, is key to the program's success. Beresfield Principal, Jonathon Ridgeway and Tarro Principal, Kelly O'Shea, are full of praise for Carolyn and the program she has run. Well done Carolyn and all the schools on this award.

ANN LINDSEY

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—For Hunter Bird Observer's Club life member Ann Lindsey, all it took was one simple line on a television show more than 50 years ago to ignite her passion for birds. She remembers looking in her backyard and seeing all the birds - currawongs, kookaburras, butcher birds - and fell in love. That was when she decided to join her local bird club, becoming more and more in love with birds the longer she was involved. A few decades later she moved to the Hunter region and became a part of the Hunter Bird Observer's Club. She served as the club's president for four years in the 1990s, and also became interested and involved in the conservation side of things. Ann started to write letters to government about land clearing and became an advocate for protecting bird habitats. She was successful in having 18 hectares of bird habitat set aside on Kooragang Island as an offset for a coal loader being installed at the site. Ann is also a life member of the Hunter Wetlands Centre. Thank you Ann for all your hard work for the community, it is truly appreciated.

JOHN BONVENTI

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—Mr Speaker, I rise to recognise Tuncurry local John Bonventi who has spent a lifetime collecting war memorabilia which he has culminated into an impressive at home museum. The eighty-year old's collection is second to none and features memorabilia from World one and two as well as the Vietnam War, Korean War, Afghanistan and Iraq. The expansive collection started with medals, when John's brother returned home from world war two but now includes rare uniforms, old photos, artillery and even a world war one 'dog biscuit' which has been used to send a holiday message home. John has dedicated a lifetime to keeping the history and stories of our soldiers alive, but what I find most admirable is his commitment to keeping the legacy he's crafted alive for the next generation in our community. John now has plans to donate his priceless collection to the Tuncurry museum which will ensure the collection stays together and can continue teaching future generation about our history.

MIA PASKE

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—Mr Speaker, I rise to congratulate fifteen-year-old, Old Bar local, Mia Paske who has been accepted as a full-time student of the Queensland Ballet. Mia has already dedicated years to honing her craft as a ballerina and those around her can't speak highly enough of her hard work and commitment to dance. Mia has been a student at the Andrea Rowsell Academy of Dance in Taree for seven years, taking classes in ballet, jazz, contemporary and more. For the young dancer gaining acceptance into this program is the next step in what she hopes will be a long career as a professional ballerina. I again congratulate Mia Paske on her achievements and wish her luck ahead of her training with the Queensland Ballet which will begin in January.

PEAKHURST PUBLIC SCHOOL CARE PACKAGES

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the incredible fundraising efforts of the Peakhurst Public School community under the extraordinary leadership of the Executive team and student leaders. During these unprecedented times, the staff at St George Hospital have been placed under additional levels of stress whilst working selflessly on the frontline of this pandemic. In response to seeing the tireless work of the local nurses, doctors and admin staff, the students and staff at Peakhurst Public School led a drive for donations to create care packages, aimed at brightening the day of those who work so hard to keep us all healthy. The school community came together to deliver 105 care bags and 30 boxes of drinks to the staff at St George Hospital, with each bag containing a unique letter of gratitude from a student, which I am sure will be gratefully received by the St George Hospital staff. I would like to congratulate all the school leaders who came forward with this successful initiative and the staff of Peakhurst Public that facilitated this campaign, notably, Principal, Ms Sally Lawson and Deputy Principal, Ms Coralie Bray.

GIFT OF BREAD

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron)—I want to pay tribute to the magnificent work of the team of volunteers at Gift of Bread, a food-rescue charity whose Community Workshop is now based in Tempe. Every day of the week, their volunteers collect unsold loaves of bread from local bakeries and supermarkets, toast and package them, and then donate them to the neediest in our community. 10 000 loaves of bread are rescued each week – a figure which continues to grow. Instead of going to landfill, they are distributed to other charities - feeding the homeless, supplying soup kitchens and halfway houses, refuges and breakfast clubs, and even supporting our firefighters on the frontlines during last year's horror bushfire season. Their toasted crispbread, called

"Snackbags", are still good to eat 18 months later. Right now, many boxes of Snackbags are headed to Beirut to support Lebanon during its recovery from the devastating explosion at its main port. They give more than just the gift of bread, they give the gift of life to the most vulnerable people in our community. I congratulate Marcel de Maria, Valerian Rego, Nick Tropea, and every Gift of Bread volunteer on their magnificent efforts.

RUSSELL IRVING

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—I would like to acknowledge and commend Mr Russell Irving for preparing a Strategic Water Security Plan for the Village of Balmoral. During the summer bushfires Balmoral suffered a critical shortage of water for the RFS volunteers to fight the fires. Emergency measures and short term solutions were put in place and much of the village was saved as a result. Russell met with me to discuss the matter and committed to prepare the plan. With his great experience in these matters he has been able to provide a workable plan that will ensure that Balmoral Village residents will have security of supply in any future emergency. In addition he has prepared a plan for a sustainable water supply for Balmoral. I join with the residents of Balmoral in thanking Russell for his great work.

CAMDEN VALLEY INN

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—I would like to acknowledge that the renovated Camden Valley Inn has now been in operation for over 12 months. I had the pleasure of officially opening the renovated facility at this time last year. The heritage buildings had been maintained and the renovations, which cost over \$15 million, ensured that the character of the very popular venue was maintained. Since the reopening 15,676 Chicken Schnitzels have been served, which is equal to roughly four tonnes - the same weight as a Bedford truck. In addition Camden Valley Inn staff poured 77,245 litres of beer and 13,725 litres of wine, which is enough liquid to fill almost three petrol tankers. Customers have also consumed more than 880 kilograms of coffee. Well done Camden Valley Inn and the Lewis Land Group for this great facility. I should add that this is where I had breakfast after I proposed to my now wife Christine in a hot air balloon above the Camden valley Inn 11 years ago.

CAMPAIGN FOR PPE EQUIPMENT FOR ST GEORGE HOSPITAL

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, during this past year our local communities have had to rely on the tireless and selfless work of volunteers more than ever before. Luckily, the Oatley electorate has community spirit in spades and has been able to unify successfully to achieve outstanding results. In particular, I would like to draw attention to the leadership demonstrated by Cllr Nancy Liu, Joanne Jiang, Derek Wang and Caroline Lian, who organised a campaign to source thousands of pieces of personal protective equipment for the staff at St George Hospital. The COVID-19 pandemic placed a considerable strain on the supply of PPE, which was vital for the protection and safety of our frontline hospital workers, hence why the generous donations to St George Hospital were so significant. With assistance from local community groups, the campaign was able to donate 13,000 surgical face masks, 895 medical face shields, 950 medical protective goggles and 500 medical isolation eye masks. I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to those who donated to this campaign and congratulate the outstanding leadership team and organisers for their amazing achievement.

NEW DOCTORS FOR NARRANDERA

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Speaker, I want to welcome Dr Ananda and Dr Shaskeeka, two new doctors into the Narrandera Community and acknowledge their commitment to helping small rural communities within the health sector. Dr Ananda hopes to work in anaesthesia in the hospital's emergency department after specialising in anaesthesia for eight years, having completed his internship in Sri Lanka. Ms Romeo, Narrandera Medical Centre Executive Director said the new doctors were already embracing the community and that their emergency skills will be well utilised in the town of Narrandera.

We welcome Dr Ananda and Dr Shaskeeka to Narrandera and thank them for their willingness and worthy contribution of which they will make to the town and its people.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS' DAY

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—Early Childhood Educators' Day was on Wednesday 2nd September 2020, a day which celebrates the efforts of all the educators working in early learning services in Australia. Early childhood educators have a tremendous responsibility caring for the physical and emotional well-being of their young charges. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us all just how much we need early childhood educators, who risked their own safety to care for the children of essential workers. As a former teacher, I recognise just how important their efforts are in the shaping of a child's learning patterns in the years before school and how much this impacts on later learning. In Fairfield a significant number of residents were essential workers during the quarantine period. These people could go to work and do their jobs knowing their young children were in a safe,

happy and healthy environment while Mum and Dad were at work. I thank all the early childhood educators in the Fairfield area and commend them for their continuing efforts during these challenging times.

MABO WICKS-VERONA SCHOOL

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I recently had the great pleasure of attending Verona School in Yennora where I learned of a fantastic project that had been completed by the Mabo class called Mabo Wicks. Mr Joshua Nott, the Mabo class teacher and School Learning Support Officer Ms Mel Davies devised a candle making business project to engage students in cross-curricular learning. The Mabo classroom environment was temporarily transformed into the Mabo Wicks business headquarters as students learned about market research and business strategies as well as learning about the process of candle making. The students took on various roles in the classroom business such as factory manager, production assistant and designer. An extremely successful project which turned out an extremely successful product with fine attention to detail. Congratulations to Mr Nott and Ms Davies for such a great idea and for successfully implementing an innovative approach to learning. Well done also to the Mabo students – Mabo Wicks are a big success.

BLACKTOWN MAYORAL HISTORY PRIZE 2020

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—Congratulations to community author Carol Thorne for winning the 2020 Blacktown City Council Mayoral History Prize. The annual competition aims to encourage an interest in the rich and diverse history of Blacktown. Mrs Thorne has regularly contributed to the documentation of local history, especially in the Seven Hills Electorate. For nearly 17 years Mrs Thorne has written about the infamous activities of bushrangers in the Blacktown district during the 1800s, specifically those across today's Blacktown, Bungarribee, Doonside, Eastern Creek, Prospect, Rooty Hill and Seven Hills. Earlier this month Blacktown City Mayor, Councillor Tony Bleasdale OAM, awarded Mrs Thorne with a \$3000 prize. The documentation of Seven Hills Electorate history allows Blacktown City residents to feel more connected to their local areas - from the Darug people who inhabited the land from 60,000 years ago, to the people living in Blacktown, Kings Langley, Lalor Park, Seven Hills and Toongabbie in the Seven Hills Electorate today. Congratulations and thank you to Mrs Thorne for your important work. I look forward to reading more of your work in the future.

WESTERN SYDNEY LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT PHYSIOTHERAPY STUDY

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—Western Sydney Local Health District Allied Health service at Westmead Hospital and the University of Sydney have collaborated for the past 5 years on exploring better ways to help patients once discharged from physiotherapy services who face lower back pain. Four million Australians suffer lower back pain and it is the leading cause for disability in the nation. The Western Sydney program sees patients receive free follow-up class from a personal health coach to assist in healthy eating plans and getting active in order to help prevent disability. The program has recently been awarded with \$2.2million grant from the National Health and Medical Research Council to continue collecting crucial data and training clinicians in the new system. The approach will now be trialled to further sites in the Western Sydney Local Health District and at South Western Sydney and Sydney local health districts to help those particularly recovering from osteoarthritis and intervertebral disc disease. I thank the work of the Westmead Hospital Physiotherapy Services team for their study and continually helping to better the lives of those in the Seven Hills Electorate.

THE COUSIN QUARTET

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I want to recognise the achievement of a special group of young musicians in our local area, the Cousin Quartet, a wonderful ensemble made up of four cousins: Beatrice and Dylan Colombis and Hanna and Jamie Wallace. This week the Cousin Quartet were announced as the inaugural winners of Musica Viva's Strike A Chord, the first National Chamber Music Championship for secondary school ensembles. Performing live from the City Recital Hall in Sydney, New South Wales the group claimed the Robert Salzer Prize, worth \$5,000. I want to commend and congratulate all four members of the Quartet for this fantastic achievement. These are exemplary musicians who's talent and dedication to their craft is really admirable. I'm so proud to be able to recognise Beatrice, Dylan, Hanna and Jamie today and I wish them all the very best for their future musical pursuits.

SUSSEX INLET AND DISTRICTS COMMUNITY FORUM

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)—The Sussex Inlet and Districts Community Forum is the Community Consultative Body to the Shoalhaven City Council for the district incorporating Berrara, Cudmirrah, Sussex Inlet and Swanhaven. The Forum's Mission Statement is to represent all the community members and ratepayers, be they residents or non-residents, to work towards the enhancement of our local socio- economic conditions, safety and environmental issues through representation to government authorities. I was pleased to address the forum at their August meeting, with the focus being Disaster Management. I outlined the more than \$2.3 billion investment made by the NSW Government to recover from the

disastrous bushfires that spread across our region at the beginning of the year. The Forum is also working to establish regular communication mechanisms with key stakeholders to ensure that support for Sussex Inlet and district during and after disasters or emergencies is coordinated and effective, and develop local communication strategies to share information that improve services for the community during emergencies. I thank everyone in the community who took part in the forum. With the next bushfire season having now begun we cannot be complacent and do all we can to prepare for the months ahead.

HELEN HAMILTON, SENIOR VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I congratulate Helen Hamilton on winning the Senior Volunteer of the Year honour in the 2020 NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards (Northern Rivers region). Helen has an outstanding record as a hardworking volunteer and is highly deserving of the award, not least for her response to the Covid-19 pandemic in April when she set up the Byron Community Pantry to provide food to people who couldn't shop or afford to buy groceries. Currently the Pantry delivers 500 meals a week to anyone in need, including to international students who cannot travel home and workers unable to access any government support. As President of the Byron Bay Community Association Helen led the effort to preserve the Byron Bay Hospital building as a community resource; she was instrumental in establishing the Byron Herb Nursery to provide employment opportunities for people living with a disability, and as president of Liberation Larder she has overseen the provision of hundreds of hot meals every week to rough sleepers and people who are homeless in Byron Shire. On behalf of our community I thank Helen for her service and dedication in helping those in need.

YOUNG ENVIRONMENT PROTECTORS

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—I rise today to congratulate the Young Environment Protectors for their work raising awareness about global warming and other social justice issues. They recently advocated for a High school art competition to be themed around the Covid-19 pandemic and they continue to spread the word about the global climate crisis through the creative arts. The Young Environment Protectors Competition is open to secondary students in the Northern Rivers and offers young people the chance to express their concerns and hopes for the environment, and to connect with other concerned youth – important functions in this time of uncertainty and disconnection. The Covid-19 crisis has added to young people's fears about climate change and the world they are likely to inherit, contributing to their sense of powerlessness and anger, with a consequent deterioration in mental health. The YEP competition provides them with a chance to be a part of something meaningful. I particularly want to acknowledge the years of work put into this enterprise by YEP founder Tony Barry, a long-standing and pro-active friend of the environment, and the support given by its patron, Holley Somerville-Knott.

SOUTHERN SPORTS ACADEMY

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—The COVID pandemic has presented our community with many challenges. But organisations such as the Southern Sports Academy in Wagga Wagga have met these challenges and found a way to continue. The organisation has been able to adapt to the new environment and continue to offer its remote sports programming. The academy's annual presentation evening may have been cancelled, but winners of its 2021 scholarships have still be announced. Wagga Wagga's Josh Hanlon has been awarded a scholarship for para alpine skiing; Kipchumba Langat for athletics and Callan Ashcroft for water ski. These scholarships – both for individual athletes and for athletes with a disability – will help meet the costs associated with accessing higher levels of competition, coaching, sporting gear and more. In regional and rural areas, where the tyranny of distance can have real impact on an athlete's ability to access training and attend events, these scholarships will make a real difference. I congratulate Josh, Kipchumba and Callan on their scholarships wins. I also commend the Southern Sports Academy for overcoming the challenges of the COVID pandemic and continuing to help provide more opportunities for our regional and rural athletes.

WAGGA WAGGA CROW AWARDS

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—This year has been one of unprecedented challenges for many in our community. Despite the setbacks, the Wagga business sector has worked hard to continue to thrive after the effects of drought, bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic. Last week, the Wagga Wagga Business Chamber recognised achievements of some of the city's businesses with the 2020 Crow Awards. While social distancing meant the usual "big night" could not go ahead, finalists held their own separate events, and winners were visited on site. This year, nominations were thrown open to the public and hundreds of individual businesses were recognised. More than 13,000 people voted to decide the seven winners from 29 finalists. Connect Tuition was named as the winner of the 2020 Golden Crow Award. Rachelle Cahill of Pe4k Childcare was named Best Business Leader, while Marbull Catering won Outstanding Customer Service. Cobrapprel was named Best Pivoted Business, with Visual Dreaming acknowledged as Outstanding Start-up. PAH Innovative Construction

was named as the Outstanding Tradie for 2020. The People's Choice Award went to NRMA Wagga Wagga. I congratulate not only the winners, but every nominee for the Crow Awards.

WISE MONKEY CAFE

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)—While the COVID-19 crisis has been extremely difficult on many small businesses, there have been some that have been able to adapt and succeed while still keeping safe under the current restrictions. One of those businesses is the very popular Wise Monkey Cafe in Berowra. In order to keep her employees working and her cafe open, owner Amy has come up with a range of new approaches to her business. She has done this with gusto which has meant her business has been able to stay open and continue to employ her staff. They started a drive-thru coffee which has been a huge hit with the locals. She has extended her seating area outside to allow for more space between tables. Amy had already decided following the bush fires earlier this year to support farmers in Kulnura by using their produce in her cafe. She is now also selling that produce directly to customers both online and in her store. Congratulations Amy on your innovation and your determination to get through this crisis. Also thank you to all the local residents who continue to support local businesses like the Wise Monkey Cafe.

TERRY JAMES

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)—Today I would like to acknowledge a special member of the Hornsby electorate, Terry James. Terry spent 11 years as Honorary Secretary and President of the Hornsby RSL Sub-branch. Over that time he dedicated countless hours to honouring and serving the members of the sub-branch. Terry was conscripted into service in Vietnam nearly 50 years ago and served on the front line infantry. Having served our country with distinction he continues to serve our community with great honour. He has decided to step down as Hornsby RSL Branch President which has allowed him to spend more time on the golf course and with his beautiful grandchildren. He hasn't stepped away completely from his volunteer roles as he still volunteers as a JP at Hornsby Library, as treasurer of the Golf Club and Chairman of the Strata Plan. Thank you Terry, for your service to our country and community. Hornsby is lucky to have you.

MAITLAND INDEPENDENT DISABILITY SUPPORT (MIDSUPPORT) OFFICIAL OPENING

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—Lorraine and Scott Martin's Maitland Independent Disability Support (Midsupport) has taken a great step forward, officially opening their new office at Thornton, a testament to their vision, passion and commitment to supporting people with disabilities in our region. I was delighted to attend Midsupport's COVIDsafe Grand Opening which, despite the restrictions required, was a wonderful and joyous occasion. MidSupport's motto is: "Where there's will, there's a way," and their goal is to help clients achieve their personal goals and live as independently as possible. To achieve these aims, Midsupport offers supported independent living and respite services, community access, transport, in-home/daily care, co-ordinates supports, and acts as a registered NDIS Disability Service Provider. The Midsupport team provides 11 group homes, employs 100 staff and supports more than 100 clients across Maitland. Impressively, Midsupport has also just been named a finalist in the 2020 Hunter Local Business Awards for Outstanding Health Improvement Services. I wish Lorraine and Scott, and all the team at Midsupport, including clients and their hardworking team, well in their new premises.

ST VINCENT DE PAUL'S AND AMÉLIE HOUSING'S SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUND (SAHF) PROJECT IN MAITLAND

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—With the Minister for Communities and Disability Services, I recently inspected 17 new units in Maitland constructed by St Vincent de Paul to provide more social and affordable housing for some of our most vulnerable citizens. I was very pleased to meet Vinnies officials Denis Walsh and Arthur Chapman, as well as some of the prospective tenants. We were all impressed with the units, which are on Maitland's High Street and located close to shops, services and public transport. The St Vincent de Paul Society (through Amélie Housing) intends to deliver another 65 new homes in the area as part of its 500-property portfolio. These developments are supported by the NSW Government's Social and Affordable Housing Fund (SAHF). Amélie Housing is about more than bricks and mortar. They have a vision to deliver wrap-around services in addition to stable housing. Their suite of supports includes health, education, employment and community services. There is an enormous need for social and affordable accommodation in my electorate of Maitland and I thank St Vincent de Paul Housing and Amélie Housing for this much-needed contribution.

ALEXANDRA NOTHDURFTER – MOUNT ANNAN SWIMMING CLUB

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Alexandra Nothdurfter from Mount Annan Swimming Club who took out the Junior Sportsperson of the Year (Under 12) award at the 22nd Annual Wests Sports Council Awards. This award provides a platform to recognise individuals

and celebrate their achievements in grassroots sport and community spirit. It is a testament to Alexandra's skill as a swimmer and her many days of training per week in order to keep improving and bettering those skills. She has been a member of the Mount Annan Swim Club for the past three years and in this time has earned herself the name of the "little pocket rocket." Her Head Coach, Joseph Grant, who has coached a generation of promising young swimmers in the Macarthur area, was in attendance as well as Mount Annan Swim Club president Phillip Carter. I wish Alexandra well with her future swimming aspirations.

LEANNE SYKES

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—Mr. Speaker, I commend Leanne Sykes for her service to the Camden community after she built the Catherine Field Street Library completely from scratch. I Note that the old school phone box-shaped community library affectionately known as 'Mr Gilbert' was created to help locals get access to books and reading especially during COVID19 restrictions limiting access to libraries and op-shops.

NSW FEDERATION OF COMMUNITY LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—The NSW Federation of Community Language Schools in Dulwich Hill is providing young Portuguese speakers across the inner west with bags of groceries and shopping vouchers to help them through the Covid-19 pandemic. The economic fallout of COVID 19 has seriously impacted hundreds of vulnerable young people in my electorate, particularly those on temporary work or student visas who are ineligible for Medicare or government assistance and have been stranded due to international border closures. President of the Federation, Lucia Johns, has said: "Many of these young people are hidden victims of the pandemic. Their financial situation has becoming exceedingly difficult as a lot of casual work around the city dries up." In partnership with Woolworths, the Federation has given out bags of fresh groceries and shopping cards to over 70 young Portuguese speakers who have visited their office seeking support. The Federation hopes to be able to expand this service soon to help other language groups. Thank you Ms Lucia Johns and all the staff at the NSW Federation of Community Language Schools for providing much needed support to Portuguese community and for always being there for young people across the inner west.

WALKING VOLUNTEERS

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—The Walking Volunteers are a group of dedicated walking enthusiasts, who spend their time walking and mapping Sydney's suburbs, including in my electorate of Summer Hill. The Walking Volunteers NSW has recently announced Blacktown City Council as the winner of the Community Based Initiative Award for their contribution to the Great West Walk. The Great West Walk stretches over 375 km, starting at Parramatta Park and finishing at the Nepean River. So far the Walking Volunteers have mapped over 1000 kilometres of walking routes across Sydney. In my electorate, you can enjoy a mapped walk from the Sydney Fish Markets to the Cooks River and beyond. During lockdown, many people used their hour of exercise to take a social distant walk around their neighbourhood. But unlike the inner west many areas in Sydney are not pedestrian friendly. I've had the pleasure of meeting with Walking Volunteers representatives Bill Avery, Ian Napier, and Leigh Shearer and discussed their work with councils on improving pedestrian infrastructure, and increasing green corridors. Thank you to Bill, Ian, and Leigh for your ongoing encouragement to get more people out exploring our city by foot. I hope to join you on a walk soon.

CAMP INC

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—I draw the attention of this parliament the fact that this year is the 50th Anniversary of establishing CAMP Inc in Sydney. It became the first lesbian and gay national political organisation, and the foundation stone for today's LGBTIQ+ community. John Ware, Christabel Poll and their partners founded C AMP in 1970. Lex Watson, Peter de Waal and Peter "Bon" Bonsall-Boone, among others, became foundation members. The group's aim was to decriminalize homosexuality, raise visibility, provide support and reduce isolation. CAMP's first rally, in Australia, was outside Liberal party HQ, Ash Street, Sydney, October 1971. The group were involved in many more demonstrations afterwards,. At a CAMP Inc 1978 executive meeting the first Sydney Mardi Gras was named.

The first homosexual specific telephone service, Phone-A-Friend was established in Peter and Bon's Balmain home, 1973. Over nearly fifty years it's provided mental health support to thousands of people. I sincerely thank every CAMP member for their contribution to LGBTIQ+ law reform and social change in Australia. I specifically want to acknowledge the 'CAMP Goes Gold 1970-2020' working group, Robyn Kennedy, Robyn Plaister and Peter de Waal for their efforts in organizing CAMP's 50th anniversary celebrations.

NORTH SYDNEY BEARS HEAD TO GRAND FINAL

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker, today I acknowledge the incredible efforts of the North Sydney Bears Women's team, who are competing in the 2020 Harvey Norman Women's Premiership Grand

Final this weekend. This is the first time that the Bears Women's team has reached the grand final series, and the team has shown great strength and development throughout the challenging 2020 season. The success of this team has also been reflected across the North Sydney Junior League in which female participation has risen by over sixty percent in the last 12 months. This year the North Sydney Bears have also launched the Red and Black Foundation with one of its programs focused on championing the equality of women in rugby league, from grassroots all the way up to the NRL Women's Competition. Congratulations to North Sydney Bears for investing in female participation, giving every girl and woman the opportunity to follow their passion. Good luck to the girls as they take on the Central Coast Roosters at Bankwest Stadium this Sunday, we'll be cheering for you.

NSW SAILING FINALISTS AT MHYC

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker, I acknowledge the finalists of the 2020 NSW Australian Sailing, NSW and ACT Awards at Middle Harbour Yacht Club. Nominations for these prestigious awards come from clubs big and small across New South Wales and the ACT, and they include hopefuls for Olympic selection, juniors starting their sailing, volunteers, club members and professionals working for the sport of sailing. Congratulations to the following finalists from Middle Harbour Yacht Club; Archie Copley and Zoe Dransfield who have been nominated for Youth Sailor of the Year. Michael Blackburn who has been nominated for Coach of the Year, and Deborah Dalziel who has been nominated for the Sport Promotion Award. Many in my local area would know that Middle Harbour Yacht Club has a proud history of success, but are also a key component of community sport and socialising in North Shore. I would like to congratulate this year's finalists, but also the sailing committee, club members, parents and sailors who contribute to the fantastic community culture at the club.

HOLSWORTHY HIGH SCHOOL LEGACY WEEK

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—Mr Speaker, I would like to recognise Holsworthy High School's community spirit – with the school raising approximately \$600 for Legacy Week 2020. To accomplish this, students worked very hard selling Legacy wrist bands, keyrings, badges and bears within the school. With such a large defence population in the Holsworthy region, it is wonderful to see these students getting involved to raise funds for Legacy, so they can support Australian families after the injury or death of a spouse or parent, during or after their service. I am very proud of these students and the cause they are supporting, and was happy to see Mr Alan Rawlinson, Chairman Bankstown/South West Division for Legacy attend the school recently to present them with a Certificate of Appreciation, acknowledging their support during Legacy Week 2020. Mr Speaker, I would once again like to thank Holsworthy High School students for taking the time to get involved in our local community and to support defence families.

JJL TRANSPORT

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—Mr Speaker, I'd like to recognise and congratulate JJL Transport, Chipping Norton, who are celebrating 45 years of business. JJL Transport are a key freight company in the Holsworthy Electorate. Employing over 50 people, JJL Transport move not only goods, but key building materials for large projects across the Greater Sydney area. Earlier this month, I met with their Operations Manager, Mr Rob Vozzo, and was provided a COVID-safe tour of their facilities. Mr Vozzo noted that, not only have they managed to continue operating throughout the pandemic, but have continued to actively hire people who are looking to re-skill and work. JJL Transport also have a focus on improving their trucks through technological advancements, making this work easier for drivers, and safer for them, other road users and for pedestrians too. This is so important to ensure that our truck drivers can feel safe and confident in their work. Mr Speaker, I once again would like to congratulate JJL Transport on 45 years of business, and their work to encourage local employment opportunities in the Holsworthy Electorate.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—I would like to congratulate Geoff Kelty and Wayne Cole who are Corrective Service Officers. Geoff and Wayne have had their own personal experiences with mental health post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Together they kayaked from Walgett to Bourke, arriving in Bourke on Sunday 13th September after having trekked along the river. The trip was 730 kilometres long. These courageous men stated that it was a life changing experience. They raised awareness for PTSD among prison officers, and also raised AUD 12,000. The funds were donated to the Black Dog Institute to assist with research, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mood disorders such as depression. I commend Geoff and Wayne on their commitment on a great cause and to supporting their fellow comrades.

PRESTIGIOUS RALPH AND AUDREY NADEN AWARD

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—Gilgandra High School Captain Kyle Welsh recently received the prestigious Ralph and Audrey Naden Award. This award is presented to an outstanding Year 12 Aboriginal student

and Kyle has been recognised for his achievements at school and in sport. Kyle plans to study nursing next year at university and his favourite subject is health. His greatest sporting achievement has been playing on the Combined High Schools Greater Western Rugby League team at Newcastle last year. I congratulate Kyle on receiving this award and wish him well for his studies and sporting endeavours in the future.

GYMEA JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the wonderful GyMEA Junior Rugby League Football Club and their commitment to rugby league for nearly 60 years. The mighty Gorillas have a strong community consisting of 650 male and female players across 49 teams, ranging from 4 to 54 years in age. They have a proud tradition and were the first club in the Shire to organise floodlights for evening trainings, the first to build their own dressing sheds and clubhouse. Their family values and commitment to football has produced three long term Cronulla captains including David Hatch, Greg Nixon and Greg Pierce who went on to play and captain for Australia. Much of the mighty Gorillas success is thanks to the administrators, coaches and volunteers who have guided the club over the past years. I recognise President Chris Allen, Senior Vice President Stephen Hardy, Junior Vice President Shaun Dooley, Treasurer Steve Coffey, Secretary Tony Ash and Assistant Secretary Scott Field who continue to shape this great club. I commend GyMEA Junior Rugby League Football Club and extend my best wishes for the future.

MR ROGER BORG AND MR SAMUEL FLEETWOOD

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney)—My congratulations to two local residents who were recently named as recipients of volunteering awards at virtual celebrations hosted by The Centre for Volunteering. Mr Roger Borg of Mama Lana's was named as the 2020 NSW Volunteer of the Year for the Blue Mountains region. Roger co-founded Mama Lana's seven years ago to provide hot meals to the homeless and less fortunate in the Penrith community. The service provides hot cooked meals, care packs and provides washing facilities and showers. Mr Samuel Fleetwood was named as the 2020 Young Volunteer of the year for the Sydney Outer West Region. For the past 5 years, Samuel has been volunteering his time at Mama Lana's serving meals to people who are homeless, suffering financial pressure or other personal trauma. He is now a team leader at the centre and leads its COVID-19 planning so they may continue to safely operate and support people in the region. People like Roger and Samuel make a real difference in our community and I thank them for their commitment to volunteering to ensure the wellbeing of others.

JACQUI TODD

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I am proud to recognise country school principals for their commitment to the education and development of children and in particular Ms Jacqui Todd, of Gravesend Public School. Gravesend Public School is a small, rural school that caters for the educational needs of its 26 students from Transition to School to Year 6 and enjoys a reputation for solid achievement in literacy, numeracy and working with technology. Recently Ms Todd and her school hosted a day of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) with neighbouring Croppa Creek Public School. Every two years their strong STEM partnership brings the two school together in spite of some COVID-19 forced remote connections. I am encouraged by the sophistication that is expected from the students who Ms Todd has tasked to develop a quality product or service for the public including the practical aspects of business plans, budgeting and promotion, incorporating STEM features. I commend Ms Todd for her inspired and creative education methods in ensuring our country children are prepared for a future of their choice.

WARIALDA'S ALL ABILITIES PARK

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I congratulate Gwydir Shire Council and the Warialda community on having the Warialda All Abilities Park named as a finalist in the Engineering Excellence Awards run by the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia. The All Abilities Park is in the running to be the winner of the Design and Construction of a Local Government/Public Works Project less than \$500,000. It was funded by the Gwydir Shire Council, NSW Government and the community and is a park the entire community can be very proud of. With a range of play and exercise equipment that has been specifically designed for all ages and those with mobility issues or a disability, the Warialda All Abilities Park is the region's very first park of the kind. I wish Gwydir Shire Council and Warialda community all the best for the Awards Gala Dinner to be held in March 2021.

PORT HACKING HIGH SCHOOL CAPTAINS

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate the newly elected School Captains of Port Hacking High School on their appointment. To be democratically elected by your peers demonstrates these individuals' skills and achievements in areas of leadership, communication and integrity. These students should be incredibly

proud to have been chosen by their peers, and I urge them to make the most of this fantastic opportunity to develop the qualities that shape community and professional leaders in life after graduation. I congratulate School Captains Kalen Fay and Yoshi Leung and Vice Captains Kyle Mayne and Wansai Chunthapunya on their successful appointment as student leaders for 2021, and extend my best wishes for their final year of high school. Although we are currently navigating unprecedented times, I trust that they will capably lead their peers through what will be their most important year of schooling thus far. I extend my best wishes to this group of fantastic student leaders as they continue to embody Port Hacking High School's motto of 'to strive is to achieve'.

IAN ROBERTSON

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I rise today to acknowledge former defence personal Ian Robertson for entering his emotive image 'Girl out of focus' capturing the devastating impacts of war through the National War Memorial's Napier Waller Art Prize 2020. Former ex-serviceman Ian Robertson knows only too well the horrific consequences that war inflicts on a community. As a former rifleman serving in the Royal Australian Regiment, Ian was conscripted under the Australia's National Service Scheme and was deployed to Vietnam as one of almost 60,000 Australians who served our nation over a 10 year involvement in the Vietnam War. To commemorate Vietnam Veteran's Day, also known as Long Tan Day on 18 August 1966, Ian uncovered a picture he had taken in early 1969, of a young girl, utterly dismayed by the pointless war, which adequately symbolised the destructive impacts of war on innocent young children. Ian submitted his photograph to the Napier Waller Art Prize and was shortlisted from one of 31 artworks chosen for the online exhibition of 141 entries received on the Australian War Memorial website. I recognise Ian as a local hero and a true advocate of peace and reconciliation above anything else because war is never the answer.

FIONA WYLLIE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I rise in the house to congratulate media identity Fiona Wyllie for hanging up her headphones on 4th September after a stellar career in radio spanning nearly 40 years. 'Fi' as she is liked to be known, is viewed in my electorate as a much loved, local celebrity on the radio airways through her popular State Wide Drive show on the ABC, with literally thousands of listeners from all around the state tuning into her wonderful program every afternoon at 3pm. Known for her tenacity and gusto, Fiona scored her first opportunity on commercial radio as a trainee announcer at 2GO in Gosford in the 1980s after confessing to 'hassling her way' through the front door. Fi then commenced study at the Australian Film Television and Radio School while working the midnight to dawn shift on the Central Coast. Recognised for her talents, Fi moved to Canberra, presenting afternoons for the ABC before returning to commercial radio in Sydney, while working for Choice as a media officer. Fi then returned to the ABC in 1995 and celebrated her 25th anniversary on 14 February 2020. Already sorely missed by her listeners, I wish Fiona all the best in her retirement.

CANOLA TRAIL COOLAMON SHIRE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Mr Speaker, Spring is a wonderful time in my electorate with cherry blossoms and canola fields at every turn. This year I am encouraging visitors to plan a Canola Trail road trip in the Coolamon Shire. The canola is in full flower from now until harvest in late October/early November. With some much needed rain throughout August and early September, the canola is a sight to behold. Spanning across fields in Coolamon, Ganmain and Marrar the canola is a must visit when in the area. Pack a picnic lunch to enjoy on your travels and make the most of the natural beauty in my electorate. There are also some wonderful shops, eateries, galleries and museums to enjoy on your visit. The main town of Coolamon is only 40km from Wagga Wagga and an easy two hours from Canberra.

JORDAN THOMPSON

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer)—Today I wish to praise the exceptional sporting achievements of Cherrybrook local and tennis star Jordan Thompson. Jordan started playing tennis at the age of four under the guidance of his parents, Stephen, his coach, and Karen, also a keen player. He grew up in Cherrybrook and attended Oakhill College, while training at facilities in Hornsby and Homebush. In 2008, Jordan was selected to represent Australia at the World Junior Tennis competition and went on to win the Australian Open Wildcard Play-off in 2014 and 2015. In 2016, Jordan won a Grand Slam main draw match for the first time, as well as his first four ATP Challenger titles, and entered into the world's top 100 ranked players. Jordan made his Davis Cup debut in 2017, helping Australia to win against the Czech Republic and the United States. In that same year, he beat world number one Andy Murray. Most recently at the US Open earlier this year, Jordan made it to a career-best fourth round, beating Stefano Travaglia, Egor Gerasimov and Mikhail Kukushkin. He now sits at No.53 on the world ranking. Congratulations Jordan on your well-earned success and best of luck for the future.

OPENING OF ALL SAINTS GRAMMAR PRIMARY CAMPUS PLAYGROUND

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury)—Today I want to recognise the official opening of the All Saints Grammar Primary Campus Playground, in Belmore that was held on Thursday, 23 July 2020 which was officiated by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios. This has been a big year for all schools and All Saints Grammar should be proud of what they have achieved, in these unprecedented times. This playground was very much needed, and a huge thank you to the support of the members of the local community who donated their time and resources to help create the open green space. The grassed playground is a fantastic improvement to the Primary Campus and by just having the green space, has made a huge difference to the students. I would also like to acknowledge, the following who were also in attendance at the opening: Father Kyrillos Zisis; Father Christos Triantafyllou; the Principal, Ms Elfa Lillis; Steve Rafeletos, President of the Board of Directors; Helen Karavitis, President All Saints Parents Association; The Mayor of Canterbury-Bankstown Council, Mr Khal Asfour. Thank you to the teachers, staff, parents and students. I hope that over the many years to come, you have many wonderful experiences using the new facility.

*Bills***STRONGER COMMUNITIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CRIMES) BILL 2020****Returned**

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

**The House adjourned pursuant to standing and sessional orders at 17:54 until
Tuesday 13 October 2020 at 12:00.**