



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 22 October 2020

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 22 October 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

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP BREAKFAST

The SPEAKER: We had two outstanding leaders of Indigenous heritage at our Thought Leadership breakfast this morning. I thank all members who attended that event. In particular I thank our guest speakers Tanya Denning-Allman, the Director of Indigenous content at SBS, and Benson Saulo, the incoming Consul-General to the United States, based in Houston. I note we will have another event in November.

[Notices of motions given]

Bills

STRONGER COMMUNITIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (DOMESTIC VIOLENCE) BILL 2020

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Mark Speakman, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (09:46:44): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2020 introduces amendments to support procedural improvements and to close gaps in the law that have become apparent. Courts can be a daunting place for victims of domestic and family violence. The processes can be overwhelming. Domestic violence is a complex crime like no other because of the intimate relationships between perpetrators and victims. Those close personal connections intertwine complainants and defendants in ways that maintain a callous grip on victims. This grip can silence reports of abuse, delay reports when victims are brave enough to come forward, and intimidate victims to discontinue cooperating with prosecutions. These challenges create obstacles—and therefore potential disincentives—for victims to act on the horrific abuse that they continue to endure.

Reforms contained within today's bill seek to ease that burden. We want victim-survivors to feel empowered to report abuse and to be confident that, when they take that courageous step, they will be supported during proceedings. These amendments will provide greater protections for domestic violence victims when giving evidence and ensure that they will continue to be protected upon the release of the offender from custody, improve court procedures for criminal and apprehended domestic violence order [ADVO] proceedings, and explicitly recognise the intersection between animal abuse and domestic violence.

The bill introduces two important provisions to the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 to assist complainants when giving evidence in criminal proceedings involving domestic violence offences and related ADVO proceedings. A domestic violence offence is a personal violence offence in circumstances where the person who has committed the offence has, or has had, a domestic relationship with the victim. Acts of personal violence include offences such as homicide, acts causing danger to life or bodily harm, assault occasioning actual bodily harm, sexual assault, child sexual assault, intimate image offences and many others. A domestic violence offence also includes offences other than personal violence offences where the commission of the offence is intended to coerce or control the victim or to cause the victim to be intimidated or fearful. Related ADVO proceedings include those that involve the same defendant and victim who is referred to as the person in need of protection [PINOP] in ADVO proceedings, as a result of the alleged domestic violence related charges being the subject of criminal proceedings. The amendments are contained in schedule 2 items [1] to [6] and [8] to [10] to the bill.

The amendments will provide domestic violence complainants with the ability to give evidence in a closed court for the duration of their evidence, including the period during which a domestic violence evidence in chief recording is played or any other recording that may form their evidence; and an entitlement to give evidence remotely via audiovisual link or other similar technology, or alternative arrangements, including the use of screen

or planned seating arrangements. These reforms build on existing entitlements available under the Criminal Procedure Act for other vulnerable witnesses, including sexual assault complainants, children and individuals who are cognitively impaired.

They also build on amendments in the Crimes Legislation (Victims) Act 2018, which introduced a provision entitling all domestic violence complainants to have a support person present when giving evidence. Increasing court protections for victims of domestic violence will help the justice system's response to domestic violence offending. This in turn may increase victim attendance rates and the finalisation of criminal matters in court. While there is the potential for some delay in these proceedings as a result, any delay is expected to be minimal and outweighed by the benefits of the reforms.

The first amendment in schedule 2 [3] to the bill implements an entitlement for a domestic violence complainant to give evidence in a closed court. The ability to give evidence to a closed court is currently available only to domestic violence complainants if the accused has been charged with a prescribed sexual offence or the complainant is a child or a cognitively impaired witness. This amendment will close the gap to ensure that all domestic violence complainants in criminal proceedings are provided with the same protections under the law of New South Wales. Requiring a complainant to give evidence in front of people in the public gallery, who may also be the accused's friends and family, can be intimidating and add unduly to the trauma of the court process. Limiting the courtroom presence only to people directly connected with the criminal proceedings is appropriate, given the sensitive dynamic of domestic violence offending.

While implementing this reform may result in some delays in proceedings to ensure the physical closure of a court, the difficulties of giving evidence also can cause delay as a complainant may require a number of breaks throughout the course of their evidence. This reform will support a complainant to give their best evidence in a timely manner and may result in fewer breaks being required overall. Consistent with similar protections available in prescribed sexual offence proceedings, a complainant will maintain the ability to elect to give evidence in open court, should they so choose. The court will also maintain some discretion to direct that the court remain open when a complainant is giving evidence if a party to the proceedings requests this. However, the court must be satisfied that there are special reasons in the interest of justice to do so, or that the complainant consents to giving their evidence in open court.

The principle that proceedings for an offence should generally be open or public in nature or that justice should be seen to be done will not in itself constitute special reasons for this purpose. Open justice is a fundamental principle of the justice system in Australia. However, this must also be balanced with a court's ability to perform its functions in the administration of justice. The closure of a court in some circumstances recognises that the public interest in the administration of justice, especially for matters involving vulnerable witnesses such as domestic violence victims, can outweigh the need for open justice.

The second amendment in schedule 2 [3] provides domestic violence complainants with an entitlement to give evidence remotely via audiovisual link or other similar technology, or through the use of alternative arrangements such as screen and planned seating arrangements. Currently, domestic violence complainants may give evidence remotely only upon successful application to the court under the Evidence (Audio and Audio Visual Links) Act 1998. This is not always granted and there have been inconsistencies in treatment of those witnesses. If contested, those pre-trial applications can also take up valuable court time. This amendment provides more certainty for complainants in domestic violence proceedings through the introduction of a legislative entitlement. It recognises that domestic violence complainants have the same need for and should have the same opportunity to benefit from remote appearances as do other vulnerable witnesses.

It can be intimidating for domestic violence victims to face their perpetrator with whom they may have been in a family or intimate relationship for a number of years. Allowing for alternative means to give evidence strengthens the criminal justice response to these difficult situations in an appropriate and trauma-informed way while balancing an accused's right to a fair trial, including the right to test any evidence to the fullest extent. The amendment ensures that domestic violence complainants will have the right to choose the manner in which they give evidence. The framing of this amendment as an entitlement makes it clear that it is not a directive and complainants will maintain the ability to elect to give evidence in person. The court also retains some discretion to order an in-person appearance; however, only if there are special reasons in the interests of justice to do so.

I turn now to an important amendment in the bill improving jury directions and warnings in domestic violence proceedings. Schedule 2 [11] amends the Criminal Procedure Act to create a new jury warning where a complainant in domestic violence proceedings fails to make or is delayed in making a complaint about the accused's alleged wrongdoing. The direction will require the court to warn the jury that absence of complaint or delay in complaining does not necessarily indicate that the allegation that the offence was committed is false; to inform the jury that there may be good reasons why a victim of domestic violence may hesitate in making or may refrain from making a complaint about a domestic violence offence; and not to warn the jury that delay in making

a complaint is relevant to the victim's credibility unless there is sufficient evidence to justify such a warning. This direction is already available in prescribed sexual offence proceedings under section 294 of the Criminal Procedure Act. Sentencing courts already recognise the unique dynamics of domestic violence offending. In *Hurst v R* [2017] NSWCCA 114. The court noted at [132] that a common feature of domestic violence is that there may be considerable delay between the offences and the victim making a complaint. The court said that such delay:

... should not be held against the victim as it is a direct product of the nature of the offending. It would be incongruous if an offender could gain a benefit from such delay.

This amendment will ensure that the same principle is recognised in domestic violence trials and hearings. Domestic violence offending can span the course of the relationship between two people over a period of years. The complexity of the cycle of domestic violence and fear a person may feel about coming forward and reporting an abusive partner, all have a role to play when it comes to victims deciding to initiate criminal proceedings. Any assumption that a victim of domestic violence would complain at the first reasonable opportunity ignores the patterns of domestic violence and can lead to unfair questioning and assessments being made about their behaviour.

There is a risk that juries may still unfairly reason that the absence or delay in complaint means that the allegation is false. This amendment will ensure that a complainant's delay in coming forward is not unduly given weight in determining the offences against an accused beyond reasonable doubt. It will also ensure trauma-informed court practices, consistent with those provided for sexual offence proceedings, and close a gap between domestic violence proceedings that may consist of sexual offences, and therefore attract this direction, and those that concern other physical or non-physical domestic violence offences.

It will remain open to the court to direct the jury that delay in complaining is relevant to the victim's credibility if there is sufficient evidence to justify such a warning, depending upon the circumstances of the matter. The bill makes clear that where a matter includes a mixture of physical or non-physical domestic offences and sexual offences, it will remain at the discretion of the trial judge to determine the nature of the direction given. This is through the insertion of a further subsection in section 294 of the Criminal Procedure Act, which is the delay in complaint direction for sexual offences.

The new subsection makes it clear that in the circumstances a judge will be able to give a single delay in complaint direction to address both types of offence or two separate directions—one pursuant to section 294 of the Criminal Procedure Act and one pursuant to the provision in the bill for domestic violence offences. This will depend on how the evidence has been adduced and ensures flexibility for courts when directing a tribunal of fact. These reforms commence on assent but are subject to a transitional provision.

The intent of the transitional provision is, first, in the case of a summary proceeding, the reforms will not apply to matters in which a court attendance notice was filed prior to the commencement of the reform; and, second, in the case of a trial heard on indictment, the reform will not apply to matters in which an indictment has been presented and the accused person has been arraigned prior to the commencement of the reform. The reforms will apply in circumstances where a court attendance notice has been filed in respect of an offence that will be heard on indictment but where the indictment has not yet been presented and the accused person has not been arraigned.

I turn now to amendments in the bill that will improve protections provided by ADVOs. Schedule 1 [12] to the bill introduces a provision to ensure that where a defendant is sentenced to a term of imprisonment, the ADVO ordered by the court is to remain in force for the period of the term of imprisonment for the offence and an additional two years after the term of imprisonment ends, unless otherwise specified by the court. A similar provision had been previously included in uncommenced section 790, contained in Schedule 1 [5] to the Crimes Legislation Amendment Act 2018. However, that provision was not able to commence due to unforeseen implementation issues with relevant IT systems. The amendment in this bill will ensure that the same policy intent can now effectively be implemented.

Schedule 1 [12] amends section 39 of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007—the CDPV Act, for short—which currently requires a court to make an ADVO on a person's conviction or guilty plea for a serious offence as defined under section 40 of that Act. The amendments will state that when making an ADVO under section 39, the court is to specify that the ADVO will be in force for a period of two years longer than the sentence imposed. This extended duration will only apply if the offender is over 18 at the time the offence was committed, and the offender is sentenced to a term of imprisonment to be served in a correctional centre. Offenders sentenced to orders such as intensive corrections orders in the community would not be captured by the specified duration. The term of imprisonment refers to the full sentence imposed by the court, including non-parole and parole periods.

The additional two years is calculated with reference to the total sentence imposed by the court at the time that the ADVO is made. This means that even if the offender is sentenced to a term of imprisonment in those proceedings that is longer than that for the domestic violence offence, the ADVO will extend for two years from the longest sentence. The amendment will ensure that the court retains the discretion to order a different period for the ADVO if it determines there are good reasons to do so. What constitutes a good reason has not been specified in the provision, to give courts flexibility in making such an assessment. This amendment will ensure that an ADVO does not inadvertently expire while a defendant is serving their sentence of imprisonment. Instead, the ADVO will continue to remain in force during an offender's transition back into the community—a period which is known to represent a heightened risk of reoffending.

Schedule 1 [11] to the bill makes minor amendments to section 39 (1) of the CDPV Act to enable "a court" to make an order under section 39, rather than just "the court" that is hearing the sentencing. This will ensure that where matters that are sentenced in the District Court are then remitted to the Local Court due to a concurrent ADVO application, the Local Court will have the power to make the ADVO under section 39, with the standard additional two-year period. This provides consistency across the courts. These amendments will commence on proclamation—anticipated to be in early 2021—to ensure that all necessary systems changes for courts and police have occurred and all necessary training has taken place. They will also be subject to a transitional provision, such that the extended duration will not apply to someone who has pleaded guilty to or been found guilty of a serious offence before the commencement of the provision.

The remaining amendments in the bill all concern the CDPV Act, and specifically ADVOS and ADVO proceedings. Schedule 1 [17] to the bill amends the CDPV Act to include an additional ground for a court to grant leave with respect to an application to vary or revoke an indefinite ADVO; namely, if it is in the interests of justice to do so. Current drafting does not enable leave to be granted in the interests of justice. The amendment also clarifies that when determining leave applications, section 72B of the Act is to take precedence over subsections 79B (4) and (5). Subsections 79B (4) and (5) only relate to persons against whom the order has been made, whereas section 72B has a broader application. This change will mean that leave to apply to vary or revoke an order would only need to be sought once under section 72B in the specific cases where sections 72B and 79B both apply. As such, where there is an indefinite ADVO, the court will be able to grant leave to the person against whom the ADVO is made for an application to vary or revoke the ADVO on the grounds that either there has been a significant change in circumstances since the relevant order was made or that it is in the interests of justice to do so.

Schedule 1, items [2] to [4], [6] to [8] and [18] to the bill inserts amendments to the CDPV Act to replace the uncommenced section 73A in schedule 1 [3] to the Crimes Legislation Amendment Act 2018, which will be repealed by clause 3 of the bill. These amendments will clarify existing powers under part 7 of that Act for police officers to issue a provisional ADVO where there is a comparable interim or final court-issued order. The uncommenced section 73A was intended to provide a system of "police variations" to enable police in urgent circumstances to vary existing ADVOS. During implementation it was identified that this is duplicative of existing police powers to issue provisional orders to address urgent risk under part 7 of the CDPV Act, even where there are existing interim and final orders. As such, section 73A should be repealed.

The bill also introduces three clarifying amendments to part 7 of the CDPV Act to support the use of provisional ADVOS: first, to state explicitly that the existence of an interim or final court order does not prevent a provisional order under part 7 to be applied for and made; second, to specify that a provisional order made under part 7 must not decrease the protection afforded to the protected person by any existing ADVO; and, third, to specify that where conditions between multiple orders are contradictory or inconsistent, the latest in time will prevail. The existing requirements for provisional orders under part 7 will continue to apply where police are using this power to issue a provisional order—where a court-issued ADVO already exists—to address urgent increased risk. This includes that a police officer must have:

... good reason to believe a provisional order needs to be made immediately to ensure the safety and protection of the person who would be protected by the provisional order or to prevent substantial damage to any property of that person.

It is important to allow police to vary the conditions of an ADVO provisionally in circumstances that require an urgent response due to increased risk. There may not always be time to wait for a court listing in order to make the order or variation to the existing conditions of the ADVO, as required. These changes will ensure that the law can adequately respond to situations where the circumstances of a victim rapidly change since the making of the ADVO in court, which will help immediately address the increased risks to victims of domestic violence. Schedule 1 [5] to the bill also makes a related amendment to section 29 of the CDPV Act to ensure that a failure to comply with the requirement to list a provisional ADVO for court consideration within 28 days does not invalidate the provisional order or application if the failure arises as a result of the appropriate court's sitting arrangements.

At present, the requirement to list within 28 days means that some regional AVO matters cannot be listed at the nearest court because of the sitting arrangements—for example, at courts that only sit once per month. As a result, the matter may need to be heard at another court, which can often result in the defendant and person in need of protection travelling long distances for the first mention, only for the matter to be referred back to the original court after that initial hearing. The amendment to section 29 will ensure that the use of these powers, and the existing scheme of police-issued provisional AVOs, is responsive to the needs of rural and regional areas where court sittings may be more irregular. As these amendments clarify existing powers, the police and courts have already begun the process of operationalising these powers. Accordingly, these amendments will commence on assent.

Schedule 1 [9] to the bill is a minor amendment to address the overlap between the mandatory and discretionary conditions of apprehended violence orders [AVOs] in relation to the destruction of property. Section 36 of the CDPV Act provides a list of prohibitions that are taken to be specified in every AVO. These are also known as mandatory conditions. Section 36 (c) provides that the defendant is prohibited from intentionally or recklessly destroying or damaging any property that belongs to or is in the possession of the protected person or a person with whom the protected person has a domestic relationship. Section 35 of the CDPV Act provides for the conditions that may be imposed in an AVO, otherwise known as additional discretionary prohibitions. Section 35 (2) (e) prohibits the defendant from destroying or deliberately damaging or interfering with the protected person's property.

As a prohibition relating to the destruction of property is a mandatory condition pursuant to section 36, the reference to "destroying or deliberately damaging" is not necessary in section 35. As such, the bill amends section 35 (2) (e) so that the words "from destroying or deliberately damaging or" are omitted. This will ensure that prohibition of damage to property is included as a mandatory provision on every AVO. A judicial officer will still retain discretion to impose an additional provision to prohibit interfering with the protected person's property. This amendment will assist police when explaining to the defendant the conditions of their AVO and why certain conditions were imposed. In the past, confusion has been caused when the court also elects section 35 (2) (e) as a condition. This in turn may assist with compliance and resolve any ambiguity that may have arisen through the repetition of similar conditions in both the "mandatory" and "additional conditions" categories.

I now turn to two important reforms that will strengthen how the CDPV Act responds to harm or threats of harm to animals. The amendments will ensure that harm or threats of harm to animals belonging to or in the possession of the protected person is included within relevant offences and AVO conditions provided for under that Act. The first amendment of this nature is contained at schedule 1 [1] to the bill, which amends section 7 of the CDPV Act to include conduct that causes a reasonable apprehension of harm to animals belonging to or in the possession of the protected person within the definition of intimidation.

Currently "intimidation" is defined to include: first, conduct, including cyberbullying, amounting to harassment or molestation of the person; secondly, an approach made to the person by any means, including by telephone, telephone text messaging, emailing and other technologically assisted means, that causes the person to fear for their safety; and, thirdly, any conduct that causes a reasonable apprehension of injury to a person or to a person with whom he or she has a domestic relationship, or of violence or damage to any person or property.

Amending the definition to include any conduct that causes a reasonable apprehension of harm being done to an animal which belongs or belonged to, or which is or was in the possession of the relevant person will therefore explicitly include both harm or threatened harm to animals as a form of intimidation. Changing the definition of "intimidation" will clarify and streamline the application of the offence of stalking or intimidation under section 13 of the CDPV Act. A person who engages in that conduct is guilty of an offence that carries a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment or 50 penalty units or both.

The second amendment of this nature, contained at schedule 1 [10], amends section 36 (c) of the CDPV Act to specify harm to animals belonging to or in the possession of the protected person under the existing mandatory prohibition in every AVO which prohibits damage or destroying property belonging to a protected person. The changes to the definition of intimidation will also impact the mandatory prohibition in every AVO under section 36 (b), which prohibits the defendant stalking, harassing or intimidating the protected person. Evidence shows that threatening, injuring or killing family pets is a tactic used to control and coerce partners or other family members in the context of domestic violence. However, this conduct is not explicitly referenced in the CDPV Act.

Perpetrators use animals to intimidate, retaliate against and manipulate victims during the relationship and after separation as punishment for leaving. Animal abuse in domestic violence settings can also delay victims leaving violent situations for fear of having their companion animals left unprotected with perpetrators. These reforms highlight the intersection between animal abuse and domestic violence and further support the protection of animals that may be at risk of harm in domestic violence contexts. The reforms also recognise the importance

of an animal or pet by giving it separate recognition to that of general "property". Pets and animals are cherished and become quasi members of the family. These amendments recognise the harm that is caused to a person when another threatens to harm or does in fact harm an animal which belongs to them. This bill is an important part of the Government's regular legislative review and monitoring program. These reforms mean a victim can feel safe and that there are people in their corner: people working to make them feel supported; people working to make them feel empowered to speak out against their abusers; people working to make them feel safe. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

NSW JOBS FIRST BILL 2020

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Yasmin Catley, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (10:16:00): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce to Parliament the NSW Jobs First Bill 2020 and with it place on the record Labor's unwavering commitment to workers, industry and, crucially, jobs in New South Wales. The NSW Jobs First Bill is the product of Labor's NSW Made policy. I want to express my gratitude to my Labor colleagues who have provided valuable input and contributions to this process. We have been working with industry, business, unions and workers to produce a policy that will guarantee real, long-term, stable jobs for workers in this State. Long-term, stable and permanent employment underpins families, neighbourhoods and communities at large.

We cannot be a nation of gig economy workers, fly-in fly-out workers or zero hours contractors. We cannot allow the casualisation of entire industries and careers to march on unchecked. We cannot give up on the ingenuity, innovation and expertise of local engineers and designers. We cannot continue to justify the economic nonsense of sending taxpayers' money offshore on services sector work that could be done and should be done here locally. Moreover, we cannot keep perpetuating the lie that there is a skills shortage or an expertise shortage in this country or that Australia and New South Wales cannot make things or do things locally.

NSW Labor believes in local jobs and local communities. NSW Labor believes in local industry and the businesses here that want to make a go of it locally. We want to support good businesses which employ local workers fairly. We want to make sure good businesses thrive and we believe that the State has a responsibility to offer these businesses the opportunity to do just that. The State Government is one of the nation's biggest customers. New South Wales spends approximately \$34 billion per annum on goods and services. That is everything from multibillion dollar ferry and train procurement contracts down to the pens and pencils in our schools.

But too much of that public money is being sent overseas when it could be kept here working harder for the local economy. Sadly, too much of that public money is being wasted. The Berejiklian Government has recklessly and wilfully wasted billions upon billions of dollars on failed projects from overseas. It does this because it does not believe in our local workers. Ms Berejiklian herself admitted that she thinks New South Wales workers are no good at it. Mr Constance has been telling us that he feels the same way.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: The unions ruined it.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: That is why the Government bought South Korean trains that do not fit the tracks. That is why it bought Indonesian ferries that are riddled with asbestos and that do not fit under bridges. That is why it bought Spanish and French trams that keep breaking down. That is why it bought buses from Malaysia instead of building them in western Sydney. But local workers know, and NSW Labor knows, that every dollar spent on these projects is a dollar wasted.

It does not matter if the trains were a bit cheaper to buy if you have to shave off the platform edges, lift up the track and re-lay it, and bore out the width of the tunnels to make them fit. It does not matter if the ferries were a bit cheaper if your passengers run the risk of being decapitated under a bridge at high tide. We all know that if you buy cheap you buy twice. There is nothing to be gained by short-changing yourself with cheap junk that does not work. Premier Berejiklian and Minister Constance know this, but they are not motivated to save money in the long run. They are motivated only by their irrational obsession with neoliberalism and their heartless view of the world that the State Government should just be simple contract managers.

This bill is about more than just the failures of an inept transport Minister and a Premier who belittle our local workforce. The starting point of Labor's NSW Made policy is that there is everything to be gained by

investing in local businesses, local workers and local enterprise. We know that New South Wales and Australian workers are diligent, professional and hardworking people. We know that they provide value for money because they produce and deliver the very best. We also know that every dollar paid to a local supplier provides a social and community value by remaining in the local economy and multiplying its impact every time it is spent and re-spent. We know that local businesses deserve the opportunity to bid on government work without being locked out on day one and told not to even bother submitting a tender. That is what this Government did, time and time again, with big projects.

The starting point on day one of the New Intercity Fleet project was "no local content". Ms Berejiklian did not wake up a few weeks ago and accidentally blurt out something offensive about local workers when she said, "New South Wales workers are not good at building trains". It was not a slip of the tongue. This is something that Ms Berejiklian has believed in for many years. That is why when the New Intercity Fleet project began under her watch, the tendering rules were set in stone from the outset. It would be a fully imported train, from an off-the-shelf design. She did not even back in our local designers and engineers. I quote from a Government press release from 4 October 2016, which was issued by former Premier Mike Baird and then transport Minister Berejiklian. She said:

Previously, New South Wales has developed unique and often costly train fleets from scratch, which has taken as long as seven years from start to delivery.

...

We are looking at buying off-the-shelf trains with proven technology and then configuring them to meet our customers' needs, meaning we can ensure the best value, best possible service and also have these new trains on the tracks faster.

Well, I ask: How is that going for the Government and the Premier? Your new trains do not fit. Your new trains are running late because they are unfit for purpose. Your new trains do not meet customer needs, they represent shocking taxpayer value and they cannot possibly provide the best service because at the moment they simply just do not work. That is the record of mismanagement and incompetence that our bill is designed to correct. That is the broken mindset and the negative attitude of Government Ministers that our bill is designed to eliminate from the decision-making process. We want to put a stop to the mindless decision-making processes that see so-called pop-up schools for western Sydney built in Victoria and trucked almost 1,000 kilometres across the border. We want to stop the insanity of buying emergency accommodation pods—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh): Opposition members will come to order.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: —from Western Australian mining companies, built in South Australia, when there are manufacturers of tiny houses right here in New South Wales. We must put a stop to the practice of offshoring every component and every process. I visited a company in Minto a couple of weeks ago with the member for Macquarie Fields. Clyde-Apac makes filters for air-conditioning systems on trains such as the XPT and Tangara. It has made those filters for more than 30 years, but all of a sudden its orders have dried up. Transport for NSW is getting the filters from another supplier.

Mr Paul Scully: Where?

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: An overseas supplier. Not only does this put the jobs of people working for Clyde-Apac at risk but also it affects the supply chain, and I will outline that. Clyde-Apac buys cardboard locally from a nearby printing company. It buys glue from a local manufacturer. It buys pallets and plastic wrap from other local businesses.

Mr Paul Scully: That is a lot of jobs.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I say to the member for Wollongong that with one decision, this Government has put dozens upon dozens of jobs out of business. We must put a stop to this economic madness. It is hurting our community and ruining local businesses that are missing out every step of the way. I am grateful for the assistance and guidance of the unions led by Mark Morey and Vanessa Seagrove. I especially appreciate the advice of Corey Wright from the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, Justin Page from the Electrical Trades Union, Natalie Lang from the Australian Services Union, Nick Kamper from the Australian Workers Union and all of the other unions that have been so helpful in formulating this great jobs policy for New South Wales. I acknowledge Minister Pavey's interjection that the unions will destroy these jobs. That is a disgrace, Minister. This is a good policy about jobs in regional New South Wales, which is something that the Minister should also be very concerned about and be supportive of.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I ask the member for Swansea to not incite the Minister.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I also acknowledge the helpful and constructive contributions by business and industry representatives, including BlueScope Steel, Business NSW, the Contractors Federation and Australian Industry Group.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: We have bus manufacturing in Oxley.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I note Minister Pavey's interjection again. Why doesn't the Government build them at those bus manufacturers?

Mrs Melinda Pavey: We do!

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: No you do not!

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

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: What about the interjections?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I understand that there was an interjection, but I think the member for Swansea has elevated the level. All members will come to order.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: A team of Labor shadow Ministers also assisted, including Adam Searle, Daniel Mookhey, Walt Secord, Paul Scully, Jihad Dib and Sophie Cotsis, and I thank them. I also thank my advisors Tom Harris-Brassil and Edward Ovidia for their assistance and contributions to this policy. Now that I have made a handful of acknowledgments, I turn to the provisions of the bill. The NSW Jobs First Bill will compel the Minister to develop a Jobs First Policy that will apply to the whole of government. The NSW Jobs First Policy will include strategies to increase employment in our State, and boost manufacturing and social and professional services by incentivising locally manufactured materials and locally delivered services. It will also promote skills development and training by mandating the employment of apprentices and cadets on government projects so that the next generation of workers benefit from the purchasing power of government.

The Minister must ensure that the NSW Jobs First Policy promotes investment in New South Wales by expanding market opportunities for local industry and businesses. We want to see partnerships between local industry and education providers, like TAFE NSW, so that the workforce is strengthened and developed over the medium to long term, and the NSW Jobs First Policy, which the Minister would be compelled to develop, will do just this. The NSW Jobs First Policy would also secure reliable supply chains. The recent COVID-19 crisis has highlighted how dependent upon overseas suppliers we have become in recent decades.

This structural weakness in our supply chain must be addressed so that we are equipped to face any future disaster or crisis head-on. The NSW Jobs First Policy will achieve this. We cannot be so dependent on imported goods to the point where we do not manufacture something simple like a surgical mask or something complex like a hospital ventilator. We have so little diversity in our manufacturing capacity and that has left us as sitting ducks during the COVID-19 pandemic. We must buttress our manufacturing sector against future disruptions to global supply chains with a baseline of capacity and diversity so that we can retool our industries in a crisis. The only way to do this is to ensure that government money is spent on local industry and local businesses so that there is a permanent baseline capacity that we can build up when required.

Writing into law the principles and objectives of the NSW Jobs First Policy will ensure that the Government spends taxpayer funds ethically with good employers who do the right thing by their workers and give back to their communities. A dollar spent overseas is not only a wasted opportunity to employ someone locally but it is also a wasted opportunity to improve our communities. We can use the immense purchasing power of the State Government to promote and encourage businesses which are environmentally sustainable and committed to fair and responsible employment practices that meet Australian standards. We can prioritise social responsibility, disability inclusion, Aboriginal employment and the promotion of long-term stable jobs. A rising tide lifts all boats. If we build a procurement framework for the State Government which incentivises good businesses to do the right thing then others will follow, and they will compete on those positive metrics rather than just on price. That would be refreshing.

We know that after almost 10 years of inaction and neglect by the current Government, there is a lot of work to be done to improve capacity in local industry. The Liberals have actively run down our local workforce capacity. They have actively dismantled our TAFE system. They have stood idly by as jobs have been offshored by the thousand. That is why we will establish a sliding scale of government projects which regulate local content values so that as industry capacity develops and scales up, so too does the requirement for local content. This will give businesses and industry confidence to invest in the long term. It will also give them the chance to build capacity over time. With the biggest expenditure comes the biggest opportunities and that is why the bill outlines major strategic projects with specific requirements for each.

We have also taken a long-term view, with businesses tendering for significant and strategic projects required to submit local industry development plans. This will incentivise procurement from businesses which can demonstrate the long-term benefit they will deliver for jobs and industry. They will be assisted with their submissions by the NSW Jobs First Advocate. They will be tasked with advising the Minister on the development of the NSW Jobs First Policy and promoting it within government and industry. Crucially, they will also have a strong enforcement role. The importance of a strong enforcement regime was something that came through during Labor's consultation process with industry and business. We invited a number of peak bodies, business representatives and industry stakeholders to Parliament to seek their input on this legislation. They made clear that they wanted an enforcement regime that would ensure that nobody could manipulate those new rules and avoid their responsibilities. They want a level playing field and that means they are willing to be held to a clear set of rules. That willingness comes because they know that a level playing field gives them a fresh opportunity to win government work.

At the moment the deck is stacked against them. Liberal Government Ministers openly boast about sending jobs overseas for the cheapest possible price and Premiers run their mouth at press conferences, telling the world how terrible they think those businesses are. That is not on. Labor cannot accept this state of affairs. That is why we have introduced a bill that will outlaw this kind of stupidity and vindictive bastardry against local workers that has become the norm under the NSW Liberal Party. The bill will regulate the expenditure of taxpayer funds in line with community expectations. It will ensure that every government agency and department abides by those rules and acts in accordance with community expectations. The fact is that Labor, the unions, business and industry are all on the same page as the community. If Government members asked their constituents about this policy, they would find overwhelming and almost unanimous support. Nobody in the real world believes that Australia should export jobs and import everything. Nobody in our electorates believes that we should have an economy solely built on a farm, a mine and a cafe. We are more than just a quarry and a tourism destination.

We used to be a State that made and designed things. We used to be a State that took pride in being and having the best. Now we are a State that is held hostage by world markets and global supply chains. Our capacity to design critical infrastructure and equipment has been eroded. Our TAFE system has been gutted, and apprenticeships and cadetships that once offered young people a bright future in New South Wales have been undermined. It is time to turn this around and to take pride in our expertise. It is time to back local workers and industry. It is time for the Government to give local businesses an opportunity to thrive and to abandon its obsession with offshoring and wasting taxpayer money. Nothing proves how timely this is than the crisis that we are currently living through. I have always believed in this throughout my working life. There is something very wrong when the mentality of members is to legislate away jobs for local businesses. It does not make sense. That is why Labor brings the bill to Parliament today—to bring jobs back home.

We want a bright future for our young people and a sustainable future for residents of regional and rural towns. They should not have to move to the city, spending 20 hours a week on the motorway to get there. Labor wants a resilient, clever and innovative business sector that is given the chance to thrive locally, export globally and provide stable, well-paid jobs for generations of workers. We know that is what the business sector wants too and we know that this can be delivered through the purchasing power of government. The Government has the opportunity not just to talk the talk but also to walk the walk and its members should vote for the bill. It is a good start that will help to save regional jobs throughout New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House. I was cut short.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): No, you were quite a bit over time. I apologise to the member for Swansea. I did not want to interfere with the flow of her speech, but we need to move on.

Debate adjourned.

ROADS AMENDMENT (TOLL-FREE PERIOD) BILL 2020

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 15 October 2020.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (10:39:52): I speak on the Roads Amendment (Toll-free Period) Bill 2020. This private member's bill is designed to amend the Roads Act, allowing for a toll-free period of unspecified length on new roads projects. I say at the outset that Labor supports toll-free periods. I congratulate the shadow Minister in the other place, the Hon. John Graham, for his work on this bill. Tollways have significant impacts on communities, construction and the cost of living. Sydney is arguably the world's most tolled city. Tolls are appearing more and more frequently. The Government has a toll mania that it is inflicting on the residents of New South Wales.

Quarterly toll increases have also been maintained throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the rhetoric of those opposite about how they are trying to make things easier, many toll roads have been increasing at 4 per cent a year, far outstripping inflation. Just this morning I spoke to Tony Libreri from Libreri eggs. I acknowledge the presence of the member for Cessnock in the Chamber because Tony lives in the Cessnock electorate. Tony's family-owned business has been operating from Greta in New South Wales for many years. I know them because for about 20 years in my business before I came into Parliament we used to buy our eggs from Tony—we on this side believe in grown and made in New South Wales. I asked Tony what he thought about the tolls that are coming up on the NorthConnex. He said:

It's very expensive ... I've heard it could be up to \$27 per trip, and I have three or four trucks going down to Sydney every week, that's more than \$100 I will have to find every week to get my eggs down to Sydney.

I asked him what he thought about the trucks being forced to use the roads and I showed him the Government's claim that his drivers might save up to 15 minutes on the trip. I asked him if it was worth it and he asked me:

Do you know what it's like to drive a truck on Pennant Hills road? The mirrors are an inch away from each other! We pay enough rego to not have to pay more to use a road!

As someone who has owned heavy vehicles, I know what he means about those mirrors. If we ever lost a mirror on one of our coaches it would cost over \$300. There was also the safety issue of having to get to a safe place to stop without a mirror, and the inconvenience of having to get it to the repairer and not being able to use the vehicle until the mirror was replaced. Additionally, in the initial period of a toll being enforced there are safety concerns around people changing their minds in the middle of the road because they realise they are on an expensive toll road. I asked Tony how he was going to afford an extra \$100 per week to pay for tolls to get his products to market. He said:

There should be an impact on prices, they should go up, but—

unlike the Government—

we don't have the luxury of putting prices up whenever we want to.

He is a hardworking primary producer and he told me:

We're already paying extra for the cost of feed, we still can't put the price up for that! This will just be another cost of being in a small business—

under this Government—

that we're going to have to pay.

He has not been given adequate information about this. How can he plan and budget for the impact on his business? He will have to deal with the NorthConnex, which was supposed to be open in August or September and is still not open now. How disrespectful it is that a small business in this State does not know what the Government's plans are. Even though the Government has his registration details and knows he drives a heavy vehicle, it cannot get pen to paper or a make few taps on the keyboard to give him the information. We know from this pandemic the importance of transport and logistics in our State. These are the people who are producing the food of our State. With the vertical integration of their businesses they are trying to get it to market and this Government just does not care.

We on this side have campaigned against these tolls and toll increases. We have consistently called for toll-free periods to ensure both fairness and safety because we know road users take time to adapt. One only has to drive down the M1 and see that sign near the southbound checking station that says, "Do not reverse back into weigh station." It is still there. How many years ago was that weigh station put in there? When the roads change after so many years people need time to adjust. We know that it is safer to give those drivers toll relief so that the toll is not another thing impacting on their decision-making while they are on the road. This is supported by both the NRMA and the 2005 Richmond review, which called for a mandatory toll-free period. The report recommended:

Future toll road contracts should include a mandatory requirement for the toll road operator to provide an initial toll-free period to assist user familiarity and allow users to make informed choices.

This Government is a joke when it comes to toll roads. It has toll mania. The new M5 and M8 have opened with an immediate toll, at the same time as a toll has been introduced onto the existing M5 East tunnels for the first time in 20 years. This Government is clawing money out of motorists' pockets day after day. It cannot even give motorists a break when it is about the change the rules or give them time to understand how they can best use those new roads. It is a disgrace.

High-profile dangerous incidents in the first month of the M4 opening last year included motorists stopping in lanes, crossing barriers and reversing near the entrance to the tollway. There were large signs—we know the

Government tried—but it was not enough. Transport for NSW has acknowledged that the risk to the lives of those drivers and other road users if they stop in lanes, reverse or cross barriers to avoid tolls, yet it does not take the action that will ensure people do not engage in that dangerous behaviour. I urge the Government to support this private member's bill and to support people in transport logistics who get our food and other requirements around our State every day.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (10:46:54): It is quite appropriate that Kogarah has been mentioned in this debate because the people of Kogarah have been absolutely smashed by the Government's toll network across Sydney. We have an extraordinary situation in New South Wales at the moment where billions of dollars are being spent on toll road infrastructure, with the supposed purpose of reducing surface traffic on congested Sydney streets. In actual fact the exact opposite is taking place. We have the crazy situation in Bexley, Kingsgrove, Kogarah and Hurstville at the moment where the number of trucks has massively increased as a result of the Government's existing toll road plan. It is a bit like that episode of *Yes Minister* where the best-performing hospital in all of England was the one without patients.

The object of the Government's public transport strategy is to build toll roads that will increase the amount of traffic on surface roads. The reason for this is quite simple: The toll regime that the Government has put on the M5 and the M8 is \$20 for trucks and \$7 for cars. That is \$7 each way. If a young tradie uses this road every day of his or her working life they will rack up over three grand's worth of new tolls each year, every year, for 20 years. And on the M5, which has been free for 20 years, the road will be paid off 17 times over as a result of the Government's toll regime. Imagine saying to anyone in this State, "Look, we've got a good plan when it comes to toll roads. We're going to get you to pay it off 17 times over. But don't worry. Most of the revenue that's collected by that company will go to a private mob, because we've privatised 51 per cent of it." That is not how the Sydney Harbour Bridge, our existing road network or any of the other major highways that circle and run into Sydney were built. This is an absurd situation.

The bill is falling due on those who can least afford to pay it. It was revealed in the newspaper this week that a young family in Camden pays an astronomical amount of their take-home pay in tolls. It is a deliberate strategy from the Government. It dreamed up this plan 10 years ago: Let us build a ring road of tolls around Sydney then the people of the State will have a choice of whether they sit in congested traffic or pay an exorbitant amount of tolls. I ask the Minister, who is a regional MP, to tell colleagues that this is killing families in western Sydney. It is just too expensive. Our offices are full of people coming to us to say they just cannot afford it.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: What's your policy?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I will tell you. This is genuine.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: What's your policy?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The Government has implemented a policy that imposes \$3,000 on a working family. Only someone who is so out of touch with working families would implement a policy like that—only a government that simply did not care about those families. What kind of interjection is that, "What's your policy?" It will take us a while to work out how to fix your mess. That is our policy.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I understand the member for Kogarah is making a point. However, he did invite an interjection—perhaps rhetorically. I ask him to be mindful of that and I ask the Minister to understand that it was purely a rhetorical question. The Minister will cease interjecting.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: It was somewhat rhetorical. This is the Government's policy and I cannot believe it. When it was revealed that it was a \$7 each-way journey, for someone who uses the M5 every day it means \$3,000 extra on their take-home pay. The Government said, "That is our policy. We believe in choice when it comes to commuters who use our roadways." That forgets the fact that the road had been free for 20 years. The Government is saying to families in Moorebank, Holsworthy or Panania—all in electorates currently held by the Government—that they have a great choice when it comes to the M5: "You can sit in a traffic jam for an hour and a half or pay an extra \$3,000 a year in tolls, but don't worry because we have consulted Adam Smith and this is the new way of dealing with public transport or toll road infrastructure."

It is ridiculous. It is not working. The Government negotiated this deal with Transurban and WestConnex and in the end there will be a massive increase in the amount that an average family will pay in tolls each and every year for the next 20 years. The M5 will be paid off 17 times over—it gets paid off, then it gets paid off again, then it gets paid off again; 17 times over. It never ends. Working families never get a break when it comes to toll roads. It just does not stop. This is a deliberate plan by the New South Wales Government. As bad as the situation is when it comes to toll roads in New South Wales, it is about to get worse because inflation, according to the NSW Treasury—and I checked it this morning—is expected to run between 1 per cent and 2 per cent over the next five years, maxing out at 2 per cent because global growth is in the toilet. But the toll roads increase

4 per cent a year—each year, every year—for 20 years. There is only one circumstance when the toll roads will not increase by 4 per cent and that is if inflation runs above 4 per cent, in which case it will go to 5 per cent.

Who wins? It is the toll road companies. Who loses? It is the Government's own voters. Most of these people live in electorates held by the Government—the corridor into the south-west of Sydney. Those families are getting smashed when it comes to toll roads, and there is virtually nothing from the New South Wales Government. The member for Rockdale and I have been on the news for the past three nights. The official response from the Government to families who are screaming into the camera that they cannot afford it anymore is, "We are looking into it. Don't worry about it; we are looking into it." There is no plan for toll relief, no plan to get out of this shocking contract that the Government is in with WestConnex—and probably a secret plan to privatise the other 49 per cent. Even the small revenue that trickles down to the Government will go because privatisation is on the agenda. This is not ideological; this is smashing people with small businesses, Liberal voters, Labor voters, and families who cannot make ends meet because their money is going on a toll road when the money should have gone into public transport.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: It is going into public transport.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Rubbish, absolute rubbish. Look at the metro Airport Link—

Mrs Melinda Pavey: I'm looking at it.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: —that was released yesterday.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: It's on the news tonight.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Let me ask you a question. How much—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): It is a rhetorical question. It is against standing orders to invite an interjection.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I am allowed to respond to the Minister's interjection.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: You encourage them.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The Minister will cease interjecting and joining in the debate. The member for Kogarah will direct his remarks through the Chair.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The metro is going out to the second airport. The Commonwealth Government is contributing half the cost. This Government has contributed \$1 billion on a \$12 billion project. When it comes to toll roads, it has all the money it needs because the road is owned by a private company. The Government is tying people to a build that they simply cannot afford. Do not take my word for it. AlphaBeta released data this week about the amount of money that people in western Sydney pay. Surprise, surprise—people in Camden and Campbelltown pay three times more than those on the lower North Shore and the inner west. It is just not affordable.

No-one is using the M8 at the moment. It is a ghost town. It is a simple premise: It is so expensive to use the M8 at \$20 a fare that trucking companies are telling their drivers to use Stoney Creek Road and Forest Road as an alternative. A truck driver told me that at 3.00 a.m. Stoney Creek Road becomes the M5. There is nobody on it and it is free. Imagine you own a house in Bexley, Hurstville or Beverley Hills, for example. You put all your savings into it, took out a gigantic mortgage and, all of a sudden, all day and all night there are B-double semitrailers hurtling past 20 metres from where you are sleeping. It is not sustainable. I cannot believe the indifference from the Government. Either it does not care about the electorates that are impacted most heavily or there is a wilful ignorance.

Something needs to be done. In the short term, there needs to be some sort of toll relief program. These families cannot afford it, particularly in the worst recession the country has had in 30 years. In the long term, the Transport budget needs to be rebalanced towards public transport. That is what cities around the world are doing. Paris, London and New York are investing in their public transport, not using every available dollar to push into toll road infrastructure. The Government is presiding over a broken system. Its wilful indifference to people who cannot afford it is staggering. Something—anything—needs to be done. I urge the member for Oxley to tell her colleagues that families in western Sydney simply cannot afford it.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (10:57:12): That is a hard act to follow but I speak to the Roads Amendment (Toll-free Period) Bill 2020. This is a positive initiative from my colleague in the other place, the fabulous Hon. John Graham.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: He is fabulous.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: He is fabulous.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: I agree.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: My electorate of Rockdale is currently in an absolute mess. It has been king hit by the enormous toll placed on vehicles travelling on the M5. As the member for Kogarah said, historically people were not paying a toll on the M5 from King Georges Road. As a result of this toll, many vehicles leave the M5 at King Georges Road to travel along Stoney Creek Road and Forest Road right through the residential communities in my electorate. The residents are beside themselves; they do not understand how they can continue to live this way. For example, trucks that are charged \$21 one-way to travel on the M5 are choosing to travel on Forest Road, and they are doing it after midnight. People are trying to sleep at 1.00 a.m. and 2.00 a.m. and there are double bogeys pounding past. The Minister is laughing. This is not funny. I have to deal with these people every day.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: It's about you.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, it is about them. It is about the people. It is about our communities, and we should care about them. I pass Minister Constance in the hallway and say, "Mate, what are you doing about this?" He is being sent emails upon emails, and what does he say? "Look, I'm worried about the fires at the moment." That is the only response I get from him. Small businesses have to make return trip sometimes four or five times a day. That is \$200-odd a day just whacked on them. You can say they can pass that onto the client; they cannot pass it onto the client. Try to explain that to the timber truck driver who gets a certain rate per tonne. Do you think that the client is actually saying, "Oh, you come from that direction so you've got to charge us more." That does not happen. Why have you got the TWU representing small business here but the Liberal Party—nothing. You whack them.

Mr Lee Evans: You've got the union people.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You have got the union support in the small business community, the owner drivers. Don't you care about them? This is what is happening. Families cannot sleep all because you've just whacked on this toll, haven't thought about it and haven't looked at what behavioural change is going to happen on the roads. You haven't thought about it at all. It is just all about whack a toll here, whack a toll there. Maybe it is just all about tolltarianism. That is all it is. Scott Morrison introduced federal tax cuts—gone because of this toll charge for those families. I plead with this Government to support this bill, support relief, support it in general. We have to do something. We cannot let these communities suffer any longer. We cannot let the small business community suffer.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Have they signed up for their toll relief?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: What toll relief?

Mrs Melinda Pavey: For the families.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The toll relief? We are waiting for the toll relief, but the Minister is worried about the koalas. We want to talk about this issue. We want to sort out this issue. Support this bill

Mrs Melinda Pavey: But you need some forms.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There are no forms. I will tell you another thing: One of my constituents asked about the noise abatement program. He was told, "Look, we're five years away before we can sort you out on Forest Road." They live on Forest Road. They have double bogies 24-hours a day running past their house. They are suffering from mental health problems—real issues. The worst thing in the world is to be at home and all day every day to have these double bogies running past their house.

Mr Chris Minns: It's not bullshit by the way.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's not crap. I will tell you that, your rural communities don't cop any of this, but our communities do and they are people who have invested in homes, have mortgages and have a cost of living and they don't need this added onto their cost of living. Seventy dollars a week to someone on a fixed income, just out of the blue like that, whacked onto—

Mrs Melinda Pavey: There are toll relief packages.

Mr Chris Minns: No there aren't What are you talking about?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There are no toll relief packages.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The member for Rockdale and Minister Pavey will cease. The member will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: They are not in touch. I urge members to support the bill.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (11:02:15): I support the Roads Amendment (Toll-free Period) Bill 2020. The object of this bill is to amend the Roads Act to provide for the declaration of toll-free periods for new tollways and to provide for the compensation of tollway operators for any consequent loss of revenue. There are powerful reasons to support this bill. There are some glaring reasons as to why members representing south-west Sydney would have a strong interest in this bill. Most obviously residents in south-west Sydney in electorates such as the one I represent, and I myself who regularly use the M5 East, have recently had to start to pay a new toll imposed on that old road, the M5 East. There has been no substantial improvement to the M5 East to justify the imposition of a new toll.

What has happened is that an entirely new tunnel—the M8—has been opened. Because the proposed toll on that was otherwise going to be insanely high, the Government decided to impose an extra new toll on the old road, the M5 East. Its financial projections, I note, may well be in trouble: I have not noticed a whole lot of cars using that road each morning. That is not really surprising. I understand that it takes you to St Peters. I have nothing against St Peters, it is just not somewhere I need to go, nor do many people to whom I talk in Liverpool. So for a new tunnel we do not use, we are paying a new toll on an old road.

There is a palpable anger at the new toll—imposed without even a toll-free period. That anger has gone up a notch or two in the past week or so. Statements for toll accounts for the last quarter, ending at the end of September, have been arriving in the mail for those of us who do not do it electronically. Those statements show with a painful and unmistakeable directness the impact on regular users of the M5 East—the financial consequences of the new toll. The bills have gone through the roof. There is an added bit of salt to rub into the wound. I had commuters, who use the M5 East and have their cashback managed electronically, contact me last week to say that E-Toll will not be able to meet the cashback claims for the last quarter until 16 October, which was last Friday, which is significantly later than normal. This was confirmed by a notice on the E-Toll, myE-Toll website.

So they are hit with a new toll and at the same time as having their cashback delayed. It is hard to imagine a greater display of contempt by this Government for the people of south-west Sydney. The failure of the Premier to attend the opening of the new infrastructure shows the acute sense of embarrassment—perhaps even dread—the Government feels over this proposal. Let me quote from a young man who has recently wrote to me. He has moved to a newer suburb with his young family into their first home. In part of his letter he says this to me:

I am writing to you to share my concerns and frustrations about the newly introduced toll on the M5 East motorway which was toll free for almost two decades.

To provide some background, I work as a solicitor in a suburban law firm in Matraville and I use both of the M5 South-West and the M5 East motorways to travel to and from work.

The effect of this new toll is that it will cost me, and therefore my family, an additional \$3,000 each year to travel to work (after adjusting for the registration relief). The alternate routes are heavily congested and would increase my travel time by at least 20 minutes each way on a good day.

He goes on to say:

Additionally, it is not simply a matter of travelling to work. South-western Sydney residents who wish to travel for other reasons to the Eastern Suburbs or to the Sydney CBD using the M5 East motorway will now face this new charge. As an example, a weekend trip to the beach for a picnic or swim will now cost families, in addition to petrol and parking costs, \$14 roundtrip.

This new toll is in my view a new regressive tax on the peoples of south western Sydney. It is, in its nature, geographical discrimination and will further inequality between the east and west, limiting opportunities for the current and future of our area.

It is unfair and unacceptable.

Not only has the State Government introduced a toll on a toll-free road but the toll rate is ridiculously high and will put financial pressure and stress on many families on already tight budgets.

These are the views of one resident. They are reflective however of the feelings of many of the people I represent. The strength of feeling on this issue is immense. Recently I received hundreds and hundreds of signatures on a petition opposing this new tax. I do not think I have ever seen a more enthusiastic or angry response. The first 10,000 signatures have been lodged in this place. A second lot will be coming shortly. The depth and strength of the feeling is shown in the decision of Liverpool City Council earlier this year to oppose the toll on the M5 East and to support a toll-free period for the M8. Significantly local Liberal Party councillors, in all their factions and sub-factions, supported this motion that was moved by Labor Councillor Nathan Hagarty.

Of course tolls are not simply an issue for those who use the M5 East. Sydney is currently undergoing a pandemic of toll mania. It is frequently said that we are the most tolled city in the world and this is about to get worse, not better. There is considerable merit in the toll-free period. The safety issues are obvious. The lack of a toll-free period increases the risk of last-minute decisions by drivers unfamiliar with new roads and toll-way

set-ups to avoid the toll by a dangerous manoeuvres. There were reportedly more than 300 separate incidents to which incident response vehicles were sent in the first month and a half of the opening of the M4 tunnels.

The argument in favour of a toll-free period has been supported by the NRMA and by the 2005 Richmond review. The outbreak of toll mania will spread to include NorthConnex, WestConnex stage 3, the M6 stage 1, and the western harbour tunnel and beaches link. It is not just that we have the highest road user charges in the world, they will go up 4 per cent each year for years to come. The impact of the M5 East toll is obvious already and has been from the time it was introduced in July. Other speakers in the debate have previously pointed to the congestion on Stoney Creek Road, Kingsgrove Road, Canterbury Road and King Georges Road, and the conga line of trucks at 3.00 a.m. on Forest Road. Many residents simply cannot afford the tolls, let alone the \$20 fee each way fee for trucks.

The inability to pay is exacerbated by the pandemic. Many commuters are thus forced off the toll road onto nearby roads, leading to that congestion. This goes well beyond inconvenience: It impedes economic growth and slows down everything. It is bad enough doing that at any time, but in the middle of a pandemic it defies any logic at all. It is particularly obnoxious when before the last State election the then and current Government said, "We can have it all." Obviously that was untrue because self-evidently we cannot have infrastructure without a new toll on old roads. Electricity can be privatised, as can everything else they can lay their hands on, but the Government cannot build infrastructure without tolling us. And as the rich and poor both pay the same for a loaf of bread, everyone pays the same toll. User pays means the residents of Liverpool will pay the same toll as multi-millionaires. It is a profoundly regressive tax. The people of Lurnea, Prestons, Casula, Moorebank and Chipping Norton have every reason to feel betrayed by this Government. These residents cannot have it all. They are not even told they can eat cake—they just have to pay tolls. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (11:08:50): This Government will have many legacies once it exits the government benches to its rightful place on the opposition benches and tolls are one of the reasons why it will. It will be remembered not only for flogging off assets but also for being the highest-taxing and greedy government in this State's history. It will be known as the toll troll. It just build roads to gauge money from people in west and south-western Sydney. Of course, everyone around our city pays these tolls, but we must not forget that people from the regions pay these tolls as well—those down on the South Coast as well as in your area of Coffs Harbour, Mr Temporary Speaker—as they commute to Sydney on these new "toll troll" roads built by this greedy Government. The Government does not consider the financial impact that its tolls have on local families.

I share with the House a story of one particular constituent of mine who is one of many thousands who signed my petition against this Government's new toll on an old road. She explained to me that she is a single mum of three who commutes each day on the M5—five days per week. Obviously there are economic challenges and financial restrictions for this local mum, who is already doing it tough. She cannot make ends meet and is trying to provide for her three children. For her, this toll will equate to an additional \$70 a week. That may not be a lot of money for our conservative Liberal members on the other side of the Chamber—or those in their leafy electorates having a jolly old time whilst they sip on their lattes and have their smashed avo on toast every morning—but it is an enormous amount of money for this single mum. She is one example of how this draconian measure put in place by this heartless Government that does not consider—

Mr Lee Evans: She gets toll relief—half-price rego.

Mr GREG WARREN: I note the member for Heathcote's interjection; I will come back to you soon, mate. We know as a matter of fact that we in south-west Sydney continue to have money gouged out of our pockets and get very little in return. Only yesterday that fine local newspaper the *Campbelltown-Macarthur Advertiser* reported online:

Camden and Wollondilly residents are forking out the most money for tolls according to new data released this week.

Further, the article states:

The data covering the period from May to September 2020, compiled by illion and AlphaBeta (part of Accenture), scanned the transactions of millions of commuters to calculate average spending on tolls per household each week.

It found that some toll road users in south-west Sydney were forking out more than double—
if not three times in tolls than people living in the North Shore or inner city areas—

AlphaBeta director Dr Andrew Charlton said the data demonstrated the effect of toll roads on south-western Sydney households.

The article continues:

"The high toll-paying suburbs from Campbelltown in the south to The Hills in the north is Sydney's new 'latte line'—a division in Sydney that speaks to the growing inequities in our city," he said.

I could not have put it better than Mr Charlton.

Mr Alister Henskens: Dr Charlton. He is the expert of choice for the union movement.

Mr GREG WARREN: Yes, the proud union movement.

Mr Alister Henskens: Yes, and he is the expert of choice.

Mr GREG WARREN: Yes, exactly. I appreciate the acknowledgement by the member for Ku-ring-gai of the importance of our proud union movement and the fight that it continues to engage in for working families—but it is now doing it for businesses as well. As the member for Kogarah rightly said, you have now got the unions standing up and fighting for local businesses because members opposite have abandoned them as well. They are absent on this issue. They have a dearth of respect and they are absent when it comes to the fair representation of the rights of people and businesses right across south-west Sydney.

Many members would know that I was formerly a truckie running around in fuel tankers—mainly coal trucks and things like that. I did not own my own truck—I worked for someone—but I remember the enormous costs that burdened local businesses, particularly owner-drivers, when it came to tolls. I commend the Transport Workers' Union for standing up and fighting for those local businesses and those owner-drivers, but it has not stopped at that. This good, proud union has been standing up for local businesses and local families, and it has been standing up for everyone that this Government has abandoned. The Government has abandoned these people. It has come out and gouged this money and is spending it elsewhere.

The windfall from this new toll on the old road will be as high as \$12 billion. It equates to motorists paying off the original \$800 million cost around 15 times over. This is nothing more than a greedy cash grab, gouged out of the pockets of hardworking families—workers, local business owners, mums and dads, students and pensioners—right across west and south-west Sydney. That includes electorates such as Campbelltown, Camden, Wollondilly, Liverpool, East Hills, Holsworthy, Canterbury and Lakemba. The members for the electorates of Kogarah and Rockdale rightly pointed out in their local media the other flow-on impact: pushing traffic onto old, congested roads because people simply will not be able to afford the toll.

Heavy vehicles will be forking out \$20 per trip. A mate of mine who owns a small truck business in south-west Sydney explained to me that he simply will not be able to afford it. He will have to not employ someone. Even when he tenders for contracts, he will be less competitive. If he does not get contracts it means he does not have a business, which means his truckies will not have a job. It is as simple as that. That is the reality of what this Government is doing. It is absent when it comes to this issue. Government members are immune to the hardship that is imposing and will further impose on local businesses and local families.

Why are motorists who do not use the M8 having to help those who do use it? That is a question this Government must answer. I know the answer: It is because this sneaky, greedy Government put the toll in place to do nothing more than fill its coffers. When members look at the expenditure of money by this Government they ought to look at the budget blowouts. I would not trust the mob opposite to run the meat raffle at the Bradbury Hotel on a Friday afternoon. In fact, I would not trust them to run my bath. It is absolutely appalling, whether it is the light rail, WestConnex or NorthConnex—and we still do not know what is going on with NorthConnex. It is an absolute joke. Only yesterday the Government said, "We are going to do the M12 in two years' time." The road would be lucky to be open when Western Sydney Airport is supposed to be functioning. The tyres will be hitting the tarmac at Western Sydney Airport, but it will be an airport with no road to it.

Members opposite simply do not get it. However, what they do get is an obsession to go to west and south-west Sydney and gouge money out of our pockets. Recently I revealed that this Government has gouged out some \$4 billion in some way or another. Why? Because Government members want to squander it in their own electorates, as we have seen through the grants inquiry. They take the collection and distribution of wealth as some sort of joke to fill the Liberal Party coffers they use to provide themselves with the political opportunism that they all so relish.

I support the bill. I commend my colleagues the Hon. John Graham, the member for Kogarah and the Leader of the Opposition, who have been championing these matters the whole way through. Even when the Leader of the Opposition was shadow roads Minister she took the fight up on the M4. But did this Government care? No, it did not. It ignored the people of Seven Hills, Penrith and Mulgoa. It does not care about those people. That is why we in the Opposition will shunt Government members to their rightful place on the Opposition benches in 2023. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (11:18:56): In reply: There is one overwhelming reason why Labor has moved the Roads Amendment (Toll-free Period) Bill 2020 and why it ought to be passed by the House today: Under this Government, Sydney has become one of the most tolled cities in the world. Under this Government working people from all over Sydney and from regional communities as well will be forced to hand over a bigger slice of their hard-earned incomes each year for decades to come. We are not just talking about weeks or months

or even one or two years: We are talking about decades to come. They will be paying for decades for the privilege of going to work each and every day and returning home, for the privilege of being able to just pick their kids up from school or from preschool, for the privilege of being able to go out on the weekend to children's sport, to go shopping or to spend time with friends and families.

Remember that under this Government tolls across Sydney will increase by 4 per cent or inflation, whichever is greater. We know that for a long time to come the increase will be 4 per cent. This is in itself outrageous. When I was the shadow roads Minister, as the member for Campbelltown said, I rallied very hard against the decision made by the Government. The decision was made without any transparency. The decision was made by the Minister of that time in secret negotiations with tolling companies.

Working people across our State know that their wages do not go up by 4 per cent each year. They know that inflation is straying into negative territory and that their electricity bills are going through the roof. They know the costs of child care are high and getting higher and that jobs in this pandemic are precarious. They understand that their mortgage is a weight on them or their rent is a financial burden for them. They also know that there are communities right across New South Wales that are facing the highest levels of unemployment seen in generations.

What they cannot understand is why they are being hit in the hip pocket when they can absolutely least afford it. That is our point in bringing forward this bill at this time. The bill recognises the environment in which we operate—an environment in which we are still grappling with a pandemic and the recession that has necessarily followed it. The Premier actually hit the nail on the head—and I was surprised that she admitted this but good on her—when she labelled her Government's approach as toll mania. I do not think any Labor member will let her forget that.

I thank each and every Labor member of this Parliament who has spoken during this debate. They know that their communities are really hurting and that families are struggling to put food on the table. They know that rates of unemployment in their areas have gone up and that there are people without jobs. They know that young people are suffering and that people are more inclined to use their cars at the moment because they fear being on public transport in light of this Government refusing to make the wearing of masks compulsory.

They know that this situation is weighing very heavily on them, their neighbours, their friends and their families. I acknowledge the contribution of our Labor members to this debate: the member for Wyong, the member for The Entrance, the member for Canterbury, the member for Gosford, the member for Fairfield, the member for Macquarie Fields, the member for Lakemba, the member for Auburn, the member for Campbelltown, the member for Kogarah, the member for Liverpool, the member for Maitland and the member for Rockdale.

The number of members who have spoken during this debate gives us a good idea of how far-reaching are the consequences of Government decisions on tolls across Sydney and into regional communities. I particularly acknowledge the members representing electorates in south-west Sydney who have not only participated in the debate but also lobbied on behalf of their communities. I acknowledge members representing electorates on the Central Coast who know that when NorthConnex opens their communities in particular will be hard hit. I say up-front that Labor is not opposed to NorthConnex.

We actually think it is a good project, but we believe that, come this weekend when NorthConnex is supposed to open, there should be a toll-free period. That is what this bill is all about. It is about fairness. It is about understanding the difficult environment we are in and about making sure that each and every person is looked after. By introducing this bill Labor has tried to make sure that it is a reasonable bill. We could have introduced a bill that was far-reaching and could have caused enormous difficulties for the Government in the contracts that it has struck, but we did not. We came up with something that is very reasonable but which I believe the Government will oppose.

Over the past couple of weeks in this House each of the Labor members have told the absolute truth about what toll mania is doing to their communities and what it will do going forward. As I said, we are not just talking about over the next couple of weeks, months or years but about decades to come. They spoke about what increased tolls are doing to the incomes of families right across the city and in the regions. They spoke about how truckies and small business owners across our city and State are really being bled dry by the way this Government is operating. I reiterate what I said in my opening: I acknowledge the Transport Workers' Union [TWU] and the leadership of Richard Olsen, who has been very fair and reasonable.

When I was the shadow roads Minister I convened a roundtable with all the trucking companies and the TWU and we spoke about what would be Labor's policy. We spoke about the Auditor-General being involved, Labor's position on transparency and the need for communities to be involved in what was happening in contract negotiations. I was surprised at that time that there had been so little consultation with the trucking companies and

the TWU about the impact of tolls on truck drivers, in particular. What most bothered them, apart from tolls being increased by 4 per cent, was that they were locked out of discussions on tripling the toll for truck drivers. The Government has never been able to tell me how it arrived at that formula. Labor understands that there is wear and tear on the roads and that trucks as well as cars cause that wear and tear. However, a very basic principle when we are talking about the hit to small businesses is that the Government should explain why it has reached a particular decision. That decision was not necessarily about imposing a toll but how the decision to triple the toll was arrived at.

Labor members also have made sure that they are in their communities and talking to people. Many Labor members have surveyed their communities. They have asked people what they think and sent out petitions. The response has been extraordinary. I think many Labor members have been surprised that so many people are engaged and outraged by decisions made by this Government. They also know that, in addition to the terrible impact on their hip pocket, toll roads are changing communities right across Sydney. The speeches by the member for Kogarah and the member for Rockdale confirm that. The M5 is the most recent of roads to have a toll imposed. Those two members have told horror stories about the impact on their communities of rat runs and how people who drive through residential streets never wanted to do that. Those motorists are being forced off main roads because they cannot afford to pay the toll.

That toll mania is now about to be unleashed on people who live on the Central Coast in particular, in the Hunter region and in regions farther north all the way to the State's northern border. From this weekend onwards people who live in those areas and who travel to Sydney will pay a toll. All Labor wants to achieve by this bill is to attract Government support for a toll-free period. We heard the member for Miranda and the member for Riverstone make weak attempts to speak against the bill by relying on technical points relating to compensation and commercial arrangements, but they missed the point. We have become arguably the most tolled city in the world under this very tired Government that has lost contact with and any ability to understand what is happening in the community right now. The member for Riverstone said:

This bill will make no real difference to the circumstances of people.

I say to him that is absolute arrogance. The bill will make a difference, and he would see that if it passed the House in the week before NorthConnex opens. It will make a huge difference to those people who will be using NorthConnex. I hope that the member's constituents in Riverstone were watching when he spoke in this House. I am sure they will not agree that a toll-free period will make no real difference. And what did we hear from Liberal Party members who represent communities that have been done over by the Government's obsession with tolls?

What have we heard from the member for Oatley, the member for East Hills, the member for Ryde or the member for Terrigal? We have heard nothing from them—just silence. They did not speak. They have not supported their communities. They know what people in their communities are going through, but they do not have the guts to stand up and say it. They do not have the guts to stand up and fight for people in their communities who are suffering enormously and who just need some relief from tolls.

Labor's proposal for making toll-free periods on new roads law is very fair and very reasonable and will strike a blow against toll mania. I thank the shadow Minister for Roads, John Graham, who has done an incredible job putting this bill together and supporting what we are doing. Having no toll-free period on new roads means traffic chaos. It means last-minute lane changes, which leads to accidents. It also leads to delays because people seeking to avoid the cost divert through residential streets, which impacts enormously on those communities. Labor's proposal is about safety and fairness. It provides commuters with time to adjust their routes before they are hit with a toll. Our proposal means that commuters and truckers travelling on NorthConnex—a road with a free alternative—will get some relief from tolls that are going to increase every quarter by a total of 4 per cent.

As I said, Labor supports NorthConnex but it will open a year late. That is not unusual with this Government and its major projects: They are either late, over budget or both. In conclusion, the Government's toll mania cannot be allowed to continue unabated. Tolls across the city are increasing at 4 per cent a year—well over double the rate of inflation—and the burden is passed on to those who rely on a car to get to work, truck drivers and businesses. Labor's proposal will ease the burden for ordinary people across our city and our regions. The people who are the backbone of our economy and who each and every person in this House is here to represent are doing it tough because of decisions made by this Government. I commend the bill to the House and I urge members opposite whose communities are impacted by this issue to spare a thought for them, land on their side and support the bill.

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

The House divided.

Ayes43
 Noes45
 Majority.....2

AYES

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

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

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

NOES

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

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

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

PAIRS

Atalla, E
 Lalich, N

Roberts, A
 Wilson, F

Motion negatived.

GOVERNMENT SECTOR EMPLOYMENT AMENDMENT (TELEWORKING) BILL 2020

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 24 September 2020.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (11:42:28): I lead for the Government in debate on the Government Sector Employment Amendment (Teleworking) Bill 2020, which the member for Barwon introduced in this place on 24 September. I state at the outset that the Government will oppose the bill. Before I move on to its substance, I make it clear that the Government absolutely supports job opportunities in rural and regional New South Wales. In particular, the Government supports employment opportunities being available in the government sector in rural and regional areas. Making sure that everyone across New South Wales has access to opportunities—whether it be through schools, hospitals, roads or jobs—has been our major focus since we came to government in 2011. Following Labor's 16 years of neglect of infrastructure and other services across the community, a lot of catching up was required.

One area that needed catching up was the public sector in terms of its diversity, its excellence and the opportunities provided to it. One of the Premier's Priorities is to achieve a world-class public service. It is about more than a catch up, although there was that to do. It is about aspiring to be the best in the world. As a government we have a goal to implement increased productivity and digital capacity in the public sector as well as drive diversity, which I mentioned before. My colleague Minister Victor Dominello is doing a lot in regard to the digital capacity of our public sector, which has involved a great deal of effort on his part in budget and policy oversight.

The aim of the Premier's priority is by 2025 to have 50 per cent of senior leadership roles held by women, to increase the number of Aboriginal people in senior leadership roles and to ensure that 5.6 per cent of government sector roles are held by people with a disability. We want to do those things because we know that the Government can best serve the whole of the community and do things better when it reflects how they look and how they want things done. That is borne out by research from around the world looking at the benefits of diversity and excellence in the private and public sectors. We are doing well in the public sector.

According to Federal Government agency data for the period of 2018-19, private sector representation of women in senior executive or c-suite roles stands at only 17 per cent. At the State Government level we are doing far superior. That said, it is a continual piece of work that we must apply ourselves to. We must make that policy sweat to ensure that in our public sector we have the broadest representation of women, Indigenous people and people with a disability. I make it abundantly clear that the Government supports flexible working practices, including teleworking, which is the focus of this bill.

The New South Wales government sector agencies and local departments such as the Department of Primary Industries and the Local Land Services have been using remote collaborative technology for many years. There is videoconferencing, the use of online platforms to enable joint collaboration on documents when people are in many different places across the State and the use and access to key systems from remote locations. These systems are important. They mean that work can be performed online from any location and enable teams in different regional locations to work together. It has the benefit of avoiding unnecessary travel time on the part of those employees and gives them some of the benefits of staying close to home with family and those for whom they care.

In recent years the New South Wales government sector has developed a range of flexible working arrangements that enable the sector to do its job flexibly. Since 2016 we have had a policy of "if not, why not" when determining whether a government sector job could be the subject of a flexible work arrangement. The Public Service Commission has done substantial work since 2018 to coordinate the implementation of that flexible working practice across the sector. That takes effort and time, and you have to have the right management in place. You also need the right attitudes, the digital bases on which to do it and a leadership culture throughout organisations that supports flexible work as a legitimate choice. It can enhance people's efforts when they feel supported across the whole of their life, 24/7.

The Government's flexible work policy and readiness to work remotely have been significant factors in ensuring that we could respond well to the COVID-19 pandemic. It did create challenges for those in the public sector, as it did for all of us. But having that framework or skeleton of flexible practices and tools in place meant that the public sector in New South Wales could respond quickly to transition their work to home. Whether it was a shared home or whether people worked in a team, it meant a minimal disruption to their efforts while maintaining critical service delivery across government to our community suffering the impacts of COVID-19.

The Public Service Commission, which oversees the public service, now supports the New South Wales public sector to plan for a new normal where, at the direction of the Premier and the Government, we are now encouraging our public sector employees to return to their workplaces in whatever form that might take. The backbone to that is the flexibility that has been in place for some time, which will continue to support them in whatever a return to work at the office means. I think that describes a very strong effort from the Government to support remote and flexible working for government sector employees across our State. With that as a backdrop, I turn to the contents of the bill.

The bill proposes to amend the Government Sector Employment Act in relation to teleworking arrangements for New South Wales government sector employees. It defines "teleworking" broadly as an arrangement under which a government sector employee performs some or all work using technology in a location other than their usual place of work. The bill would require the Public Service Commissioner to make rules under the Government Sector Employment Act in relation to teleworking arrangements, including specific rules for teleworking arrangements that prohibit employees of Sydney-based agencies from entering into teleworking arrangements from outside of the Greater Sydney region. That takes away some of the flexibility that is already within the work practice of the public sector.

The bill requires the Public Service Commissioner to access all current and future government sector roles to determine whether they are suitable for teleworking. The commissioner would have to report annually on teleworking arrangements across the government sector agencies and establish a website that gives information to government sector employees about teleworking. Although the Government continues to support the availability of teleworking arrangements and other flexible working arrangements for public sector employees in rural and regional areas, it is our firm view that the bill is not the most effective way to achieve its objectives. Therefore, the bill will be opposed by the Government for the reasons I will speak to now.

Ms Kate Washington: Shame!

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: The member for Port Stephens has not been listening about what we are already doing on teleworking.

Ms Kate Washington: What am I doing?

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: Yes. The member for Port Stephens is criticising the bill. If she listens, I will say, as I said before, all the things we have done that support remote and flexible workplaces. That is why we are opposing the bill.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Vaucluse will be heard in silence.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I will take you through the reasons why we do not support the bill as it is currently cast. Firstly, flexible working arrangements are already implemented across the New South Wales government sector and there is no need for legislative amendment or any changes to that. One form of flexible working is to enable work to be performed from other locations, including via telecommuting, remote working or other technological means, and that is described in the bill as "teleworking".

COVID-19 has seen an increase in the use of flexible working arrangements and it has demonstrated that the current arrangements work very well. The Public Service Commission is working with all of the clusters across government to ensure that the flexibility that was broadened during COVID-19 can still remain to support our public sector workforce. Rather than legislatively mandating rules for teleworking, the view of the Government is that it is preferable to make sure that the Public Service Commission continues to work with government agencies across the sector and provide guidance and resources, support pilots and develop the capability of flexible working. That needs leadership, digital capability—which has significant investment and leadership from Minister Dominello—and a working culture that supports all of those opportunities.

There is greater scope for innovation—and the Government is open to that—and adaptability in the future implementation of further flexible work arrangements. They need to be pursued through policy rather than legislation, which creates a certain inflexibility on the way that can be done and the way further innovation is rolled out. The bill creates a rather rigid framework—the antithesis of flexibility—for imposing teleworking arrangements in a way that would restrict the ability of agencies that demonstrate they can work flexibly, nimbly and innovatively to provide suitable work arrangements for their employees.

Secondly, the Government opposes the bill because it would negatively impact on the ability of government agencies to recruit and manage staff as appropriate for the needs of New South Wales communities and the operational needs of the public sector. Individual government agencies, rather than the centrally located Public Service Commission, are the best at assessing whether roles in their organisation are suitable for teleworking, as they can take into account operational capacity and customer needs, and how best to meet those needs. Flexibility is the best way for exemplar public servicing of our community and it is going to be inhibited by the bill because it prescribes certain things to take place in certain ways. There will be unnecessary restrictions on how agencies can recruit, deploy and manage their staff in order to deliver government services. Being the experts, government agencies know how their service could best be delivered.

Finally, the bill is not necessary to support or facilitate government sector job opportunities in rural and regional New South Wales. New South Wales government agencies and the Government strongly support rural and regional jobs across the State. That has been a very strong focus of the Government. There are teleworking arrangements and other remote working arrangements in place within the public sector, and their success has been proven throughout the COVID pandemic. The work, focus and flexibility of managing and creating opportunities in rural and regional New South Wales is best done at a policy and operational level by government agencies that know, with the policy settings of government, how best to provide services to local communities and to adapt to changing needs. Who would have thought this time last year that we would have faced a global pandemic? The government sector had to have a flexible, nimble and agile response, and they responded admirably. They had the flexibility to do things as they saw best and the ability to customise to areas across the State that had different needs. They are the three reasons why the Government opposes the bill. I commend my speech to the House.

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (11:57:01): I speak in support of the Government Sector Employment Amendment (Teleworking) Bill 2020 and I congratulate the member for Barwon for introducing the bill. He recognised that the COVID pandemic has shown us the enormous potential of working from home using communication technology—in other words, teleworking. He has recognised the boost this could have for rural and regional areas. We have finally learned that many jobs no longer require an on-site presence all week. Instead, we have discovered that they can be done from home. This means that city-based jobs can be done from rural and regional areas. There are more than 300,000 public servants in New South Wales and I thank them for the work they do for our communities, particularly during the pandemic, but many of these roles can be done partly or entirely remotely.

The member for Vacluse has spoken about the initiatives the public sector is currently undertaking. I recognise and applaud those, but I believe the bill is critically important because it will facilitate teleworking for public sector roles; ensure it continues past the pandemic; elevate the issue to legislation which sends a clear message to the community, bureaucracy and broader private sector that the Parliament wants action; and make sure that teleworking is measured—and we know that unless something is measured it does not get done; it is just words.

Why is it important to facilitate teleworking? The key to rural and regional communities is people. In recent years there has been a shift of jobs, and hence people, to the city for many reasons, which has undercut our communities. Thankfully, many communities have fought back, and I acknowledge the role the Government has played in putting regional growth to the forefront, particularly the infrastructure development and activation precincts, but more can be done. The key is jobs. Jobs for young people, for people who want a tree change, for people who wish to stay in their beloved communities, and for partners. I want to focus on jobs for partners today.

The recruitment of professional services to rural and regional communities is critical to their survival. Medical, nursing, pharmacy, allied health, legal, communications, public service and community development professionals are critical to these areas. They provide services locally so that people do not have to travel to the city. This encourages businesses to congregate around those services. It is vital that shopping centres in small rural communities contain pharmacies and a medical practitioner.

I speak from long personal experience as a senior health administrator of the challenge and diabolical difficulties of recruiting medical specialists and professionals to rural areas. It was the bane of my existence for many years. Over the past two decades in Wagga Wagga I have partnered with local practitioners in both the public and private sector on a recruitment and retention committee that has worked diligently to recruit specialists. One of the key issues when recruiting medical specialists and professionals has been finding a job for their partner.

I know of many ideally suited specialists who wanted to work in the Wagga Wagga area who balked at the opportunity because there was no work for their partner. Teleworking could certainly solve that issue because it would open up a range of jobs that partners could apply for. This becomes an important component for professional services. I comment on that not just because I have personal experience in the field but also because partners may well be very interested in that sort of work.

Last week marked the International Day of Rural Women. This year the theme was building rural women's resilience in the wake of COVID-19, and strengthening sustainable livelihoods and wellbeing. Increasing teleworking opportunities is one way to build back up and improve the lives of regional and rural women who are perhaps looking to change their current working conditions or take on new roles. In this regard I highlight Jo Palmer, a constituent of mine who is the current AgriFutures Rural Women's National Winner. I have spoken previously about her work, which is a pertinent example of what is possible. She is based at The Rock, a town near Wagga Wagga, and is passionate about creating employment opportunities for rural and remote Australians. Jo believes that location should be no barrier for individuals who are looking to create impact, innovate and make a difference. Her work has enabled more people to contribute to the prosperity of rural and regional Australia.

Jo is the founder of online platform Pointer Remote Roles, which provides a pathway for companies, corporations and government agencies to fill positions with the best candidate for the job, regardless of where they live. Her job-matching platform, which mainly services rural people, has connected people on the land who could not find remote work opportunities with rural businesses. This demonstrates that this can be done not just for rural businesses but for all businesses. Jo says that the COVID pandemic has levelled the playing field for regional areas, as old attitudes about working remotely have been thrown out of the window. The ceiling no longer exists, so this is a great opportunity. She says that teleworking represents an opportunity to improve the lives of rural and regional Australians.

According to the Public Service Commissioner, teleworking benefits for the employee include cost savings from not having to travel to work, flexibility of work hours, an increased ability to manage work-life balance, increased job satisfaction and a greater ability to participate in the workforce where traditionally that may not

have been possible. I reference the example of Jo Palmer and her company to illustrate the opportunities that teleworking can open up not just for rural women but also for partners too. It gives both the ability to work from home, and it means that families can stay in, or relocate to, rural centres to take advantage of professional services opportunities.

The bill will ensure that the New South Wales Government and the public service facilitates teleworking. The reasons given in opposition to the bill by the member for Vacluse point to either work that has been done already or technicalities. She misses the point about the message that this sends to the broader community about the importance of facilitating these opportunities in rural and regional areas. It is a cruel irony that these communities are increasingly having their health services provided through telehealth without the presence of doctors. The metropolitan-based elites think that it is good enough for rural and regional people to receive health services online. But when member for Barwon introduces legislation that would reverse that, suddenly Government members raise a number of technical and minor points that would halt the progress of the bill.

The bill provides the opportunity to reverse that unfairness. We have the opportunity to help rural and regional communities, and address the imbalance. Surely that is the fair thing to do. By promoting these roles and by passing this bill, the Parliament and the Government is sending a clear signal to the community that this is something that we should be working for. Let us look at it. Let us not just talk about the performance and work flexibility that we may or may not have. Let us measure it, put targets in place and take advantage of this opportunity to further grow regional and rural businesses. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (12:06:09): I make a contribution to debate on the Government Sector Employment Amendment (Teleworking) Bill 2020. The Government thinks that it is unnecessary and undesirable to amend the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 to mandate flexible work practices for and the creation of teleworking jobs in rural or regional areas, as proposed by this bill. Flexible teleworking arrangements continue to be implemented across the New South Wales government sector, including government agencies in rural and regional New South Wales, without the need for legislative amendment or imposition. Legislation is not required to mandate teleworking. There is nothing new about it. COVID has shown that.

Government sector agencies across New South Wales have been working flexibly and remotely for some years now, supported by the Public Service Commission. Teleworking and other flexible work practices have been used to perform work in metropolitan, rural and regional areas for many years. These working arrangements are routinely used to facilitate and support collaboration between different rural areas, Sydney and other CBDs, and between other jurisdictions. The Government supports the availability of employment opportunities in the New South Wales government sector in rural and regional areas. The focus of the sector is on having the right management and digital capabilities, digital tools, and workplace and industrial culture to maximise the availability and accessibility of regional and rural work.

The Public Service Commission and the Department of Premier and Cabinet are currently leading a program of work focusing on ways of working in the public sector. This aims to hard-code the benefits realised by the different working arrangements made during COVID-19, including working remotely, and to consider other opportunities for workforce reform in the public sector. The Public Service Commission is working collaboratively with New South Wales government agencies on a number of initiatives, including the development of regional and outer suburban hubs for public service employees that allow them to work closer to home. These cross-agency hubs and touchdown spaces will increase public service workers' ability to work remotely from regional New South Wales, supporting a decentralised and flexible workforce. Another initiative involves properly equipping workers to enable continued remote working productivity.

To support the sector further, the Public Service Commission is also working with the Department of Customer Service to develop and deliver digital capability learning frameworks to employees in the New South Wales government sector. In addition, ongoing work is being carried out to support the mobility of government employees to allow for easier movement across the sector and faster deployment of staff to new roles. The bill would also negatively impact on the ability for agencies to recruit and manage staff as appropriate to meet both business and customer needs. The Government Sector Employment Act allocates the employer functions of government to secretaries of departments and the heads of other public service agencies. These arrangements are designed to give the heads of agencies the flexibility and discretion they need to determine who to employ and how employees will be managed. Individual agencies are best placed to make these decisions.

The bill also seeks to prevent employees who have Sydney-based roles from entering into teleworking arrangements outside the Sydney region. This would prohibit employees whose usual place of work is within the Greater Sydney region from carrying out regular business-as-usual or incidental work offsite, such as conferences, meetings, site inspections, hearings, training and other attendances. Those rules would also prohibit commuters

from carrying out work from home or from other locations outside the Greater Sydney region, including regional hubs.

The Government does not believe it is appropriate or desirable to prohibit an employee whose usual place of work is within the Greater Sydney region from working remotely or online outside that region as this bill seeks to do. To sum up, it would be more effective for current arrangements governing flexible work including teleworking to be maintained. These arrangements give government agencies the necessary flexibility to determine and implement flexible working arrangements that are suitable for their staff and their operations. While I agree with the intent and with the goals the bill is trying to achieve, for the reasons outlined earlier I oppose the bill.

Debate interrupted.

Motions

ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN CONFLICT

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (12:10:44): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the actions of Azerbaijan towards the Republic of Armenia as well as the Republic of Artsakh and its blatant disregard of international law by recently breaking their ceasefire agreement.
- (2) Notes the serious concerns that have been raised from Armenian-Australians regarding the existential threat to the indigenous Armenian population of the Republic of Artsakh by this military action.
- (3) Condemns the actions of President Erdogan of Turkey and President Aliyev of Azerbaijan in their pursuit of a policy of Pan-Turkish nationalism, which has previously led to genocide and which now threatens the Armenian population of Artsakh with ethnic cleansing.
- (4) Calls on the Federal Government to condemn these attacks and advocate its support for the safety and security of the Republic of Armenia and Artsakh.
- (5) Recognise the right to self-determination of all peoples including those of the Republic of Artsakh and calls on the Federal Government to also recognise the Republic of Artsakh as the only permanent solution to the conflict to avoid further attempts of such military aggression.

I note this motion has been supported by the New South Wales Labor caucus. I also acknowledge the support of this motion by the Government, which has offered to co-sponsor this motion and gives its support. I also note the many crossbenchers who have spoken to me personally to support this motion. For over 100 years the plight of the Armenian people has been greatly interwoven with the fabric of Australia's proud Anzac history. That legacy continues today. To understand how and why Australia's contribution played a vital role in the continued existence of the Armenian people we must travel back to the early morning of 24 April 1915 when the Ottoman Empire began its heinous agenda to commit one of the greatest genocidal crimes against humanity.

In the shadows of the First World War, Ottoman authorities attempted to exterminate the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire through State-sanctioned indiscriminate acts of violence, which involved a murderous series of deportations, death marches and large-scale massacres with the purpose of ending the collective existence of the Christian minorities. One-and-a-half million Armenians, and one million Greeks and Assyrians were killed in what Raphael Lemkin, the man who created the term, called the Armenian Genocide. Meanwhile, 300 kilometres south of the empire's capital, young Australian men began to fight bravely against the Ottoman soldiers during the Gallipoli campaign, one of the most significant and formative events in the history of Australia.

Our Anzacs were fighting for freedom and democracy. Our men fought not against a regime but against a heinous ideology: Pan-Turkish nationalism, a nationalist movement that had the goal of ensuring the political union of all Turkic people from Eastern Europe to Central Asia. From here the stories of the plight of the Armenians and the stories of our brave young men began to intertwine, as seen through Anzac eyewitness accounts of the Armenian Genocide. It makes me so proud that Anzac prisoners of war who were eyewitnesses to the atrocities being committed against the Armenian, Assyrian and Greek peoples during the genocide recorded hidden notes on scraps of paper about the death marches as they travelled through the deserts of modern Iraq and Syria. Their notes and stories found their way to Australia, which responded with the largest international humanitarian relief effort in our country's history.

Unfortunately this Pan-Turkish ideology that motivated the ethnic cleansing of 1.5 million Armenians and that our Anzacs fought and thought was defeated forever has now arisen and is alive and well. However, Australia's resolve is not defeated. The modern Ottomans, or neo-Ottomans, motivated by the twisted expansionist dreams of their forebears are Azerbaijan's Aliyev and Turkey's Erdogan. They are today terrorising the indigenous Armenians of the Republic of Artsakh. It is crucial Australia finds her voice and prevents another genocide of

Armenians. In the early hours of 27 September 2020 Azerbaijani forces launched large-scale air and artillery strikes on the indigenous Armenians of the Republic of Artsakh and the Republic of Armenia. These strikes escalated over ensuing days to include nonstop shelling of Stepanakert, Artsakh's capital of 50,000 civilians, the majority of whom are Armenians.

The attack, in coordination with—as well as encouraged by and with direct involvement from—the dictatorial regime of Turkey's Erdogan involved a long list of heavy artillery, missiles and rocket systems. Also being used are drones, tanks and armoured personnel carriers, many of which have been destroyed by the defending Armenian forces. Since the start of these attacks, over 700 Armenian soldiers have died defending the Republic of Artsakh's right to freedom, democracy, peace and self-determination, leaving countless others injured. Thousands of Azerbaijani soldiers have also lost their lives in this senseless military aggression. This is in addition to the dozens of civilians, including women and children, who have been killed due to Azerbaijan's active targeting of civilian infrastructure in Artsakh, in complete violation of international law.

Most recently, international humanitarian watchdog Amnesty International issued a statement proving that it was able to trace the location of footage to large residential areas and identified deadly cluster munitions, banned under international humanitarian law, used by Azerbaijani forces. Azerbaijan continues its deliberate and nonstop shelling of civilian towns and infrastructure despite the recent humanitarian ceasefire. Australia has shown extraordinary compassion to the Armenian people in their time of need, which must be recognised as a part of our recollection of the past. It is this same compassion that must be shown to the people of Armenia and Artsakh today to ensure that they do not face persecution from their indigenous homeland 105 years on. We must continue the legacy of our Anzacs and protect the Armenians from persecution from the genocidal ideology that aims to eradicate them once again from the region.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (12:17:39): I thank the member for Prospect for his opening remarks. In my electorate the City of Ryde Council, as the sister city of Artsakh's capital, Stepanakert, unanimously passed a motion on Tuesday condemning Azerbaijan and Turkey for their attacks against the indigenous Armenian population of Artsakh. Now it is time for the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales do the same. It is time our Legislative Assembly follows what our Legislative Council did in 2012 and recognises the Republic of Artsakh, as only this will serve to protect the people's human right to self-determination.

I speak as the member for the largest Armenian-Australian State constituency in Australia and declare solidarity with their community. The Armenian community in Sydney has made a strong and valuable contribution to the social fabric of this State. Since the earliest days of Armenian immigration to Australia the community has demonstrated its influence on the Australian way of life through civic and community leadership, hard work and an entrepreneurial spirit. The Australian friendship with the Armenians began when Anzacs wrote home about the targeted killings of Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks in the Ottoman Empire and when some of those Australian and New Zealander soldiers helped save Armenians—a friendship that continued when thousands of Australians donated to relief efforts during the Armenian Genocide of 1915 and helped house orphans the genocide left behind.

And now again comes an hour of need. The ethnic Armenians in the Republic of Artsakh face an existential threat. Since 27 September Azerbaijan has been carrying out large-scale aggression against the indigenous Armenians of Artsakh, with the assistance of Turkey. It has demonstrated its aim to resolve the territorial dispute by force and, most concerning, has signalled its intent to conduct ethnic cleansing of the Armenian people of Artsakh. For weeks now there have been indiscriminate attacks on the people of Artsakh. Every day civilians in Stepanakert, the capital of Artsakh, have been awakened by nonstop shelling. My Federal counterpart and member for Bennelong, John Alexander, made history as the first elected representative of the Australian Parliament to visit Artsakh. He tells me how beautiful it is and how the country is a democracy that seeks peace. Some in this place, on both sides of the aisle, have also visited Artsakh. I have heard stories about the unmatched hospitality, the strength and integrity of the people there. Yet this desire has turned into something bittersweet.

The heartbreaking images coming out of Artsakh show the disastrous consequence of the world's failure to hold Azerbaijan to account. For Australia this is a matter of standing up for the democratic rights we hold dear in our society. Our country has a longstanding history and tradition of standing up for what is right. We helped the Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks following the Armenian Genocide of 1915. Later in the twentieth century, our great country played an influential role in bringing an end to South Africa's deplorable apartheid system. Australia not only applied trade sanctions and cultural boycotts against South Africa but also led the international community by urging Europe and America to follow suit. This is a pivotal moment in history that requires us to stand up for what is just.

Amnesty International has already called out Azerbaijan's use of banned cluster bombs on civilians in Stepanakert. To date, dozens of civilians have been murdered and hundreds have been wounded by the attacks.

Civilian infrastructure, public and industrial objects have been destroyed by this aggression. There have been 24,000 schoolchildren deprived of the right to education due to the indiscriminate nature of these attacks. To stop this the world must support the people of the Republic of Artsakh and recognise their right to self-determination. Staying silent at this time is an act of dishonour against justice, truth and integrity. This motion sends a strong message to Baku and Ankara that terror will not be tolerated, disrespect of international democratic norms will be rejected, and human rights violations will receive rightful condemnation. We stand with the people of Artsakh.

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (12:23:21): Last night in the Strangers Dining Room at the New South Wales Parliament National Unity Week was launched. On the same day in this Chamber the New South Wales Government was using its muscle to suspend the orders of the day to ensure that this divisive and polarising motion had precedence in this House. It is disappointing that a former Minister for Citizenship and Communities is at the front of the speakers' list. The contents of this motion should not come before the New South Wales Parliament. It is solely a matter for the Federal Parliament, and this Parliament can have no influence in the matter other than to stoke division. Members may wish to reflect on why this matter is not on for debate in the Federal Parliament. It is disappointing that members of this Chamber have so little faith in the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Marise Payne, and the shadow Minister, Senator Penny Wong, to put the interests of the Australian community first. Personally, I have great faith in both of those Federal parliamentarians to represent Australia's best interests in this matter.

War degenerates, and it degenerates quickly. Families on both sides of these conflicts have suffered tremendous losses and a million people have been displaced, with many living in refugee camps. The interests of this Parliament should firstly be the cohesion and security of the people of New South Wales. The polarisation and imbalance in this motion, and the decision of the New South Wales Government to give it precedence in this House over all other issues on the paper, is concerning and represents a risk to that social cohesion and security. My electorate is diverse and faces significant unemployment, poverty and homelessness, which the COVID-19 crisis will only magnify. This week I put forward a motion on the decision of this Government to cut funding to some of our most vulnerable children—the victims of abuse and those needing out-of-home care. The New South Wales Government feels no need to urgently move on to give that motion precedence for debate. That shows this Government's priorities.

Communities who believe they have been left behind and have come under continuous, sustained attack in the media do not need to be further isolated. The greatest risk to our national security is those people who become alienated from the mainstream community. It is why the launch of National Unity Week last night should have been applauded in this Chamber, not immediately undermined by a motion that the New South Wales Government decided is so urgent it has suspended standing orders. Perhaps the New South Wales Government is desperately seeking a distraction. Whatever the reason, it would appear the New South Wales Government no longer feels we are all in this together.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (12:26:15): I speak in support of a motion that condemns the actions of Azerbaijan and Turkey for their continued aggression and attacks against the Republic of Artsakh. Since 27 September the actions of Azerbaijan against the indigenous Armenians of Artsakh have included multiple violations of international law, deliberately targeting churches, hospitals and other civilian infrastructure, and the use of illegal cluster munitions, as confirmed by international human rights watchdog Amnesty International. This is why the strong Armenian Australian community of our State has a right to be concerned about the existential threat to the indigenous Armenians of the Republic of Artsakh, who have continuously inhabited those lands for millennia. As I speak, multiple drones and artillery strikes are being conducted across the Artsakh border, including on the capital city, Stepanakert. This city has a population of 50,000 civilians and no military targets.

The Artsakh Government has declared martial law, which means that all men over the age of 18 are required to go to the front lines to defend their homeland and their heritage. The only people who remain in the cities are civilians, women and children, bunkered down and hoping their brothers, sons and fathers survive and save their homes. Earlier this month Azerbaijani artillery struck the sacred Holy Savior Cathedral twice. This cathedral is an important symbol of peace and strength for the proud Christian Republic of Artsakh. During the senseless attack, which represented no strategic value, Armenian emergency service workers and a journalist were critically injured. Similar to over a century ago, the Armenian people did not seek, nor did they provoke, an assault on their freedom or way of life. They did not expect, nor did they invite, a confrontation with genocide. Yet today they are potentially facing the same threats that their forefathers faced and the same horrors and senseless death that is not yet recognised by our great nation.

I am proud to stand in front of all members and say that this Parliament recognises the Armenian Genocide, the Assyrian Genocide and the Greek Genocide and, further, that the New South Wales Legislative Council has recognised the right to self-determination and independence of the Republic of Artsakh since 2012. The recognition of the Republic of Artsakh is now considered by several international experts as the only solution to

the violence, the only solution to save Armenians, like many of our forebears did during World War I. This is why I am proud to support the motion today that adds the largest parliamentary Chamber of the largest Australian State to the legislatures to have recognised the independence of the Republic of Artsakh. The continuation of these attacks will intensify humanitarian crises in the region. As Australians, it is important that we continue our steadfast moral leadership on these issues. We must continue to promote Australian democratic values and support the people of the fledgling Christian democracy of Artsakh.

I wish to address the comments of the member for Auburn. I express my deep disappointment, and that of others in this place, in her words and language that seek to silence this Parliament and, in effect, deem that discussions about international concerns and conflicts are no place for the Parliament of New South Wales. I am sure that most people in this Parliament heartily and wholly disagree with her. Any attack on human rights or against women, children, hospitals, churches and other places of worship, centres that foster humanitarian care, concern and education should be a cause of moral outrage by all human beings on earth, not only members of this place.

The fact that a different level of government has the responsibility to negotiate, discuss and address these matters in international forums and speak on behalf of our nation should not in any way mean that any other person in this country should remain silent. I am heartily distressed and distraught that the member for Auburn would seek to stifle a discussion in this place about a gross violation of human rights. This matter concerns a violation of human rights and this is an opportunity for every person, regardless of the political badge they wear, to speak against it.

Let us look at what is happening to these innocent people, women and children, who are being attacked. Men who are not soldiers or trained in defence of the nation are being called up to defend their nation against these attacks. This is an outrage; it should be condemned for what it is. I urge the Australian Government, in all forums and in all manners, to speak up on behalf of these innocent civilians in Artsakh and to do all it can to rally the international communities to defend them. Let us continue to stand for democracy, freedom of speech, freedom of worship and freedom of association in these fledgling democracies. I commend the motion to the House.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (12:32:10): In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Ryde, Mulgoa and the shadow Minister and member for Auburn for their contributions to this debate. The New South Wales Parliament has a long history of standing up for human rights. I note that the Federal Government so far has done very little in this case. I would not say that I am insulted, but I am surprised by the comments that this may be a distraction. To me and to those members of Parliament who represent Armenian, Assyrian and Greek communities, it is no distraction.

This issue, which has been ongoing, was championed by former Labor Premier Bob Carr. On 17 April 1997, in a motion by former Leader of the Opposition Peter Collins, with bipartisan support, the Legislative Assembly recognised the Armenian, Assyrian and Greek genocide. On 1 May 2013 former Premier O'Farrell moved to recognise the genocide, which was supported by former Leader of the Opposition John Robertson. On 25 October 2012 the Legislative Council moved to recognise the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, now known as Artsakh.

The Australian Government's failure to call-out and condemn an aggressor and an enabler by name, especially when they are bombing civilians and openly threatening ethnic cleansing, only emboldens the aggressor to continue committing war crimes and, in this case, to advance the same expansionist agenda that our Anzac heroes fought against 105 years ago. That is why this motion is essential. The Legislative Assembly, the largest legislative chamber in the country's largest State, must join members in the Legislative Council in recognising the Republic of Artsakh as an independent State. It is important to call on all our Federal colleagues to remember the heroes past, and to stand with self-determination and freedom against a dictatorship.

This time last year I had the opportunity to visit the Republic of Artsakh. Whilst there I witnessed that the will and the strength of the people of Artsakh is fuelled by their desire to continue sharing their language and culture among the mountains that they will forever call their own. They fight to defend their people and their democracy. They fight to protect their land and to defend everything it means to be Armenian. Most importantly, they fight to see a better tomorrow, despite the work of others who wish to make today their very last.

The world must not fall silent. It must hear the cries of such people who desire to live free of threat amongst the mountains where their Armenian identity was crafted. Australia and the state of New South Wales must stand on the right side of history, as we did 105 years ago, and ensure that an ethnic Armenian minority are not persecuted and ethnically cleansed from the lands where their identity was borne. Today I am pleased that today we recognise the Republic of Artsakh. To do otherwise, would be to betray our democratic values and the sacrifice of our Anzac heritage. I thank the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be agreed to. A division has been called for. There being only two members having challenged my decision, I declare the House to have resolved the question in the affirmative.

Noes, 2

Mr P. Lynch
Ms L. Voltz

Motion agreed to.

MANLY HOSPITAL SITE

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (12:48:23): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Commends the Housing and Property Group within the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment for the development of the draft master plan for the old Manly Hospital site.
- (2) Thanks the community members who have contributed to the master plan via their roles on the Project Steering Advisory Committee.
- (3) Acknowledges the draft master plan reflects the guiding principles of the project and will deliver new public spaces for future generations.
- (4) Notes the draft master plan is on display and seeking feedback from the community until at least 31 August 2020.

It gives me great pride to speak in support of the motion I have brought to the House. This motion takes us back to 1924 and the Manly Act No. 55, which stated it was:

An Act to sanction the construction of a public hospital at Manly; and for purposes connected therewith.

The bill received assent on 23 December 1924. It also states:

BE it enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly of New South Wales in Parliament ...

The plan of the works is the plan marked "Manly Peace Memorial Hospital," signed by the Secretary for Public Works and countersigned by the Acting Government Architect, and deposited in the public office of the said Secretary.

The Act to create the old Manly Hospital, which retained the original name of the Manly Peace Memorial Hospital, was passed in 1924. Now in 2020 we are breathing life into the old hospital site. I commend the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, specifically the Property NSW team, who have worked hand in glove with my local community to bring them along in imagining a future use of the old Manly Hospital site that will continue to provide health and wellness services not only to the people of Manly but also to people from across the State.

The site is set up on North Head. It has a path and a nearby road that led to our wonderful Collins Flat Beach. The hospital is set against a backdrop of the national park with stunning views across Sydney Harbour. For some years the community and the Government have been working collectively to devise ways of the hospital continuing to provide health and wellness services to people in the community. We are now at the final stages of preparation of the master plan and the planning proposal that ultimately will be lodged with the council. This demonstrates the smart and sensible use of government land that has been held for nearly a century to continue to evolve and be modernised in a way that will deliver a mixture of community and health services to people who need that most.

I pay special tribute to the team that has worked on this project for many years. In particular, I applaud the efforts of Ray Mathieson, the chairman of the Little Manly Community Forum, who I acknowledged previously in this House during my inaugural speech. He has been a champion of ensuring that the overall design and plans for the future of the hospital site speak directly to achieving the aims and goals of the community of Manly. A number of other people have worked or participated as part of the community advisory committee. In particular, I acknowledge Ms Denise Keen, the president of the Greater Manly Residents Forum, who has ensured that the views of people in her part of the community also have informed the final plan that will be lodged with the council.

One of the most exciting elements of the project is that the site will contain not only a mixture of health and wellbeing services but will continue to provide a rest stop for people doing the Bondi to Manly Walk or for those who enjoy the walking tracks around North Head and the national park. The site will include a cafe and restaurant where people will be able to stop and enjoy the surrounds of the national park. Ultimately, the site will provide access to a part of Sydney that essentially has been locked up for nearly a century. It has been used as a hospital that has told the story of Manly with many births and wonderful moments, but equally it has been a place of pain and anguish for many people who went to the hospital for treatment and care.

The new project will open up the site and breathe new life into it. It will enable people to make use of it. The National Parks and Wildlife Service is connecting walking tracks and pathways that adjoin the site to allow people to enjoy one of the most magnificent places on Sydney Harbour. The Property NSW team of the New South Wales Government has been wonderfully led by Tahlee Smith who, alongside Sarah Bennett, has worked with me to ensure that we deliver the best outcome not only for the people of Manly but also for people across the State by revitalising and breathing new life into the old Manly Hospital site, which is entirely fitting. The discussion began in 1924 and led to Act No. 55 being passed to permit construction of the old public hospital at Manly. I note the first stage cost £69,000, of which residents contributed £18,666 to meet the overall cost.

In today's values, which have been provided to me by the Manly, Warringah and Pittwater Historical Society, the cost would be \$144 million with residents providing \$39 million. The project will involve the adaptive re-use of the heritage parts of the building and the opening up of the site to the community, which is incredibly exciting. The site will remain a health and wellness precinct. In many respects this is an offer from the people of Manly to people from across New South Wales to come and rest, recuperate and enjoy receiving health and wellbeing services and care at the old Manly Hospital. I commend the motion to the House.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (12:55:24): I support the motion moved by my colleague and friend the member for Manly. I congratulate him on bringing to the attention of the House the old Manly Hospital site draft master plan. The development of the draft master plan for the old Manly Hospital site demonstrates the Coalition's commitment to investing in the health services that our communities want and need, and shows that this is happening across our entire State. In my own electorate of Miranda the New South Wales Government is investing \$81.5 million to deliver an operating theatre upgrade at the Sutherland Hospital. The upgrade will include eight new state-of-the-art operating theatres, two new endoscopy suites, a surgical short stay unit and recovery, new staff amenities and workspaces, facilities for admission and discharge, and a new central sterilising services department. The project will deliver a contemporary operating theatre environment, improve efficiencies and access to services, and enable implementation of new models of care and surgical clinical pathways.

That significant investment will make a huge difference to patient care and ensure that our growing shire community can access world-class services closer to home. I am sure Mr Temporary Speaker, the member for Heathcote, is very happy about that. The Sutherland Hospital Operating Theatre Upgrade Project will build on and support the \$62.9 million expansion already delivered during the last term of Government. Sutherland Hospital redevelopment stage one included a new and expanded emergency department with a short stay unit, a new general medical unit, a new general surgical inpatient unit and an expanded critical care medical unit. Boasting the latest medical technologies, the redevelopment has greatly benefited staff and patients alike.

In late 2018 I joined the Attorney General, and member for Cronulla, to open the Caringbah ambulance superstation, which is yet another example of the Coalition Government's dedication to health services for all communities. It is a major investment in our local health services, ensuring our community receives the best possible medical care when they need it most. Located alongside the Sutherland Hospital complex, this modern facility is supporting our highly trained paramedics in their lifesaving work. It includes capacity for an emergency operations centre to respond to major emergencies, parking bays for up to 10 emergency ambulance vehicles, a logistics and storage area, a purpose-built medication room and administration office areas and amenities. The New South Wales Government's investment in this superstation is just another part of our efforts to ensure that we have the infrastructure to support the health needs of local communities in the shire for many years to come.

In the most recent health announcement for our community I was incredibly pleased to join the Minister for Health and Medical Research at the Sutherland Hospital last month to announce a further \$7 million investment to purchase an MRI machine. With around 800 patients at the Sutherland Hospital requiring MRI services each year and needing to be transferred to the St George Hospital or private providers for scans, this new medical technology will allow our local community to access MRI services quicker and closer to home. This is a fantastic outcome for patients, carers and health staff who have been calling for this vital technology for some time. I know that Mr Temporary Speaker was as delighted as I was to make this much-needed announcement for our local communities.

I have recounted some of the important health wins for my local community. I again take the opportunity to commend the efforts of my colleague the member for Manly, who clearly is dedicated to delivering for his own community by the establishment of a vibrant health and wellbeing sanctuary at the old Manly Hospital site. This Government is clearly committed to providing the people of New South Wales with access to world-class health services when they need them the most in each and every one of the 93 electorates in this State. I look forward to continuing to deliver these vital projects for my community. Again, I commend the member for Manly for bringing this important motion to the House.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (12:59:40): I, too, take this opportunity to commend the member for Manly for bringing on this very important motion. It is indeed an important opportunity for each of us in this

House to have our say on hospitals and hospital sites. I commend the member and also commend the Department of Planning, Industry, and Environment for undertaking a master plan process for the old hospital site at Manly. It has provided an opportunity for Manly residents to have their say about their vision for the future of that site. I am delighted they are able to have a variety of facilities for health and wellbeing, and for open and community spaces that they can forever be proud of in Manly, together with their new hospital.

Of course, I would like the residents of Bankstown and East Hills to have the same opportunities that the residents of Manly have had. Prior to the last election, the Government announced there would be a new \$1.3 billion hospital; 18 months later we still do not know where that hospital will be. We have made requests for information. On asking the health Minister for further information, I have been advised that it is all commercial in confidence. I have been told that six sites have been suggested as part of the process, but all other information is commercial in confidence. Residents in my electorate and in East Hills have concerns about where the new hospital will be. There is great concern that the hospital could end up in the Bankstown CBD area, where we have all sorts of congestion issues and where we may end up with a metro station and interchange that will take up a large part of the centre of the CBD.

In my view, there certainly would be no room for a hospital of the scale that I would expect for Bankstown. We are a growing community and I expect a state-of-the-art hospital. I also expect the current site to be considered as a potential site for the hospital redevelopment. The Government should also consider the educational facility at the Bankstown Senior College site across the road. I do not think that is being considered. What concerns me is what will happen to the old site at Bankstown. When, eventually, a new site is found for the new hospital—wherever that might be—what will happen to the old site on Eldridge Road? Will we have the opportunity to have a master plan, like the residents of Manly, and to participate in the steering committee to set the vision for the site? Will the residents of Bankstown be given the same opportunity to decide on the vision for that old site should the new hospital be at a different location? What will happen to that site? Will it just be sold off to a developer to redevelop? That is what I expect will probably end up happening.

I commend the member for Manly for ensuring that the residents of Manly have been given an opportunity to be part of a very important and significant process of master planning their new hospital site. I put the Government on notice and I ask the health Minister and the planning Minister that, should the current site not be utilised as a future hospital, we will be granted the same opportunity in Bankstown to determine what will happen to our old hospital site. I reiterate that our community wants to see a new hospital. We were promised a \$1.3 billion hospital and we are still waiting.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (13:03:54): We on this side of the House have committed more than \$10.1 billion to health infrastructure over the next four years, till June 2023. That includes the wonderful work that is happening on the northern beaches, and in Manly in particular. I thank the member for Manly for his outstanding efforts—

Mr Matt Kean: Say how good-looking he is.

Mr MARK COURE: No, I will not say that.

Mr Matt Kean: He's the best-looking member of the Parliament.

Mr MARK COURE: Second best-looking. Across New South Wales more than 100 projects are underway and many more are in the pipeline. This is the largest portfolio of health capital works anywhere in Australia. A motion such as this on health matters gives me the opportunity to talk about one of the greatest hospitals in Sydney—other than Manly, of course. That is St George Hospital, where we are delivering one of the final stages of a more than \$700 million redevelopment two years early. Part of the New South Wales Government's \$3 billion COVID-19 Recovery Plan, the initial injection of \$105 million will boost local jobs and the economy. We are getting on with the job of getting stage three built and delivered once and for all.

I hear members in the Chamber asking, "What else have you done at St George Hospital?" When we came to office in 2011, we reopened the hydrotherapy pool that was closed under Labor. Stage one also delivered the new \$41 million emergency department. Of course, there is more. Stage two of the redevelopment was completed in October 2017, six months ahead of schedule, and delivered an eight-level acute service building above the existing emergency department, which was delivered in the previous stage. The new building features additional inpatient beds, a new intensive care high-dependency unit, a cardio unit, a sterilising services department, a new helipad, and eight additional digital and interventional operating theatres, backed with more parking at the hospital. This is part of our \$700 million spend at St George Hospital. I am already speaking to the staff medical council about stage four.

St George Hospital was neglected by Labor for 16 years, and those opposite know it. It was as if the hospital was in some sort of Bermuda Triangle: They just forgot about it for 16 years. The last redevelopment of

the hospital was under the Greiner-Fahey governments. The one before that was the Askin Liberal Government. For St George Hospital—like the hospital at Manly and so many others—Labor is no friend when it comes to health infrastructure. In particular, it is no friend of St George Hospital.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (13:07:50): In reply: After that breathless and Churchillian contribution from the member for Oatley, it gives me great pleasure to thank all the members who contributed to the debate, starting with the member for Miranda, who very proudly outlined the terrific amount of funding and the contributions that this State Government has made to health services in her area. Those contributions include the theatre upgrade at Sutherland Hospital and the \$7 million investment to purchase the MRI machine. I know that supports constituents in her neck of the woods as well. I welcome the contribution of the member for Bankstown, who took the opportunity to raise her views on hospitals. It is better to be asking where the hospital will be than "Will we be getting a hospital?". I encourage her to thank her lucky stars that the Government is investing in her area, and will continue to do so.

The passionate contribution of the member for Oatley was, as always, very much appreciated. His passion for St George Hospital is evident, as is the work that he has done to ensure that his community receives the health services they deserve. As he said, they are getting on with the job down there in Oatley. I started my contribution with the Manly Act No. 55, passed in 1924, to sanction the construction of public hospital at Manly. When we lodge the planning proposal for future use of the site we will be continuing the rich history of health services delivered on that site at North Head. It is a beautiful open space, with the national park adjoining it and harbour views. It has a special place in the hearts of the Manly and the northern beaches communities.

I acknowledge the Minister for Health and Medical Research, Mr Brad Hazzard, for his involvement in and support of the project. I thank the Minister for Water, Property and Housing, Ms Melinda Pavey, and others for the terrific job they have done. We will shortly lodge the planning proposal with the council, which will set in stone the future use of the site by the public. It is our gift to the people of New South Wales. The hospital site at North Head, Manly, will be open to anyone needing health and wellbeing services. People will be able to enjoy this beautiful space whilst receiving much-needed health and wellbeing services. It has been a long journey. Again, I thank all members for their contributions to this debate. I commend the motion to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

TRANSGRID

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (13:11:43): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the upgrade to the electricity grid to be undertaken by TransGrid on behalf of the Government.
- (2) Notes the absence of meaningful community consultation by TransGrid particularly in regard to its HumeLink proposal.
- (3) Notes the very significant concern of farmers and residents in the affected areas.
- (4) Calls on the Government to ensure that TransGrid undertakes appropriate and meaningful face-to-face consultation with all the communities affected indirectly or directly by the proposed developments and genuinely acts to minimise the impact on the livelihoods, health, safety and wellbeing, and the environment of those communities.

The importance of developing a major energy grid in this State is well known. The Government, to its credit, is preparing for the future so that our energy will be renewable and sustainable. We need a grid for that. I congratulate the Government and the Minister on that initiative. The problem is that in my electorate, after the drought, bushfires and COVID, farmers and landowners have had to face another disaster—and, unfortunately, it is the Government, in the form of TransGrid. In the midst of recovery, farmers and landowners found out, almost without warning, of the prospect of these enormous towers—65 metres high and carrying 500 kilovolt lines—running straight through the middle of their properties. They are big structures.

People are worried. They do not know about the possible impacts on their health, their farming practices, GPS communications, biosecurity, telecommunication, their neighbours, the outlook of their land and the value of their land. Consultation was essentially done via a remote online process. I understand the demands of the COVID pandemic, but I am not entirely sure that the remote online consultation was not a convenient way of circumventing genuine consultation. So, we have these big power lines, we have some sort of remote consultation process in the midst of all the disasters and we have concern and anxiety in those communities. It is not the role of Government or its agencies to create uncertainty. We look to Government to help us. After all, it is our Government. The key to addressing uncertainty is openness and trust. Trust needs face-to-face consultation. It needs genuine openness and it needs time.

The problem is that all those things were missing. What is the answer? The answer is consultation. Proper, genuine, effective consultation. In August this year I raised this issue in Parliament and, to his credit, the Minister has responded. He has outlined to TransGrid and to the Parliament that every issue of concern to every member of the local community is important and must be respected. That every effort is made to ensure appropriate action is taken. I recognise that. The pay-off to better consultation is that we will get a better line and we will get a better understanding of what is involved. We will make sure that government is not government to people, but it is government with and for people.

I can report that there appears to have been some high quality and genuine consultation with groups, particularly in Yaven Creek Valley and Adjungbilly to Batlow about alternative routes. That has been a great win. In particular, I thank Graeme Wedderburn, who has joined this action in TransGrid. He has been an active and genuine listener to those communities and they have been exploring alternative routes. It is not done and dusted, but I have to say it has been an example of good consultation. However, I am moving this motion because that has not been a consistent experience. This grid will go elsewhere in the State and it is everyone's interest to get the consultation process right. The feedback I have received from the Kyeamba Valley farmers indicates that they feel consultation has been a superficial box-ticking exercise.

There should be a clear expectation that TransGrid will genuinely look at alternative routes and, at the very least, explain in detail the reasons for choosing the routes or corridors that they have. Sadly, the advice I have received is that in some circumstances this has not taken place. Surely it is not the responsibility of the landowners to work out an alternative route. They are coping with a year of drought, bushfires and COVID. They are not the experts. Surely they deserve an explanation and a respectful discussion with TransGrid about alternative routes. It should not be up to them to come up with those routes. That is simply not good enough.

It is easy to point the finger at TransGrid, but this is a government responsibility. The privatisation of government assets does not absolve the Government of responsibility to its communities. I am pleased because I believe the Minister recognises this and has taken it on board. But there is an underlying issue that needs to be addressed around the electricity planning framework that operates in Australia. At the outset of this scheme the focus is on the least cost option for the grid. To be fair, TransGrid are probably responding to the least cost option. They will talk about it as the best value option, but really, as far as the landowners are concerned, it looks like the cheapest option. That is an issue.

I know we are concerned about the price that consumers pay for electricity and we want to keep the costs down, but it should not come at the expense of farmers and landowners, it should not come at the expense of communities and it should not come at the expense of the environment. That is an issue we need to think through in terms of the consultation process. Finally, another issue is the compensation regime. I have been in discussions with the Minister and his office concerning the one-off payments versus annuities, and I raise that issue again. In summary, we have a process where consultation is improving but we must reinforce from this House to TransGrid and the Government that meaningful consultation is important. I call on members to support the motion and send that message to the community.

Debate interrupted.

Bills

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AMENDMENT (INFORMATION EXCHANGE) BILL 2020

Returned

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments. I set down consideration of the amendments as an order of the day for a later time.

Committees

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON COERCIVE CONTROL

Establishment and Meeting

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council agreeing with the Legislative Assembly's resolution of Wednesday 21 October 2020 relating to the appointment of the Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control, and noting that the time and place for the first meeting of that committee will be advised once it has been determined.

I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

*Business of the House***SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: QUESTION TIME**

Mr RYAN PARK: I seek leave to move a motion to suspend standing and sessional orders to extend the duration of question time today until 20 minutes have elapsed or the answering of five questions, whichever is the longer.

Leave not granted.

*Question Time***STRONGER COMMUNITIES FUND**

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:16:51): My question is directed to the Premier. This morning the Premier claimed that she did not sign off on grants from the Stronger Communities Fund, yet an email dated 25 June 2018 says, "The Premier signed off on almost all metro council projects." Then an email dated 28 June says, "The Premier has signed off on further funding for metro councils." Why is she not telling the truth again?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:17:19): These issues have been raised previously by the Leader of the Opposition, but I want to make this point clear: The New South Wales Government signs off on guidelines in relation to grants depending on the category of grants and depending on what type of program it is. I say this: At all times, our Government makes sure not only that the guidelines are adhered to but also that obviously the public servants and the agencies that are responsible for issuing those dollars do it in the appropriate way and this is no different.

At the end of the day, this is a good program. In fact, members representing the electorates of Heffron, Maroubra and Rockdale proudly posed for photos with cheques through this program. As I have said before, I have here a photograph with the member for Heffron. I like the member for Heffron, but I have a photo of him with his grant. I have here a photo of the member for Granville. She is not in the Chamber today but she is grateful for the grant she received. In fact, even Burwood Council in the Leader of the Opposition's electorate received funding to deliver upgrades to Henley Park.

What we have to remember about this program is that it is funding to local communities. It is funding to help infrastructure projects. Whether it is projects in the bush, whether it is projects in the cities, this is about improving the ability of councils to support local communities. As I have said, and as my colleagues have said in the other House, we have produced everything we have. This program has delivered untold benefits to local residents. I also want to stress very strongly that our Government has worked damn hard, especially pre-COVID—and COVID has no doubt put a spanner in the works—to get the dollars available to support local communities, and sometimes it is through projects we fund directly ourselves and sometimes, and on many occasions, it is through local governments. Whether it is myself or any one of my colleagues, whenever we sign off on the guidelines it is—

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: The Premier said she signed off on it—

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

Ms Yasmin Catley: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Premier is not answering the question. You said you signed off on these then you did not.

The SPEAKER: The member for Swansea will direct her comments to me. What is the member's point of order?

Ms Yasmin Catley: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Premier is not being relevant directly to the question.

The SPEAKER: The Premier is being relevant. The member for Swansea will resume her seat.

Ms Yasmin Catley: No, she is not.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The member for Swansea, when she is trying to make a point, cannot even get it right because she misread the email.

The SPEAKER: The member for Swansea will remain silent. That is enough from the member for Wollongong.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I say this: Whether it is myself or any other colleagues who were—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am answering the question.

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

Ms Jodi McKay: These emails show the Premier—

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

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Premier clearly signed off on these grants. She said she did not this morning.

The SPEAKER: I have just ruled on that.

Ms Jodi McKay: Why are you not telling the truth?

The SPEAKER: The Premier has been relevant.

Ms Jodi McKay: These emails say you did—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: At the end of the day, as I said, the Government sets the guidelines to a number of programs. They are delivered in different ways, but at the end of the day, Labor members vouch for this because they have taken photographs congratulating their local councils for getting the funding. They love this program because it works and it is delivering for the people of this great State.

DARYL MAGUIRE, FORMER MEMBER FOR WAGGA WAGGA

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:21:00): My question is directed to the Premier.

The SPEAKER: The member for Baulkham Hills will remain silent.

Ms JODI McKAY: Given revelations today that Daryl Maguire had a key and access to the Premier's home for several years, including as recently as last month, why did she breach her own Ministerial Code of Conduct by failing to disclose this relationship?

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:21:38): I am happy to answer the question.

The SPEAKER: Normally there would be a problem with that question. It is the practice of the House to be respectful of the sub judice rule and of suppression orders that ICAC has made in terms of restricting publication or otherwise referring to material pursuant to section 112 of the ICAC Act. Balanced against that would be questions of privilege of the House and the public interest, but I will not rule on it given that the Premier has indicated that she is happy to answer the question. I flag that there would be a potential issue if the Premier had not been happy to take the question.

Mr Brad Hazzard: It is the first time in my 30 years in this place that I have seen any grub actually run against the order of ICAC.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It is okay, Minister Hazzard. I want to make the following point in relation to the question the Leader of the Opposition put to me today, and I say this: Today, and in the last little while, I have heard and read things which are practically factually incorrect, and I have chosen not to respond because there is a process in place and none of us want to be in contempt of the process. If we have faith in the process, as I do, let the integrity agency do its work. I was asked to be there as a witness and a witness only, and I say—

Mr Michael Daley: Well then why did you go on *Kyle and Jackie O*?

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

Mr Michael Daley: If you cannot say anything, what about your gossip columns on the weekend?

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

Mr Michael Daley: We cannot say anything now, but it was okay on the weekend and last Friday?

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Maroubra to order for the third time. He will leave the House if he continues.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As I said, I have read and heard things said, including today, which are just factually incorrect. I will say this: I respect the process. I have faith in that process. I ask everybody to have faith in that process of which I was a witness, and I say this to the people of this great State, as I have said since I spoke as a witness and that is: Every day that I have held this office has been for the people of this great State. At all times our Government has put the people first and that is no different, and if those opposite or those elsewhere want to make things up, that is on their head and on their conscience.

DARYL MAGUIRE, FORMER MEMBER FOR WAGGA WAGGA

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:24:17): I direct my question to the Premier. Given revelations today that Daryl Maguire had a key and ongoing access to her home for several years, including as recently as last month, why has she been misleading the people of New South Wales every day since she appeared at ICAC?

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order: It is the same point of order.

The SPEAKER: The Attorney General takes the same point of order. I refer to my earlier comments. Does the Premier wish to answer the question?

Ms Gladys Berejiklian: I do wish to answer the question.

The SPEAKER: I will let the Premier proceed on that basis.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:24:24): We cannot have rank hypocrisy in this place. You either trust the ICAC or you do not. You either trust that the process is, at all times, proper or you do not. I say to members opposite: Look at what happened to previous members of the Labor Party who were held in contempt of the ICAC proceedings. I refer them to that.

DARYL MAGUIRE, FORMER MEMBER FOR WAGGA WAGGA

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:25:13): I direct my question to the Premier. Given revelations today that Daryl Maguire had a key and ongoing access to her home for several years, including as recently as last month, her claims that the relationship did not have "sufficient status" have fallen apart. When will she finally stop deceiving the people of New South Wales and resign?

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: We are going to go through the same process regarding the point of order.

Ms Gladys Berejiklian: I am okay. You do not need to.

The SPEAKER: But I do. A point of order was taken by the Leader of the House. Again there is an issue on which I would normally rule, but the Premier wishes to answer the question.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:25:44): The Leader of the Opposition has chosen to ask the same question three times. The Leader of the Opposition has chosen to repeat things that are factually incorrect. The Leader of the Opposition has chosen not to respect the proceedings that are taking place. I say that is on her head, because at the end of the day there is a process and we have to respect that process. I say this: On every occasion I have put the community first. On every occasion I have respected the process, notwithstanding what some people have chosen to say that has been wrong and incorrect. I have held my court, because at the end of the day I respect the process, and I respect the people of this State too much to respond to the kind of horrible things that have been said, which frankly should not have been said and are not even true.

At the end of the day, I have a job to do and that is what I am focused on. I do not care what anybody says, I am here for the people of this State. I am here to do my job and lead the Government, which has done so much for the people of our State and will continue to do that. I do not care what members opposite say. At the end of the day, we know what the truth is and we know what the people know.

GULGONG MULTIPURPOSE SERVICE

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (14:27:01): I direct my question to the Minister for Health and Medical Research. Following the death of a patient at the Gulgong Multipurpose Service on September 15 this year during the delivery of her medical emergency assessment and treatment via telehealth due to the absence of an available medical practitioner at the facility since June, what steps have been taken to employ or contract medical practitioners at Gulgong and other resource-challenged NSW Health facilities in regional New South Wales? Will a review of telehealth be expedited to prevent the repeat of such a tragedy?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (14:27:48): I thank the member for Orange for his question. I extend sincere condolences from the Government and the entire Parliament to the family of Mrs Dawn Trevitt, who passed away while in the care of the Gulgong Multipurpose

Service on 15 September 2020. It was a challenging and difficult medical circumstance. I appreciate the question and note that I have also had discussions with the member for Dubbo, who has spoken to me a number of times about this issue and brought it to my attention. I have spoken to the local health district acting chief executive. I have also spoken to the chief executive of NSW Health and the chief executive of NSW Ambulance.

I read in the press that there was some suggestion that telehealth was being used. That certainly is correct. As I understand it, the ambulance made the decision to take Mrs Trevitt to Gulgong. In the absence of a doctor at Gulgong—for a number of reasons—the telehealth service was used. In fact, I think they had also called for an AW139 helicopter to transfer her to a major hospital. It was quite a serious medical circumstance. I saw it suggested that telehealth was being used as a substitute for doctors. That was not the case. That is certainly not what the Government supports and it is not what was happening. What I understand was happening—but it needs to be sorted through and a review has been implemented; I will come back to that—was because there was no doctor available at that time telehealth, which is now operational across Australia particularly, but not exclusively, in regional areas, was relied upon. The reason that doctor was not there remains to be seen, because until fairly recently there was a doctor in that location.

Usually in small regional areas, as the member would be aware, the doctors tend to be in local practices and they are contracted to come in when necessary. Sometimes when I have visited Bourke the nurses and staff have explained to me that there are no doctors. That is one of the challenges that we face in the more remote parts of New South Wales. I was in Gulgong only a few weeks ago to open the new Mudgee Hospital. I took the drive to Gulgong to look at the arrangements there. It took about 20 minutes, so it was not a very long drive. Under lights and sirens, that patient could have been brought to Mudgee. But the real issue was there was an immediate assessment by telehealth that the patient should be transferred to a major trauma hospital.

It is fair to say that I have some concerns about the challenges that face small regional areas more broadly. We had a regional conference in Wagga Wagga eight or nine months ago—just before COVID—which the Deputy Prime Minister attended. We talked about the issues that face the whole of Australia. All Labor and Liberal Ministers around the country have similar concerns in their regional areas. Getting doctors into small regional communities is a complex issue. In the absence of a doctor, for whatever reason—maybe because either they cannot or will not go there—telehealth has its place. I visited the Royal Perth Hospital at the invitation of the very good Labor Minister Roger Cook and the Deputy Premier of Western Australia. I saw services that were being offered via telehealth in the Kimberley and other areas. I also visited Israel and saw how they were doing similar things. *[Extension of time]*

It was quite eye-opening. I think there were nearly 70 hospitals in north-west America that did not have ICU specialists so they had Israeli- and American-qualified doctors providing the service via telehealth into those hospitals during night shifts because they could get them during the day but not during the night. This is an issue that affects countries around the world. Telehealth has its place but, first and foremost, we should always try to get doctors in those locations. I have dealt with Labor members who have had these challenges in various areas and discussed them with me. It is not necessarily easy to get the doctors who might be in their own busy GP practices and who are prepared to come to the local hospital.

At this stage, we are doing everything we can. I have directed that there be an external review probably under the auspices of the Clinical Excellence Commission—that decision is being worked through at the moment. As a result of speaking to the chief executive of NSW Health and chief executive of NSW Ambulance, I have asked them to look at the ambulance protocol that operates. In the case of Dawn Trevitt, I think they had already bypassed one other multipurpose service [MPS]. So the question then is: Why did they not bypass another MPS and possibly go on to Mudgee? That might have made a difference, but it may not have done in that particular medical situation. But they are looking at all those issues as well.

From the point of view of the member for Orange and the member for Dubbo, we should all be working together with the Government and indeed the Opposition to try to address some of those issues. The Federal Government also has a big role in this, as was evidenced. In a couple of weeks I will be in Dubbo to attend another regional conference to look at how we can promote doctors into those regional areas. Again I express our sympathy to Mrs Dawn Trevitt's family. We understand that it was a terrible event for her but I am sure everybody in this place will do all we can to try to improve the opportunities for doctors to be in regional areas and to support patients throughout our entire State.

The SPEAKER: I draw the attention of the Chamber to the fact that the member for Penrith is wearing a scarf, albeit it is not cold but I think it is appropriate for the Chamber to back the New South Wales team and wish them well in the grand final this Sunday.

*Committees***PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE****Inquiry**

Mr GREG PIPER: As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Public Accounts Committee has resolved to conduct the following two inquiries, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page:

- (1) Examination of the Auditor-General's Performance Audit Reports February 2019-July 2019.
- (2) The Management of Public Housing Maintenance Contracts.

*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 amendments to the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Information Exchange) Bill 2020.

Motion agreed to.

*Petitions***RESPONSES TO PETITIONS**

The CLERK: I announce that the following Minister has lodged responses to paper petitions signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Andrew Constance—South-east Sydney Bus Services—lodged 17 September 2020 (Mr Michael Daley)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—South-east Sydney Bus Services—lodged 17 September 2020 (Dr Marjorie O'Neill)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—M5 East Motorway Toll—lodged 17 September 2020 (Mr Anoulack Chanthivong)

*Bills***WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AMENDMENT (INFORMATION EXCHANGE) BILL 2020****Consideration in Detail****Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments.***Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 22 October 2020***No. 1 GOVT No. 1 [c2020-128I]**

Page 2, clause 3, line 10. Omit "**Health Secretary may provide information to regulator**". Insert instead "**Provision of information from Health Secretary to regulator**".

No. 2 GOVT No. 2 [c2020-128I as amended]

Page 2, clause 3, proposed section 271B(2), lines 15–19. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

- (2) Without limiting subsection (1), the Secretary of the Ministry of Health must, as soon as practicable after being notified under the *Public Health Act 2010* about the following, provide to SafeWork NSW the information contained in the notification—
 - (a) cases of occupational dust diseases,
 - (b) deaths resulting from occupational dust diseases.
- (3) Information is not required to be provided under subsection (2) if the information is about—
 - (a) a disease or condition that is included on a register under Part 6 of the *Public Health Act 2010*, or
 - (b) a disease or condition prescribed by the regulations.
- (4) Information may be provided in accordance with this section despite any prohibition in, or the need to comply with any requirement of, any Act or other law.
- (5) In this section—
occupational dust disease means—

- (a) a dust disease set out in Schedule 1 to the *Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Act 1942*, or
- (b) any other respiratory disease or condition prescribed by the regulations.

271BA Dust Diseases Register

- (1) SafeWork NSW must ensure a register is kept of the information provided under section 271B(2), other than information prescribed by the regulations.
- (2) Subject to the regulations, the register is to be kept in the form approved by SafeWork NSW.
- (3) The purposes of the register are—
 - (a) to monitor and analyse the incidence of occupational dust diseases that are required to be notified under section 271B(2), and
 - (b) to enable information about the diseases and conditions to be exchanged with a Public Service agency.
- (4) The register is to be known as the Dust Diseases Register.

271BB SafeWork NSW must report to Minister

- (1) As soon as practicable after the end of each financial year, but no later than 30 September, SafeWork NSW must ensure the Minister is given a report stating—
 - (a) the number of cases of occupational dust diseases notified to SafeWork NSW under section 271B during the financial year, and
 - (b) the number of deaths resulting from occupational dust diseases notified to SafeWork NSW under section 271B during the financial year, and
 - (c) the types of diseases or conditions recorded in the Dust Diseases Register during the financial year, and
 - (d) the actions SafeWork NSW has taken to implement the purposes of the register, and
 - (e) any other information about a disease or condition recorded in the register that SafeWork NSW considers appropriate.
- (2) However, SafeWork NSW must not include personal information or health information in the report.
- (3) The Minister must, as soon as practicable after receiving the report, cause it to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly.
- (4) In this section—

financial year means the period of 12 months ending at the end of 30 June in each year.

health information has the same meaning as in the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002*.

personal information has the same meaning as in the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*.

271BC SafeWork NSW to publish information on website

- (1) SafeWork NSW must publish on its website—
 - (a) each report provided to the Minister under section 271BB, and
 - (b) the number of cases of occupational dust diseases notified to SafeWork NSW under section 271B during a financial year, and
 - (c) the number of deaths resulting from occupational dust diseases notified to SafeWork NSW under section 271B during a financial year, and
 - (d) the types of diseases or conditions recorded in the Dust Diseases Register for each financial year, and
 - (e) any other information prescribed by the regulations.
- (2) SafeWork NSW must keep the information published under subsection (1) up to date.

271C National register of dust diseases

- (1) The provisions of this Division, other than sections 268–271A, 271B(1) and 272–273, expire on a day prescribed by the regulations.
- (2) The Minister may recommend the making of a regulation under this section only if satisfied that a national register has been established to monitor the prevalence of dust diseases and conditions.

No. 3 **GRN No. 1 [c2020-194A]**

Page 2, clause 3. Insert after line 19—

(2) Section 276A

Insert before section 276B—

276A Case-finding study

- (1) SafeWork NSW must ensure that a case-finding study is carried out—
 - (a) to investigate respirable crystalline silica exposure in the manufactured stone industry, and
 - (b) to gather information to improve the identification and assessment of workers at risk of exposure.
- (2) A report on the findings of the study must be completed on or before 1 July 2021.

No. 4 GOVT No. 2 [c2020-128I]

Insert "and for other purposes" after "that Act".

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (14:38:05):

I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendments be agreed to.

I am pleased to bring an amended version of the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Information Exchange) Bill 2020 to the House. This morning important amendments were passed in the other place which strengthen the efficacy of the bill. The amendments to the bill strengthen the process by which cases of silicosis and other occupational dust diseases that are diagnosed in New South Wales may be tracked, responded to and prevented. In addition to information-sharing by NSW Health to SafeWork NSW about silicosis cases the bill now facilitates information-sharing about diagnosed cases of asbestosis and mesothelioma. Those diseases can also be contracted in occupational settings and therefore warrant the scrutiny of the workplace safety regulator. Once SafeWork NSW has those notifications, SafeWork inspectors can target their compliance and enforcement efforts based on each diagnosed individual's current or previous workplaces and ultimately prevent further cases.

The bill has been amended in the following ways: to impose a positive obligation on the Health secretary to notify SafeWork NSW of notifications of dust disease diagnoses it receives or notifications of a death arising as a consequence of a dust disease as soon as is practicable after the secretary receives the relevant notifications under the Public Health Act; to codify a New South Wales dust diseases register in law for all notifiable dust disease diagnoses received by NSW Health and deemed by SafeWork NSW to have been contracted in an occupational setting; to facilitate the transition of a New South Wales dust diseases register to a national dust diseases register when one is established; to require SafeWork NSW to provide an annual report on the dust diseases register to the Minister responsible for work health and safety, and for the Minister to make that report available for public scrutiny via a publishing process; and to require SafeWork NSW to undertake a case-finding study to investigate specific issues associated with respirable crystalline silica exposure in the manufactured stone industry and to improve the identification and assessment of workers at risk of exposure.

Those amendments collectively strengthen the information-sharing framework between NSW Health and the work health and safety regulators and support a whole-of-government approach to addressing occupational diseases. The bill we will pass today is a consequence of a collegiate working relationship between me, the health Minister, the Opposition and crossbench members. The Hon. Daniel Mookhey and Mr David Shoebridge, members from the other place, have worked closely with me and my office to ensure that our bill is robust and will effectively protect workers in our State. I am grateful that we have been able to engage in a productive negotiation process on the bill, which has produced a piece of legislation that has bipartisan support from the Opposition and crossbench members and will keep our workers safe in this great State of New South Wales. I am proud to commend the amendments to the House.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (14:41:55): On behalf of the Labor Opposition I support the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Information Exchange) Bill. The Opposition very much appreciates the Government's acknowledgement that the amendments have improved the bill and will make for a safer working environment for workers in this State. I too thank the Legislative Council for strengthening the bill with Labor's significant amendment to establish the dust diseases register in New South Wales. This is a historic step to curb the spread of silicosis, which we know is a shocking disease that too many young workers are contracting and subsequently dying from. It was important that New South Wales pass this legislation to stop that deadly lung disease, which is threatening the lives of the State's tunnellers and stonemasons. This bill goes a long way to doing that.

In February 2020 New South Wales Labor announced a plan to halt silicosis in its tracks, as the complexity of the issue and the devastating effects of the disease were clear. That plan included taking steps to immediately introduce a regulation to ban the dangerous practice of dry cutting manufactured stone; immediately establish a New South Wales notifiable dust lung disease register for major dust diseases modelled on the Queensland scheme, which has operated since July 2019; make working with stone safer by reducing exposure limits from

0.1 milligrams per cubic metre to 0.002 milligrams per cubic metre for all non-mining industry, the world's best silica dust limits; require that stonemasons receive full face respirators with the world's best filtration technology to protect them from dangerous dust; require mandatory registration for all manufactured stone fabrication sites every 12 months to allow tougher enforcement of the manufactured stone supply chain; implement a registration scheme for workers cutting manufactured stone to enable the long-term monitoring of stonemasons' health; and partner with employers and trade unions to introduce regular mandatory health screenings for workers exposed to silica dust, maximising the probability of early silicosis detection and treatment.

The plan will also introduce mandatory health and safety representatives in industries with high exposure to silica dust; establish health and safety committees comprising a majority of workers to partner with industry and trade unions; introduce a Work Health and Safety Act regulation for dust exposure in the tunnelling industry, requiring the application of a hierarchy of control for dust; fix all SafeWork NSW awareness campaigns; and immediately undertake a case-finding study into known silica cases modelled on the Queensland case-finding study. I am pleased to note that the Opposition has advanced many of these objectives successfully. I acknowledge the work of the Hon. Daniel Mookhey in the other place, who has worked tirelessly on this issue, and of course all members of both Houses who supported the legislation. I have no doubt that it will become law very soon.

Sadly, silicosis looms as the asbestos of our times and New South Wales has fallen behind other States in having the tools we need to stop its spread. We will stop that today. There has been an explosive rise in the number of cases of silicosis in New South Wales. In the last financial year New South Wales recorded 140 known cases of silicosis. The State's historic average is three to four cases per annum. These statistics require urgent and decisive action. Again, I thank my colleagues in the other place for working in a bipartisan manner to prioritise the health of workers.

It may have taken some effort to persuade the Government, but it was worth it and through a lot of hard work it was achieved. New South Wales now has the toughest laws to fight the silicosis epidemic, and that is something we should all be proud of. We still have more work to do. I assure members that Labor will keep campaigning until New South Wales has all the laws it needs to halt the spread of silicosis. The Australian Labor Party has a long, proud history of ensuring that workers across the country have a safe work environment and we will continue to do that. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Private Members' Statements

M5 AND M8 TOLLS

EASTWOOD RAILWAY STATION

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:47:51): We are not going away. That is the message from the St George community to the New South Wales Government and its self-described "toll mania". It is completely ruining the lives of thousands of families in my local community. Only a government so out of touch with real people and their problems would pursue a transport policy that tips millions of taxpayer dollars into a tunnel, ostensibly to reduce the amount of surface traffic through our communities, only to see a massive increase in the amount of surface traffic ripping through those communities. I am prepared to believe mistakes were made about the toll imposed on local communities. Clearly it was based on the paucity of traffic movements on the M8 and M5 since the toll came into effect. The \$20 fee for trucks and the \$7 fee for cars each way is too high. However, it may be the case that somebody stuffed up the equations determining what amount motorists were to pay. Maybe mistakes were made in the financing, and they need to be corrected.

But something gives me pause. Months prior to the imposition of the gigantic new toll on the M8 and M5, Roads and Maritime Services ripped through my community and that of the member for Rockdale with new clearways, smashing local businesses in the process. This had the effect of dramatically decreasing the amount of on-street parking at the front of the local chemists, dry cleaners, cafes, restaurants, the very friendly and popular Forest Inn Hotel, and hundreds of other businesses. One can imagine the outcry from the local chamber of commerce—"What is going on?" they demanded from me and other local members. We dutifully made inquiries of the roads Minister to find out why on earth the Government would be imposing new and onerous clearways through a vibrant shopping precinct, which is not on a transport line but struggles through and does quite well, considering it is difficult to get through. Why were these clearways coming into effect at the same time the taxpayer was ploughing billions into a new toll road tunnel that should reduce the amount of traffic on surface roads?

Our assumption is that the Government was aware that there would be a big increase in traffic as a result of the toll road going ahead and that the toll was being imposed on a road that had been toll free for the past 20 years. It is simple. Hundreds of people are coming to our offices in St George telling us that their lives have been turned upside down by the toll road. The constant noise of B-doubles clattering just metres past their bedroom windows does not allow them to sleep. I have been told probably 20 times that I must join local residents on Stoney Creek Road at 3.00 a.m. as they dutifully record the noise of massive trucks clattering down their roads. What good is it to spend that amount of money on a piece of infrastructure that makes the situation worse not better?

I realise I have grabbed the attention of the House on this issue once already today. Of course, I am aware that there are many other issues on what is undoubtedly a packed State Government agenda, but the residents of south-west Sydney cannot be ignored by the Government. We must stand up for them. We have tried for a long time to develop policies to help those communities keep their heads above water during the toughest recession in 30 years. This giant new toll is not helping communities. There must be relief in sight now. Why are we building infrastructure that is designed to tip billions into the coffers of private companies rather than adopting a financial model that builds the infrastructure for its use? Of course, that includes public transport infrastructure as well.

While I have the attention of the House, I speak on a related transport topic: Eastwood railway station. Recently I met with Ryde Mayor Jerome Laxale and Eastwood Chamber of Commerce, who have been fighting to restore the express train service to Eastwood and Burwood. The cuts to those services have been made without warning or consultation and commuters are left to suffer long waiting times or increased congestion if they use the roads. Removal of the express service means that a trip to the city can now take almost double the time it took prior to 2018. I thank the mayor and the Eastwood Chamber of Commerce, and implore the New South Wales Government to restore this essential and important public transport service.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (14:52:55): I note the comments made by the member for Kogarah and say to him that there is no better time to remind his community of the New South Wales Government's opportunity for registration relief for New South Wales drivers. Drivers who spend \$25 a week or more on tolls are able to access the free registration program through Service NSW, while drivers who spend on average \$15 or more are able to access the half-price registration scheme. I encourage the member for Kogarah to look at the services available at Service NSW and promote them to his constituents.

ROBERT STARK

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (14:53:37): I acknowledge the 2020 NSW Grandparent of the Year, Robert Stark—or, as he is known locally, Bob. Bob lives in Cromer in my electorate. He came here in 1973 from Glasgow. By 1974 he was a police officer in the NSW Police Force and served at a number of stations, including North Sydney and Mosman. In 1981 he transferred to the dog squad. Today I had the great privilege and pleasure of being with Minister Geoff Lee to congratulate Bob Stark as the New South Wales Grandparent of the Year. With him was his granddaughter Ruby, who is nine years old. Bob Stark, along with his wife Patricia, has been the primary carer for his granddaughter Ruby since she was six months of age. Effectively Mr and Mrs Stark have performed the roles of parents but Bob has been particularly immersed in all aspects of Ruby's life. Today to see them together was extremely heart-warming. Clearly the bond is extremely close.

Ruby told us that her granddad is a volunteer at her school, Cromer Public School, and down at Long Reef Surf Life Saving Club, where she is a nipper, and also at the Collaroy Cromer Strikers Football Club. Clearly she adores her grandad and sees him as being the person who has given her so much as he brought her up from when she was six months old through to now when she is nine years old. Bob has not wavered in being a loving and supporting grandparent despite a number of issues in his personal life, including two recent major surgeries and radiotherapy. He is now 71 but he seems to be very energetic. He told us he is down on the beach early getting the flags out and giving support for nippers. For soccer he is out there first thing giving support and setting up various flags and so on to make sure that all the young people can have their games.

To my mind Mr Stark is just an outstanding person and an outstanding grandfather. This morning Ruby showed us a bundle of photographs of her granddad that she had taken to for a show-and-tell at school, I think, last year. She had photos of her granddad in his police uniform with his police dog, Cassius, a very fine looking German shepherd dog and various other photos of herself. By producing those photographs, Ruby showed Minister Lee and me the loving relationship and a little bit of her life. I was also pleased to see that she is a very competent young lady at age nine. A news television crew asked her to comment and in front of a microphone, with no notes or guidance, she was able to talk about the love, affection and fondness for her grandfather.

She actually gave details of how she ended up in the care of her grandfather. How she got there is irrelevant to the story. What matters though is that she appreciates that her granddad who is now the Grandfather of the Year

in New South Wales, and his wife, Patricia, whom he met just a few years after he came to New South Wales in 1973 from Glasgow and married a few years after he arrived, have been caring for her in the most loving and caring way. Ruby also spoke about the fact that she got a cat by the name of Sophie, I think. Sophie was not capable of being looked after by somebody, so Ruby and her grandparents brought her in, and now there is a lot of love. It does not matter where the love comes from but love is all around. Love, in this case, is very much in the domain of Ruby and her grandparents, particularly her granddad Robert Stark, the New South Wales Grandparent of the Year. I thank him for being an outstanding human being.

OVEN MOUNTAIN PUMPED HYDRO ENERGY STORAGE PROJECT

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (14:58:52): Last week I was delighted to join with my colleagues the Minister for Energy and Environment, Matt Kean, and the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales, Adam Marshall, to announce the accelerated approval status to a billion-dollar Oven Mountain Pumped Hydro Energy Storage Project. By declaring the project as critical State-significant infrastructure, the New South Wales Government will kickstart the country's largest renewable energy zone and unlock opportunities for up to 600 direct and 1,500 indirect regional jobs throughout the northern part of New South Wales.

The project is about 10 kilometres within the electorate of the Northern Tablelands, held by Adam Marshall, and right beside my electorate of Oxley. We are both very proud local members of Parliament and will do all we can to ensure that much opportunity is unlocked for Kempsey, the mid North Coast of New South Wales, as well as Armidale and New England. Pumped hydro is essential for the State's energy future and works by pumping water up the hill when energy is cheap, and letting it run down the hill when the sun is not shining and the wind is not blowing.

The Australian Energy Market Operator says that New South Wales needs more than twice the energy storage of Snowy 2.0 by the mid-2030s and projects like Oven Mountain can help us reach that goal. It is expected to generate up to 600 megawatts of hydro power during periods of peak demand. A key advantage of the Oven Mountain project is that it is a closed loop project, pumping water between two new reservoirs. That means that no rivers are dammed or diverted and ensures that sensitive ecosystems and natural water flows are protected.

Ordinarily, projects of such magnitude can take about eight years to deliver, but the massive pumped hydro project in Kempsey shire's backyard will not wait. I am determined to get going now to create jobs and improve the reliability of our State's energy grid. It is important to note that the project is also an essential part of our local future water infrastructure, as it includes the construction of two reservoirs, tunnels and a new underground power station and has the potential to operate as a water source for firefighting and water security for Kempsey.

The Oven Mountain pumped hydro project is a road map for how a government can support sensible, private development. We must encourage investment in new infrastructure through private sector proposals for new energy investments, including our State-owned water assets. The announcement is truly a game changer for our region, an incredible development to drive energy prices down and grow our local economy. I thank my colleagues, especially the Minister for Energy and Environment, Matt Kean, for being so supportive in helping push the project to the forefront. I also give a shout-out to the hydro project team, Anthony and Jeremy, who have done the hard yards over a number of years to get the project off the ground. It was lovely that they were able to join us on the riverbanks of the Macleay at the upper reaches for the event.

I also acknowledge the Thungutti people, many of whom live in the nearby village of Bellbrook. They showed us some of the very sensitive parts of that watercourse, and their cultural heritage, for example, fishing for catfish. It is very hallowed grounds for the Thungutti people. I very much respect that and look forward to working with the new chief executive officer of the Thungutti Local Aboriginal Land Council and with the locals to ensure that their customs and history are respected. It is important that they are part of the project in its delivery phase. With many exciting opportunities for renewables, it will be a very good starting ground for jobs not only in our valley but also throughout New South Wales into the future.

The project is currently meeting the requirements of an environmental impact statement [EIS]. Once that is received, the EIS will go out on exhibition for community feedback. I encourage people across my region to participate in the consultation process. I look forward to working with the Thungutti Local Aboriginal Land Council Chief Executive Officer Arthur Bain to ensure that that happens. I also congratulate Kempsey Shire Council, and the work of the Slim Dusty family, on its announcement that Kempsey Shire Council will take over the running of the Slim Dusty Centre. The process has been in deliberation for some time. Recently I was with the Mayor of Kempsey Shire Council to talk to the project, which will become the new cultural and tourist information location for the Kempsey shire. It is a great initiative. We are proud of our famous Slim Dusty and look forward to working into the future to continue respecting that heritage.

CAMBRIDGE GARDENS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (15:04:07): This afternoon I speak on behalf of local parents and primary school students in my electorate and the neighbouring electorate of Penrith. In particular, I speak of the community at Cambridge Gardens Public School. It is a terrific local school serving families in Cambridge Gardens, Werrington Downs, Cambridge Park and the surrounding areas. It currently has around 500 students—it is a decent-sized school—and has gone above and beyond to cater for many students, particularly in the suburb of Jordan Springs. As members know, I have spoken many times in this Chamber about the Liberal Government here in New South Wales taking nearly a decade to build the school at Jordan Springs.

Recently parents from Cambridge Gardens Public School spoke to me of their frustration with the lack of a security fence at their school. Unfortunately, it has caused the school to be a target for break-ins, significant damage and theft. Nearby schools, including Cambridge Park Public School, Cambridge Park High School, Kingswood Park Public School, Braddock Public School, Cranebrook High School and, of course, the newly built Jordan Springs Public School, all have security fencing. It stands to reason that this lack of a security fence makes Cambridge Gardens Public School a prime target for crime. The current wire fence is very easily cut. As a result, tens of thousands of dollars of technology has been carted out of the school by thieves. In fact, over the past six months Cambridge Gardens Public School has been broken into no fewer than 14 times. These break-ins have caused more than \$100,000 in infrastructure damage and resulted in \$90,000 worth of laptops, iPads, projectors and other technology being stolen from our children. Sadly, a lot of the stolen items are technology items the school's P&C has raised money for and bought itself for the students to use.

Members would think that building a security fence in this situation would be commonsense—but not for this Government. The Liberal Government has actually refused to build a fence at this school. It refused to build it even after hearing about 13 break-ins at the school and after seeing all this technology stolen. It refused, despite the insurance and replacement costs incurred by the Government itself. It is just madness. Parents at Cambridge Gardens Public School could not be making a more reasonable request. They are simply asking for a security fence to protect their children's school from thieves. Unfortunately, this saga is yet another sign of the growing separation between the New South Wales Liberal Government and the people of western Sydney. Whether it is schools, overdevelopment, congestion or transport, hardworking families in the suburbs of western Sydney are crying out for the Government to listen—but they continue to be ignored.

What is the point of the Government developing risk ratings and the so-called security initiatives program if schools that have had 14 break-ins in six months cannot get a security fence? The Liberal Party hides behind bureaucratic regulations, policies and programs to deny communities like these the most basic infrastructure—after all, it is just a security fence. In fact, the Liberals have deliberately designed the Government to keep western Sydney families in the dark and out of the picture. The Government is just not respecting the views of local communities. A parent at Cambridge Gardens Public School would be forgiven for thinking that they have been completely ignored. They are not asking for the world. They are simply asking for a security fence to protect their school and the Government's own assets.

I thank the Cambridge Gardens Public School community, particularly local mum Belinda Adams, who approached me and all the parents I met last week who are fighting for a resolution for their school. Building this much-needed fence would actually save taxpayer money; it is illogical for the Government to deny such a reasonable request. I call on the Liberals to reverse their decision to refuse to build a security fence at Cambridge Gardens Public School. I urge them to please stop ignoring these western Sydney families, reverse this ridiculous decision and build this school fence.

DUBBO DRUG REHABILITATION CENTRE

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (15:08:54): For a number of years, one of the biggest issues in my electorate has been the need for a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre in the region. This was the case before I was elected and has remained the case in the 18 months I have been in the job. Since the release of the report from the Special Commission of Inquiry into The Drug 'Ice' and its recommendation for a rehab centre in our region, discussions have certainly ramped up. I have been asked many questions about my position and whether in fact I have a desire to make it happen. This week I wrote an opinion piece for local media to outline once and for all my position on this matter, especially given the New South Wales budget will be handed down on 17 November. I place that opinion piece on the record in this House. It states:

We are now less than a month away from the 2020 NSW Budget being handed down by the Treasurer.

Every budget is important, but this year has taken on extra significance due to COVID-19, and the fact that everything we are doing as a Government is being put on the credit card.

The hard work done by this Government to return the State to a surplus after 16 years of Labor incompetence has been wiped out by the coronavirus pandemic and our nation-leading response to it. But that doesn't mean essential projects should be left behind.

One of those essential projects is a drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility for the Dubbo region.

This topic has been on the agenda for many years, and I have always been supportive of it.

Since I was elected in March 2019, I have said on many occasions that funding for the bricks and mortar is only the start when it comes to a residential rehab facility.

That's why, despite the pledge of a block of land from Dubbo Regional Council and a generous commitment of funding from the Federal Government, it was important to see the recommendations from the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug "Ice".

It's also important that we fund the ongoing programs and support workers which will make this a success, not just a building.

In fact that's the most important part of this whole project, and it is something that only the State and Federal governments can facilitate.

It is well documented that the report from the Special Commission recommended a facility would be of benefit in our region, where ice and other drugs have become a scourge to our way of life.

Directly and indirectly, there are many people in our communities who have been impacted adversely, and there isn't a person who could genuinely say they don't want to try and fix the issue.

That's why I've made it very clear there needs to be a collaborative and sustained approach from health and mental health professionals to make sure we get it right.

While I love the passion of so many in our community, building this facility too early and without proper resourcing and funding would have been a disaster, with little or no positive outcomes.

When the report was released and it recommended a facility for our region, I wrote to the Premier, Treasurer, Health Minister and Attorney General to ramp up my lobbying for the facility, and an associated drug court.

As the member for the Dubbo electorate, that is my job and it is one that I take seriously. While I'm not providing a running commentary on discussions, people should know that I am doing absolutely everything I can to get these projects over the line.

In my maiden speech to the 57th Parliament of NSW on May 8, 2019 I referenced a quote which states that "although Rome wasn't built in a day, they were laying bricks and pavers just about every hour. You may not see or hear every single thing I do, but I will be there, laying those bricks every hour".

I have been working hard behind the scenes on this issue, like I have with many others, in an effort to achieve an outcome that helps the people of our region, whether they be directly or indirectly impacted by drug use and abuse.

I have been in regular contact with the Health Minister and Treasurer in recent times, and spoke to them both in Parliament last week, because as we get closer to the budget, it is important for this project to be front and centre.

The time for this rehab facility is now, and I remain confident there will be a positive outcome for our region on November 17.

As I stated in that piece, I really do commend the community for its support of this concept. But it is important to note this is a project that can really only be facilitated through the State and Federal governments. I appreciate the desire for Dubbo Regional Council to feel like it has a role to play in supporting this type of project—and it should. The council should fully support everything I am doing to make this a reality. However, I have also had quite a few questions about the use of ratepayer money to design a logo, employ staff to work on a campaign, and for the council to use its media team to produce community question and answer sessions.

I have also fielded questions about the perception of some in the community that council is actually trying to undermine the work I am doing to achieve results in this area. I hope that is not the case, and I call on council to get on the same page as me and support me on this. Again, it is a facility that would be built and run with money from the State and Federal governments and not from council. As I stated, I will continue to fight for this and to do my job in the State Government. I hope council does its job and supports my role within the Government to bring this to life.

SYDNEY METRO WEST

SYDNEY HELICOPTERS

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (15:14:02): I draw to the attention of the House concerns expressed by a number of residents in my electorate and people who own properties in my electorate and immediately outside it who are affected by the compulsory acquisition process for the Sydney Metro West project. I support the Sydney Metro West project. I think it is a fantastic project, although I think it should have an additional stop in western Sydney between Parramatta and Sydney Olympic Park—which was part of the original proposal. The Government was considering turning the Camellia peninsula into a residential suburb but Camellia cannot be a residential suburb without improved public transport. The area is already traffic constrained as a sparsely populated industrial area with very few people working there; yet every single day there is traffic chaos on the very narrow roads in and out of the area.

The people in my electorate who have received compulsory acquisition notices have been stuffed around no end by this Government. In June this year I had a Zoom meeting—a virtual town hall-style meeting—with all the residents in Westmead who have been affected by this proposal. The Government's approach to the process is

most interesting. I am very familiar with compulsory acquisition processes. A few years ago I supported residents of my electorate when they dealt with Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] in relation to the M4 widening and a number of years ago when I was a councillor on City of Parramatta Council when there was a challenge to the council's compulsory acquisition of properties proposal all the way to the High Court in relation to Parramatta Square. The manner in which Transport for NSW is handling the compulsory acquisition of properties in relation to the Sydney Metro West project is not just and not fair.

People received letters in November last year advising them that their property would be compulsorily acquired and that there was a six-month time frame for negotiations. It was not until March that valuers visited their properties. In May, at the end of the negotiation period, they received their final offer from the Government. That is entirely inappropriate. The offers they received do not allow people to buy like for like in Westmead. People who own single dwellings should receive an offer at the maximum developable value of the land but the offer they received was on the basis of a single dwelling, despite all single-dwelling properties having development potential. When this Government's Sydney Metro West project is completed, there will be very high apartment blocks built on those former single-dwelling sites.

The people who live in units were given very stingy valuations on the basis of the age of their building—so stingy that there is no way they can buy in Westmead a unit of the same size, such as a two-bedroom unit for a two-bedroom unit and a three-bedroom unit for a three-bedroom unit. That is incredibly unfair. Since May I have been in contact with property investors who own property in a block and who have been told that they will not be given compensation for the stamp duty costs of moving their investment. The Government is making that offer only to those people who are owner-occupiers. As far as I am concerned, that is not a just term.

I now address the problems faced by Sydney Helicopters, which is a very longstanding business that operates just outside my electorate of Granville. Last year the company totalled 4,200 flying hours when fighting bushfires for the Government—it does contract work for the Government all the time. The company has waited over a year for support from the Government to relocate. Sydney Helicopters is the only standalone heliport in the Sydney Basin but it has to vacate the premises by the middle of next year. The company has a longstanding lease with the Government that will be terminated in August next year and it is getting next to zero help from the Government to relocate. It is important that residents and businesses are supported under the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act.

PICTON ROAD

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (15:19:02): "I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take it anymore!" That famous quote from fictional character Howard Beale adequately sums up the way I feel about the state of Picton Road. The notorious road extends from the Hume Motorway interchange in my electorate of Wollondilly across the Princes Highway interchange in the electorate of Keira. Since 2014 there have been 10 fatalities, eight of which occurred along one deadly eight-kilometre stretch of road. Regrettably, on the weekend the road took another life. Ty Delaney, aged 26, died after the ute he was driving collided head-on with a vehicle that was towing a boat at Wilton at around 6.00 a.m. on 17 October. The accident also left two other people seriously injured, which is sometimes the forgotten story of Picton Road.

There have been deaths—too many—but there have been many more severe injuries sustained by drivers and passengers. Surviving a head-on collision is life-changing and can be just as damaging and destructive on a family and communities as can a fatality. We can encourage people to drive more safely but that alone will not prevent deaths from occurring on a road like Picton Road. That road is too unforgiving. A momentary lapse of concentration by one driver not only puts their life in peril but also imperils the lives of those innocently travelling in the opposite direction. I have heard firsthand accounts of near misses along the road and, sadly, unfortunate stories of the loss of loved ones. It was stories like those that motivated me to assist others in forming the Picton Road Motorway Coalition. Wollongong Lord Mayor Gordon Bradbery, former Wollondilly mayor Matthew Deeth, and the members for Keira and for Wollongong and I launched the non-partisan group earlier this year. I also acknowledge and thank the Illawarra Business Chamber executive director, Adam Zarth, for his involvement and leadership in promoting the need for investment in Picton Road upgrades—and upgrades do make a huge difference.

When the Wollongong end of the road was improved and completed in 2013, no further fatalities were recorded. Can there be a better dividend from public expenditure? So what are the solutions to preventing head-on collisions? The usual approach is to install a median barrier that seeks to protect not only the person who has made a driving mistake but also the innocent people travelling in the opposite direction. On the one hand, high reinforced concrete barriers can stop trucks crossing to the wrong side, but they are unforgiving to occupants of a car that hits them. On the other hand, flexible wire rope barriers are not designed to stop trucks from ending up on the wrong side of the road. Neither approach is desirable for Picton Road. The volume of heavy vehicles combined

with the growth of passenger movements from the Wilton Growth Area over the next decade make either solution impracticable in the long term.

My firm view is that Picton Road must be duplicated. It is an expensive solution but it is also effective from a safety perspective. The Government has been previously quoted as saying that when 80 per cent of the Pacific Highway duplication project was complete, it led to a 50 per cent reduction in fatal crashes. The economic case for the duplication is equally compelling. The road carries a high ratio of freight traffic, at 25 per cent, with traffic—20,800 vehicles per day and 5,200 during peak hours—growing at 14 per cent a year. It is possibly the most heavily congested freight corridor in the State and will reach peak hour capacity in just five years from now. Picton Road must be developed to recognise its importance as a key freight link between western Sydney, the proposed aerotropolis and Port Kembla. As the traffic congestion grows, productivity will be lost. Accidents close roads and dangerous roads increase travel times. But for me, it is simply this: The deaths must end.

The senseless tragedy and destruction to families must end. The endless talk must end. The blame-shifting and politics must end. It is time to deliver for the road users of Picton Road. Today I implore the Treasurer and the roads Minister to commit to the duplication of Picton Road to motorway standard. The case, in both safety and economic terms, has been made. Since coming to government in 2011, the Liberal-Nationals Coalition has had to deal with the infrastructure neglect of the Carr, Iemma, Rees and Keneally Labor governments, and has done an outstanding job. But now it is time to deliver for the users of Picton Road.

COALMINING

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (15:24:12): The number 2,463 is incredibly important for my community and me. It is the number of workers who are directly employed in the resources sector—in coal and coalmining. That is 2,463 families who put a roof over their head and food on the table, pay their bills, go on holidays, buy Christmas and birthday presents, have holidays and spend time together, have barbecues in the backyard and the like. Politically there is a lot of language around coal and coalmining and what the future might look like, but it is incredibly important we remember that every single worker in the resources sector has the same needs as the common person. In my electorate 2,463 people go to work in a coalmine. The great majority of those people do not love coal. They do not love what coal is or what it does. They do not have a passion for coal and, quite frankly, a lot of them—particularly the underground workers—simply do not love the unnatural act of going down a dirty black hole. But they do it for their families, for their kids and for their way of life. They do it because they need to work. They do it to get ahead. They do it to create opportunities for their children and their loved ones. Many of those 2,463 workers do it in the hope that their children will not do it.

Sadly and unfortunately, whenever we enter into a political conversation about coal, it quickly descends into a conversation about ideology. The media and some in political circles would have us believe it is as simple as being either for coal or against coal. Quite frankly, it is not as simple as that. Anybody who is sensible, reasonable and rational will admit and acknowledge that. Coal is a resource that has been used in our society for the past several hundred years and, quite frankly—unless we are going to have completely stranded assets worth billions of dollars—probably will be used for the next couple of decades. In all of these conversations, those who work in coalmining communities need to be remembered as decent, fair, hardworking, honest people who are doing what they need to do for their families.

I have heard it said so many times in this great Chamber of ours that the loss of any single job weighs heavily on all of us as politicians. We have to contemplate that every single time. Twenty or 30 years ago, the number of coalminers in my community was in the tens of thousands. Automation has taken away many of those jobs. We understand that. In the future, further automation will take more jobs away. We understand that. In future decades and generations there will be a low appetite for coal and there will be fewer jobs. We understand that. But I urge all members of Parliament, whatever their ideology and whatever their position on coal, to please remember and respect that in my electorate alone 2,463 families depend on that product and their jobs rely on that product. Respect all of those families.

INNER WEST BUS SERVICES

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (15:29:17): I raise a pressing matter that is causing significant concern in my community. In October Transport for NSW announced bus service changes affecting bus region 6, including the inner west area. Since that announcement my office has received a considerable amount of correspondence about the consequences of some of the changes, which are due to be implemented from next Sunday 25 October. Well-loved routes such as the 439 Mortlake to Martin Place, the 436 Rodd Point and Chiswick to Pitt Street and the M50 Coogee to Drummoyne are some of the services that will be withdrawn. While I acknowledge that the Minister for Transport and Roads has been an outstanding Minister and has done much in the transport space in my area, some routes that are not well utilised—particularly during the day, when a lot of elderly people tend to use them—are most

affected. I understand the problems associated with transport. A 300 per cent increase in people using public transport is a great thing and is what we all want, but it brings so many challengers in a short period of time.

The Transport for NSW website advises that alternatives will be offered for those impacted by the changes. However, many in my community have contacted me to advise that the alternatives offered will highly inconvenience their journeys. Many have mentioned that they will need to interchange multiple times to go a short distance. For example, Samantha from Concord tells me that her 79-year-old mother-in-law currently catches the 439 bus to travel directly to Haberfield or Leichhardt or to attend appointments at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. As a result of the changes, she will need to interchange three times to travel no more than 10 kilometres from Mortlake to Haberfield or Leichhardt. Many from the Mortlake area will find themselves in this predicament as a result of the changes.

I have spent considerable time talking to the Minister and his staff, who have been very cooperative. They have agreed to keep an eye on this issue as it progresses. There is potential for changes to be made down the track, based on evidence. The Transport bureaucrats tell us that interchanges are part of a modern city. Whilst it is acknowledged that interchanges will perhaps become more frequent and common, my community will not accept interchanges when travelling short distances. We spend a lot of time in this place discussing modern cities and the need to encourage public transport use. However, interchanges must be within reason. If they are not convenient, then commuters will look for other options. They will most likely choose to get in their cars.

A further matter is that the changes do not seem to be consistent with current and forecasted population growth. The Labor-dominated City of Canada Bay Council has approved many new dwellings in Breakfast Point and Mortlake. The population in this small peninsula has more than doubled in recent years, with additional people set to move into the area as more and more units and dwellings are approved. Mortlake and Breakfast Point are particularly challenged in terms of transport options. Those who are physically capable are able to walk to the Cabarita ferry wharf. However, for those who are unable, the changes mean that the area will be left with only one bus route and no direct service to the city. Sarah from Mortlake advises, "It is my means of transport. Without it I can't get things done."

I am hearing similar sentiments in Russell Lea with regard to the 436 bus route. Catching public transport is already challenging for residents in Russell Lea, as there are limited options. The changes will impact negatively on a number of residents. Fiona from Russell Lea says, "With the 436 no longer running, there is no longer a direct bus to Camperdown, where I work, or to Broadway Shopping Centre. These changes don't encourage me to use the light rail, but encourage me to drive instead, creating more traffic issues." As my electorate's representative, I feel it is appropriate that I bring these issues to the House. I have been liaising with the transport Minister's office and I am calling for the services to be looked at.

ST LUKE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (15:34:24): The official launch of a book on the history of St Luke's Anglican Church took place in Liverpool last Sunday. The book is entitled *Yesterday, Today and Beyond* and written by Dr Bryan Cowling, who seems to have devoted the first three years of his retirement to the project. The effort has been well worthwhile. The launch at St Luke's featured, among others, Dr Cowling, Senior Minister of St Luke's Stuart Parson, Bishop of Georges River Peter Lin, Liverpool Mayor Wendy Waller and Dr Peter Bolt as MC, himself an author of several books relevant to Liverpool's early colonial history. The publication of this history is important for the parish. It is also important more generally for Liverpool because of the parish's long-term significance.

The book launch was on the 201st anniversary of the church. The formal European establishment of Liverpool was in 1810 by Lachlan Macquarie. There were certainly Europeans living in the area before then, including Michael Dwyer and the Tellicherry Five from 1806. And, of course, the traditional owners had been living there for millennia. In 1810 Macquarie also allocated land for the church that became St Luke's. Macquarie chose as the architect Francis Greenway—that quarrelsome, troublesome and brilliant figure. Greenway was born in Bristol in 1777. At the age of 35 he was convicted of forgery. His death sentence was commuted to 14 years transportation. Some think he also designed what is now Liverpool TAFE, what used be the Liverpool asylum. St Luke's is described as "a restrained but dignified early colonial church in the Georgian tradition constructed of sandstock bricks on a sandstock foundation".

Dr Cowling notes that even Commissioner Thomas Bigge praised Greenway's work in Liverpool. That is one of the few positive things said about the guy who did such a job on Macquarie. Macquarie laid the corner foundation stone of the church on 7 April 1818. At the same time he named the church. The original building contract was awarded to Nathaniel Lucas. He came to Botany Bay on the First Fleet, sentenced in 1784 to seven years for stealing clothing. Greenway and Lucas had multiple arguments. At the 1818 ceremony to lay the foundation stone the Greenway-Lucas dispute became so loud and noticeable that Macquarie could not finish his

speech. Lucas died six days later. It was widely thought he had drowned himself following this public embarrassment. The contract was then awarded to James Smith, with whom Greenway also argued. Partially arising from that, Smith was forced into bankruptcy.

Dr Cowling also records that the bell and clock tower construction witnessed a convict workman hanging himself and three others being killed when lightning struck them as they sheltered in the partially complete towers. All this helps explain why the building was not completed until 1824. Services were held, however, in the unfinished building from 1819 on the initiative of Reverend Robert Cartwright, previously having been conducted by Reverend Samuel Marsden and Reverend John Youl. Marsden is a well-known and polarising figure and the subject of studies, including by A.T. Yarwood and Peter Bolt, which I have read. Cartwright is not as well-known as Marsden but is a quite interesting figure in his own right; Dr Cowling's history provides a fascinating portrait of him. A suburb in my electorate was named after him.

The church building and the nearby Blackett Hall were added to the register of the national estate in March 1978. The buildings were assigned a permanent conservation order in February 1982 and they were added to the State Heritage Register in April 1999. Robert Cartwright was not the only interesting figure at St Luke's in early colonial times, or indeed at other times. Two other people are Thomas and Rachel Moore, early parishioners at St Luke's. Once again Peter Bolt has written about them. Thomas Moore was born in England in 1762. He arrived as a carpenter in 1792, settled in Sydney in 1796 and was appointed master boatbuilder. He built a residence on the Georges River in 1809, calling it Moorebank. The next year the Moores hosted Macquarie, who stayed with them at Moorebank. He acted as supervisor of public works in Liverpool and as magistrate, and he was a major landowner and benefactor. In 1814 Thomas and Rachel were appointed guardians of Lachlan Macquarie's son should anything happen to the parents while in the colony.

In 1817 Thomas was a founding member of the Bible Society in Australia and the Bank of New South Wales. Rachel Turner was also born in 1762 but her path to the colony was a different one to that of Thomas. In 1787 she was sentenced to seven years transportation and arrived on the *Lady Juliana* in 1790. She was assigned to surgeon John White and had a son, Andrew, to him. In 1794 White returned to England leaving Rachel and 18-month-old Andrew behind. In 1797 Thomas and Rachel married. They raised Andrew as their child. He was educated in England, joined the army and, as far as is known, he was the only officer born in Australia to have fought at Waterloo. In 1838 Rachel died. In 1840 Thomas died, shortly after having donated the land in George Street, Sydney, for St Andrew's Cathedral. After his death his entire estate went to the Anglican Church. He was one of the richest persons in the State at that stage.

In 1856 his estate established Moore College, Liverpool. In 1889 it was relocated to Newtown, where it continues to this day as Moore Theological College. My electorate office is located on Moore Street in a building called Moore House. Part of Liverpool Hospital is known as the Thomas and Rachel Moore Education Centre. Whilst I have mentioned here only early colonial items, the book is very much broader than that. It is a very enjoyable and interesting read and an important addition to the history of Liverpool. It helps the community of Liverpool know more about itself. I congratulate the parish of St Luke's and Dr Bryan Cowling.

BAULKHAM HILLS ELECTORATE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE STUDENTS

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (15:39:27): It is a pleasure to speak on behalf of the Baulkham Hills constituency and wish the 858 students sitting the HSC in my electorate every success for the future after completing 13 years of schooling. I know the final year of school was not what the class of 2020 had in mind, yet the resilience of HSC students in the face of uncertainty has been extraordinary. I am very proud of what this cohort has achieved. Completing your HSC in regular times is challenging enough, yet in 2020 the stress has been compounded by the pandemic. This year has thrown up plenty of challenges and our HSC students have met them with the help of their schools, family, friends and the wider community. We want students to know we are behind them as they take on this final chapter in their high school careers.

Our students have done so well and we are proud of them. I know they have these final few weeks covered. There is support all around them, so I hope they make to ask for help if they need it. Online resources are the easiest to access, along with friends, family and fellow students. My message to students is to celebrate how far you have already come and continue to take care of your health and wellbeing. Stay healthy, keep active and make sure you keep talking with your friends and family. The world is changing faster and more dramatically than ever before. Agility and fortitude will be your trusted companions in the many chapters beyond the HSC. Students need to enjoy this milestone, look around and remember there is a team of people, particularly their teachers, who have got them to this point. Toward that end, I encourage everyone to recognise the remarkable effort of school communities in supporting HSC students this year in not only preparing students to do their best in exams but also in ensuring that COVID-safe exam processes are in place to keep everyone out of harm's way.

I am grateful to the principals, teachers and supervision staff in the Baulkham Hills electorate for their vigilance in preparing to implement contingency and communications plans in the instance a positive COVID-19 case is confirmed during exams. These measures are about minimising disruption to students so they can get back to their exams as soon and as safely as possible. The safety of students and staff remains the Government's priority, and we will continue to prioritise health advice as we support schools in planning for and operating the exams. Although exams are operating a little differently as we learn to live with the virus, the perseverance we have seen from this 2020 cohort to get to this point has been astounding. My best wishes go to all 73,000 students sitting their exams. Whatever their mark when HSC results are released on 18 December, I wish to remind students that it will not set their future in stone. There are so many other opportunities that the adventure of life will take them to. Their adventure is just beginning. With that in mind, I close with the following words from philosopher Eric Hoffer:

They who lack talent expect things to happen without effort. They ascribe failure to a lack of inspiration or ability, or to misfortune, rather than to insufficient application. At the core of every true talent there is an awareness of the difficulties inherent in any achievement, and the confidence that by persistence and patience something worthwhile will be realised.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (15:42:57): I speak today about the importance of mental health, and particularly how the challenges of this year have impacted on the mental wellbeing of many people in our communities. October is Mental Health Month and gives all of us a chance to check in on ourselves, our friends, family, neighbours, colleagues and community members and seek help if we are not okay. This year, 2020, has been an extraordinary year, and the pressures placed on individuals and communities have been—to use a much said word this year—unprecedented. Our communities have battled prolonged drought, extreme bushfires, a global pandemic and the ongoing uncertainty of a national recession.

Just one of these issues can take an enormous toll, so it is clear that investment in support services and starting the conversation with our family, friends, colleagues, neighbours and even strangers around mental health has never been more important. I recently met with Gary Witt, a passionate local advocate of men's mental health and getting men to open up about the challenges they are facing. Gary's concept is simple: men talking with men. It is about men coming together to share their concerns, breaking down the barriers of isolation, celebrating the steps they are taking to improve their mental health and knocking down the stereotype of the typical Aussie bloke who stoically faces all obstacles with emotionless silence. That myth is an integral part of our history, and one that men seem particularly compelled to live up to. But it is just that—a myth. Suffering in silence cannot be accepted in a world where we have never been more connected, where it has never been more okay to show vulnerability and understand that someone else is experiencing the same challenges. Gary is building an online community forum of men and I encourage anyone interested to visit the Facebook page and get involved. I look forward to seeing the project grow and I am doing everything I can to help it thrive.

Losing just one person to suicide is one too many. I am proud that this Government is investing \$87 million over three years in its Towards Zero Suicides initiatives. Part of that work is the development of the Strategic Framework for Suicide Prevention in NSW 2018-2023, and I have fought to ensure that the communities of the Cootamundra electorate are part of that conversation: I facilitated a forum where the community came together and had its say on what the framework should include. But we still have a long way to go to ensure that no-one experiences the pain of losing a loved one to suicide. The hardships of drought have taken their toll on the mental health of our communities, so I was proud to be able to announce a "farm gate" counsellor and frontline mental health worker based in Temora in 2018. That was part of a \$6.3 million commitment from the New South Wales Government, which delivered 20 additional counsellors to some of the State's most drought-affected communities.

One of the great tragedies of mental illness is how many young sufferers there are. It is vital that children and young people can access mental health support in schools, and I am so pleased that Young High School, West Wyalong High School, Narrandera High School, Junee High School and Cowra High School will soon gain student support officers in the first phase of the rollout across the State. The officers will work with students one on one and help them to develop the tools they need to build resilience, get mentally healthy and thrive. In an effort to overcome the challenges of attracting expert mental health professionals to small communities, a dedicated team of specialists are working as part of a fly-in fly-out program providing psychology support to schools across much of my electorate and other parts of the State.

So far, Gooloogong Public School, Grenfell Public School, Koorawatha Public School, Naradhan Public School, Weethalle Public School, West Wyalong High School, West Wyalong Public School and Wyalong Public School have been part of the trial by Royal Far West, which has brought an expert workforce to rural and remote students who may not have had access to these services in the past. This is a practical solution to the constant challenge of attracting mental health professionals to small communities and schools, and these psychologists are

providing a vital service for our young people who deserve the same level of specialist support that is available in the city.

The Murrumbidgee Local Health District recently announced that 25 new mental health support workers and clinicians would soon be appointed in communities across the district, boosting the available services of many of the communities in my electorate. It is a welcome surge in the number of professionals in the region. This is an issue where we can always be doing more. We all have a role to play. If anyone notices someone who seems to be struggling, reach out, or if anyone needs help there is always Lifeline, or they can make an appointment with their GP.

SPECIALIST HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (15:48:10): The COVID-19 pandemic has seen a 47 per cent increase in demand for specialist homelessness services across New South Wales. That figure represents 16,000 additional people seeking support. Economic modelling shows that the pandemic, along with the economic recession, will place further strain on the already underfunded and under-resourced specialist homelessness services sector. In the lower Hunter, Nova for Women and Children has exceeded all its targets for the 2019-20 financial year. That sounds like good news but that is not the case. By exceeding its targets, the service assisted 1,454 women and children between 1 July 2019 and 30 June 2020. The majority were fleeing domestic and family violence. The second largest group of clients were seeking help as a result of the housing crisis.

A growing cohort for specialist homelessness services is women over 50, who after rearing children accrue far less superannuation than their male counterparts and have not had the opportunity to buy a home throughout the course of their lives. This month Nova for Women and Children expanded its service delivery to the Lake Macquarie area, where it has opened The Hub. The Hub is a drop-in centre where homeless women can enter a safe environment, take a shower, have something to eat, receive support from workers and be referred to other services. Nova for Women and Children, along with all other specialist homelessness services across the State, is anticipating another increase in demand for its services over the rocky period ahead. An increase in demand for specialist homelessness services must be matched by an increase in funding.

These services were given the certainty of a 12-month contract until 2021. It came with an assurance from the New South Wales Government that this would transition to a three-year plus two-year contract post-June 2021. The New South Wales Government must come good on this funding commitment. Short-term funding contracts diminish the capacity of the sector to plan service delivery for what is now a homelessness and housing crisis. Women turn to organisations such as Nova for Women and Children when they have nowhere else to go. The link between homelessness and the lack of affordable housing and social housing cannot be overlooked. The correlation is clear and direct. In New South Wales 60,000 people are on the waiting list for social housing. That number represents an irrefutable failing by government to meet the existing and growing demand.

In Lake Macquarie east and Newcastle there are 1,683 applications on the social housing waiting list. The current wait time in that area for social housing is five to 10 years, and that is far too long. For these people and their families, that is five to 10 years of uncertainty, of instability, and of living in vulnerability and insecurity. It is a pathway that leads to homelessness for many. The pandemic offers a unique opportunity for the New South Wales Government to fast-track investment in social housing. Not only would the investment provide desperately needed homes for vulnerable people, but also the construction of new social housing would stimulate the local economy. There is social housing in every city and in towns and villages across New South Wales. Building new housing stock will not only create jobs in New South Wales; it will create jobs in regional communities where social housing can be constructed.

I call on the Government, as does Nova for Women and Children, to increase funding to specialist homelessness services in the upcoming budget by 20 per cent, to confirm ongoing certainty of funding for three-year plus two-year contracts and to invest in the construction of 5,000 social housing properties every year for the next 10 years. I congratulate Nova for Women and Children on the work it does. I have worked with the organisation for a number of years and I take my hat off to the people employed there. They work with very vulnerable women, children and families, and often deal with stressful situations. I hope that they look after themselves as well as they do the people they look after.

BARE CREEK BIKE PARK

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (15:53:08): The former Belrose tip in my electorate of Davidson has been creatively repurposed. Six hectares of surplus government land is now a magnificent playground for outdoor enthusiasts. Funding from the New South Wales Government has turned a rotting, smelly and often dusty pile of rubbish into the outstanding Bare Creek Bike Park at Belrose. A \$2 million world-class sports facility, it includes nine mountain bike trails, skills and dirt jump areas, a pump track, and walking and running paths.

I recently witnessed a trial run and watched riders flying metres into the air on bicycles and whooping with joy as they defied gravity. Many others will enjoy that adrenaline rush when it officially opens in early December. Importantly, the bike park is open to the public and entry is free. The project is a wonderful story of persistent grassroots community action. It is an example of a smart and sustainable solution from a tuned-in government and public service which have responded to the needs of a community.

Shortly after being elected in 2007 I became involved with the project. As the Belrose tip approached capacity, residents asked me to help them turn the land from a garbage tip into a community space. Support came from the community advisory committee as well as organisations such as the Belrose Rural Community Association and the Covenant Christian School. Local residents with long-term involvement include Merrilee Brown, Donal Carr, Malcolm and June Dawes, Connie Harris, Ron and Cynthia Patton, and the late Mary Armstrong. There was also valuable input from Matt Ward of Trail Care as well as other mountain biking community members, including Brett Butler.

I acknowledge the central role of Peter Graham and the team at Property NSW throughout the project. Their clever coordination with Transport for NSW allowed unwanted excavated material from the nearby Northern Beaches Hospital-related roadworks along Warringah Road to be reused to construct the bike park. Transport for NSW avoided expensive disposal charges, and Property NSW secured 110,000 cubic metres of sandstone and clay to remediate the site and build the trails. It was a true win-win outcome.

The Northern Beaches Council has taken a keen interest in and will manage the Bare Creek Bike Park when it opens with the help of a \$1.5 million dedicated maintenance grant from the New South Wales Government, raised through waste levies from the Belrose tip. An additional benefit of the bike park will be the protection of local bushland, which was sometimes destroyed by people building unsafe and illegal trails in the national park. There is now little incentive for riders to venture into the national park when there is so much fun to be had in the new bike park. I acknowledge and thank all the stakeholders for their various contributions to what is a wonderful resource for the local area, the region and the State. The transformation of Belrose tip into the Bare Creek Bike Park is a wonderful testament to all the people involved. I am pleased to have played a central role in seeing this project come to fruition.

Business interrupted.

Petitions

SYDNEY BUS SERVICES

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before we commence, and for the benefit of those watching online, I take this opportunity to explain the process and rationale behind this unique debate. It is unique because it enables the public to bring their concerns directly to the attention of the 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 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 will, in most cases, be determined on the voices and be passed. However, if this is challenged by a member then it may proceed to a division, where the bells are rung and members vote on the motion by sitting on, or in this case walking through on, the appropriate side of the House.

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

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:59:13): I speak on behalf of the more than 10,000 signatories to this petition. I thank the community that has been behind this campaign from the very beginning. I thank the Rail, Tram, and Bus Union [RTBU] and Unions NSW for the amazing way in which they have advocated on behalf of the community to save these bus services and protect the jobs that would be lost if they were removed. I represent all of those who have written to me, visited my office and stopped me on the street in the electorate of Coogee to express their shock and absolute disbelief at the Liberals' callous cuts to these vital and much-loved buses. I represent the local people of the eastern suburbs who rely on these buses day in and day out to take them to libraries and doctors appointments, to see friends and family, and to take them to work—everywhere that they need to go.

In the midst of a pandemic and an unemployment crisis, I speak to fight for the bus drivers and transport workers who are about to have their hours cut or their jobs made redundant. It has been nine months since these heartless and senseless cuts were announced not by this cowardly Government but by the Opposition, by way of a very brave public servant who leaked documents to us. We have put in Government Information (Public Access) Act applications to make this document public only to have them rejected. I have to ask: Why is the Government hiding these bus cuts?

My office has received thousands of emails, letters and calls from locals who are devastated by the Government's plan to cut 16 bus routes from the south-east region, which will remove more than 1,600 services every day and 10,000 services every week. Those buses are the 302, the 314, the 317, the 373, the 376, the 377, the 393, the 394, the 395, the 397, the 399, the L98, the M10, the M50, the 891 and the 893, with an additional 11 services set to be rerouted to funnel people onto the light rail. This is in addition to the 378 and the 361 services, which have already been cut.

Make no mistake: The only reason the Government is cutting these bus services is to force people to use its light rail and justify the "dog of a project". That is exactly how the Minister for Transport and Roads has described this piece of infrastructure. It is an abysmal replacement for some of the best bus services in Sydney. The light rail went more than \$1.3 billion over budget, is 20 minutes slower than existing bus services, has fewer stops, has more breakdowns and has safety concerns across its entire network.

People from the eastern suburbs reject the Government's cuts to their bus services, and they are prepared to fight this every step of the way. The Randwick Council-commissioned report by EMM Consulting stated that, according to the Government's planned capacity projections once these bus services are removed, the only way to increase capacity is by packing people like sardines onto the light rail at crush capacity. This is the Government's great plan for the eastern suburbs—cut all the buses, jam everyone onto the light rail and make sure that they are packed in like sardines. It sounds lovely—and great during a pandemic as well!

By reducing these services, the amount of available jobs will also be reduced. We are in the middle of an economic crisis, so we should be fighting to keep every single job instead of throwing them down the toilet. Earlier this year RTBU members threatened to go on strike but they did not, because they came to a verbal agreement with the Minister, who promised that there would be comprehensive community consultation before any bus services were cut. No community consultation ever happened, and this Sunday 25 October the M50 and the M10 services are set to be cut. The Minister says one thing and does the complete opposite. This should not be shocking, however, because it happens time and time again. The much-loved 378 and 371 services were cut in the dead of night with no consultation. It just happened.

If the Government understood how transport worked in the eastern suburbs, it would realise that any reduction in bus services just forces more people to drive on our already congested roads. More significantly, any reduction in services will isolate vulnerable people in our community. We know that privatising the buses would be even worse. When is the Government going to learn? When is it going to listen? The people clearly do not want their bus services removed. They do not want to catch the Government's light rail and they definitely do not want the buses privatised. Since I have been a member of Parliament, more than 60,000 people have signed petitions saying that they do not want their bus services taken away or privatised. The Government should keep its hands off them.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:04:25): I am advised that from 25 October bus services across Sydney and surrounding areas will change. Some of those changes include: new, faster services on Parramatta Road and extra services on key routes, as well as almost 1,000 additional weekly bus services for the inner west; more than 530 additional weekly bus services introduced in other areas, with many services added in the early morning and evening on some routes; and some minor changes to bus-stop arrangements along Anzac Parade in Kensington. The changes will improve the frequency of services on key routes, improve travel times and give customers more choice around when they travel.

Some routes will be withdrawn. The M10 and M50 are two routes that extend from the inner west to the eastern suburbs. Less than 4 per cent of customers on those routes travel between the two regions. With other frequent bus and light rail services, customers will be served better by using buses on other routes. Customers travelling between the inner west and the CBD will have access to frequent services along Parramatta Road and Victoria Road, while other bus routes and light rail services between the CBD and eastern suburbs run every five to 10 minutes. The CBD and South East Light Rail passenger services are now operating on both the L2 Randwick line and L3 Kingsford line. Regular services run around every four minutes between Circular Quay and Moore Park and around every eight minutes between Moore Park and Randwick and Kingsford in the 7.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. peak on weekdays.

This provides public transport to important health precincts for workers and the community. The 12-kilometre route features 19 stops, extending from Circular Quay along George Street to Central Station, through Surry Hills to the Moore Park precinct, which includes the Sydney Cricket Ground and Allianz Stadium. After this it travels to Kensington and Kingsford via Anzac Parade, and to Randwick via Alison Road and High Street, taking in the racecourse, the University of New South Wales and the Prince of Wales Hospital. The stops are designed to service major transport hubs and create easy interchange points with buses, trains, ferries and the Inner West Light Rail. Each light rail service can carry around 450 passengers, which is as many as up to nine standard buses.

With Sydney's population set to increase by another million people over the next 10 years, transport capacity needs to grow and flex. Sydney's new CBD and South East Light Rail plays a key role in enabling the city's transport future by transporting thousands of customers between the CBD and Randwick or Kingsford in the south-eastern suburbs. Transport for NSW is developing a new integrated south-east light rail and bus plan. A combined bus and light rail network will significantly improve public transport access to health precincts in Randwick, the University of New South Wales, TAFE and major sporting and entertainment facilities at Moore Park and Randwick. Additional light rail services will provide extra capacity for major events. Before any changes are made to the south-east bus network, Transport for NSW is continuing to monitor customer travel behaviour following the opening of the L2 Randwick and L3 Kingsford light rail lines, which includes considering the impact of COVID-19 on travel behaviour.

More than 2,000 additional weekly bus services will be added in Sydney's northern beaches. The new services include overnight B-Line services operating between Mona Vale and the Sydney CBD for the first time ever, and buses operating every 10 minutes on key routes as part of the creation of an all-day frequent network operating throughout the day, seven days a week, including the much-anticipated route between Dee Why and Chatswood. The new, frequent routes—operating every 10 minutes across the day, seven days a week—are: route 100 from Mosman to City, route 144 from Manly to Chatswood via St Leonards, route 160X from Dee Why to Chatswood, and route 199 from wonderful Palm Beach to Manly via Mona Vale and Dee Why.

New B-Line overnight services will be introduced—operating every 30 minutes, seven days a week—between Mona Vale and the CBD between midnight and 4.00 a.m. This means the B-Line will now be running 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Overnight services will also operate between Avalon and Manly seven days a week as part of the new network. There will also be changes to some bus routes and timetables, designed to support the new, all-day, frequent network. To help reduce duplication on the network, some routes are being replaced by new routes or extra services on other routes.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (16:09:09): This petition says, "Concerned residents and commuters bring to the attention of the House our strong community opposition to the New South Wales Government's plans to cut 16 bus routes from our area." I can tell you from having lived in the community every day of my life, from talking to residents and from catching buses myself—which I still do—the strong community opposition to the Government's plans comes from the fact that we have a very strong love of buses in our area. They have served us well from time immemorial and they still do the job that people want them to do. Do not just believe me. In a time of COVID when social distancing is the key, the light rail has acreage in it. A person can literally sit 50 metres from the nearest other passenger. So if someone was wary of catching COVID on public transport, they would catch the light rail.

But guess what? The buses that are still running along Anzac Parade are full and the shiny, new, over-time, over-budget and hopelessly, rubbishly slow light rail is empty. We did not ask for it; we did not want it. It does not come to Maroubra Junction and it is making matters worse in our area. Leave the buses where they are. One of the best things I did as roads Minister before Labor lost government was to bring the M10 to Maroubra Junction and the M20 to Botany. This weekend, on Sunday 25 October, the M10 will be no more. It will be scrapped, along with the M50 from Coogee that goes to Drummoyne. There was no community consultation that was promised. There was a notice on the website and something stuck with chewing gum on bus stops around the area—that is consultation under Berejiklian and Constance. The M20 that we brought to Botany has been renamed and does not come to Botany anymore. It goes to Mascot.

The three Metro buses that were so loved in our area have been necked and for absolutely no reason other than this Government does not want to deliver services to the community. Those opposite are always about ideology and their ideology is leading them to incompetence. They want to get rid of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union. They do not want buses driven by unionised bus drivers. They want to funnel people onto the light rail and cut costs as much as they can. It is almost as if they have an abiding hatred for our local area—Maroubra, Coogee and Heffron—with all the overdevelopment we have to cop, a cruise terminal at Yarra Bay and all the horror stories they are visiting upon our local community. The cherry on top is to get rid of our beloved buses.

A leaked secret New South Wales Government document has revealed that 16 local bus routes will be cancelled—the equivalent of removing 1,600 buses a day from our local area. Eleven other routes will be changed to deliver a different service. These changes are designed to force people onto the light rail—and I have spoken about all that. If the changes are implemented there is no way people will be able to go from the electorate of Maroubra and reach the heart of the CBD during non-peak periods, no way to get to Oxford Street and no way to get to Macquarie Street—and I know a lot of older people who still visit Macquarie Street specialists. They will have to get off the light rail in George Street and catch a taxi up to Macquarie Street. What a disgrace those opposite are. Fair dinkum! The routes that will be going are the 302, 314, 317, 373, 376, 377, 393, 394, 395, 397,

399, L94, M10, M50, 891 and 893—completely cancelled. All those services that older people particularly rely on during the day will be axed completely, and as yet there is no comprehensive plan for what will replace them.

I thank the member for Coogee for bringing this petition to the House. I have another one in identical terms lodged with the House and we will be taking note of it next week. But I want to deliver a message to the Premier. I know she is in trouble at the moment with corruption scandals and the like, but she says when she comes into this House that the Government is still governing for the people of New South Wales. Well, the people of Maroubra, Coogee and Heffron are residents of New South Wales. We love our buses. We think the Government's light rail is an absolute dog. So do us all a favour: Let the sleeping dog lie and let our buses run alongside it, because we love them and they are still working well.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:14:11): It is great to see Basil Fawltly of the Labor Party, the member for Maroubra, rolled out again. Unfortunately, it is a real problem because this issue is too important to have a run-down, old member like the member for Maroubra, who has completely lost it, making a speech about it. He made five speeches in total in the House last year, and they keep rolling him out in this sort of pathetic way every time there is an important issue such as that affecting the people who have signed this petition. The member for Maroubra told the House this afternoon that Labor never asked for light rail. I recall Premier Baird on many occasions reading out a letter from the member for Maroubra asking that the light rail be extended to his electorate. Now he says Labor never asked for it, when in fact he did, he wanted it to go to his electorate.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the member for Maroubra he is on three calls to order.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Then he informed the House today that this is all the ideology of the Liberal Party. He did not say that it was actually the Unsworth report in 2004 that first recommended the wholesale franchising of metro bus contracts in Sydney. He did not say anything about John Watkins, the Labor Minister, who started the franchising of bus contracts in 2005. Of course, he failed to tell the House about what the member for Keira's former boss, David Campbell, had to say when he was Minister for Transport in 2008. He stated:

... the needs of the community are not being met under the current arrangements. It has become clear that public transport services cannot be effectively managed under a system in which the delivery agency is a State-owned corporation ...

They are the words of the former Labor Minister for Transport in 2008. He also stated:

... privately operated transport service providers have contracts with Government that provide for far greater accountability than the model that currently applies to government-owned rail and ferry services.

These are former Labor Ministers, all of them encouraging the use of private operators for public transport. Where is the ideology? How do they keep pretending that they do not support the private delivery of public transport services? They continually put their hands over their ears and pretend that those words were never spoken, when they were. They say one thing in government, they say something else in Opposition. Why do they not tell the truth? Why do they not tell the truth to their constituents that they support the private delivery of public transport services? Let us talk about south-east Sydney for a minute, and what the member for Coogee has said. I have been a public transport user my entire life. I am privileged to live in an area where there is a core delivery of public transport, which is the North Shore train line delivered in the 1890s.

In 1961 the tram service to the electorate of the member for Coogee was abolished by the then Labor Government. During the course of the Heffron Labor Government, the Renshaw Labor Government, the Wran Labor Government, and all the many Labor Premiers of New South Wales for 16 years from 1995 to 2011, nothing was ever done to service the electorate of the member for Coogee to provide a light rail core transport service like the Coalition Government has now provided. It is the best delivery of public transport to have a core, reliable service such as a light rail service, then to have buses delivering passengers to the hubs along the light rail services. That is what happens with the North Shore train line. Since the light rail has been delivered there has been a 30 per cent increase in combined services of bus and light rail taking people from south-east Sydney into the CBD. Instead of criticising the Government in the way that they have, why do they not just say thank you?

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (16:19:17): The people of my electorate of Heffron and the people of Maroubra and Coogee will not be lectured by the member for Ku-ring-gai and the people of Pymble and Killara about public transport. The only Mercedes-Benz they get in is the S-Class that they paid \$250,000 for. The reality of the situation is that the public transport system—

Mr Alister Henskens: That's good coming from a highly paid barrister.

Mr RON HOENIG: The member interjects about my profession as a barrister, but I happened to be a public defender working for the poor, not taking huge amounts of money and becoming a rich person who can live in Pymble, or look down their nose at the people of my electorate and take away their bus services.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Heffron will direct his comments through the Chair and ignore the interjections. I call the member for Ku-ring-gai to order for the first time.

Mr RON HOENIG: I am not going to be lectured about public transport by these wealthy North Shore Tories. The reality of the situation is that 16 routes will be cut that impact on the suburbs of Kensington and Kingsford, and 14 of those 16 routes impact my electorate. The Government should show some respect to the hardworking member for Coogee, who easily collected 10,000 signatures of people who are genuinely concerned about their loss of bus services to present to the House.

Instead of properly managing bus services the Government's decisions are political. There have been 59 new bus services introduced in the electorate of Lismore. Bus services are being cut in the electorates of Heffron, Coogee and Maroubra, but not Lismore. It is just a naked political decision. Do they think they are going to get Commie George's seat back? Janelle Saffin is so good, they are never going to move her. They are just wasting their money. The greatest crisis in the way in which the Government manages public transport is it is making these decisions without looking at an integrated transport system. We are in the middle of a public health crisis, when people are frightened to catch public transport, and the \$3 billion light rail project is empty. The member for Ku-ring-gai should support my proposed motion to shift the light rail to Luna Park because it would be a great ghost train. Nobody is using it at the moment.

Many bus routes have been slashed through Kensington and Kingsford. Public transport along the Anzac Parade corridor will be gutted. The 391 will now terminate at Daceyville, not Central. The 392 will terminate at Redfern, not Circular Quay. The 396 will terminate at Central, not Circular Quay, and the 393 will terminate at Redfern, not Central. If one looks at public transport run efficiently everywhere around the world, New South Wales has been absolutely hopeless at it. That is why, as Minister Constance said, he had to take over this dog of a project. He is poor old Basil Fawltly trying to manage what he calls a "dog of a project".

When transport modes are changed, they have to be efficient and integrated. I know the member for Ku-ring-gai travels to a number of wealthy countries around the world, and he knows when he catches public transport that when he gets off one mode there is virtually another one waiting for him. It does not happen here because it is not integrated and there is no competence in the management of public transport. To slash routes now when it is not known what the effectiveness of light rail will be, creating fear and risking the jobs of bus drivers—who have virtually been risking their health moving people in a pandemic—is really quite reprehensible. The smart thing to do is to analyse any changes to public transport after the health crisis and make a decision based on merit. I ask the Government: Will somebody please look at a way to integrate public transport in the city? It has not happened for 200 years, but it should start now.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (16:24:31): Let us look at the facts. The New South Wales Government is committed to delivering the best possible public transport network for our customers and that means delivering more services when and where they are needed. As outlined in the CBD District and South East Light Rail Environmental Impact Statement in 2013, bus services in Sydney's south-east will be adjusted to reflect changed customer travel patterns, while express bus services will be retained to complement the light rail. Planning for these changes is still ongoing and is being informed by Opal data, changed customer travel patterns and feedback. The detailed plan has not been finalised and will be released to the public for feedback in 2021.

Current concepts for possible bus changes show we will retain most existing transport connections and improve how customers travel around the local area and move between major hubs such as Central, Randwick, Kingsford and Taylor Square. Early modelling shows that overall capacity of a redesigned bus and light rail network will be increased by more than 30 per cent in the morning peak. Any changes to bus routes and timetables are designed to improve the frequency of services on key routes and give customers more choice around how and when they travel. To help reduce duplication on the network and improve efficiency, some routes may be replaced by new routes, or extra services on other routes, modifications to existing routes and more express services.

Inner west bus service changes being introduced from October will provide almost 1,000 additional weekly services, including faster services via Parramatta Road. The M10 and M50 services linking the inner west with the south-east via the Sydney central business district and are being withdrawn to serve customers better by using these buses on other routes. Less than 4 per cent of customers travel between the inner west and the eastern suburbs on the M10 and M50, with the majority of customers alighting in the Sydney CBD. Customers travelling between the inner west and the CBD will have access to frequent services along Parramatta Road and Victoria Road, while other bus routes and light rail services between the CBD and the eastern suburbs run every five to 10 minutes.

Again, the detailed bus plan for Sydney's south-eastern bus services has not been finalised and any planned changes will be informed by customer feedback, Opal data and changed customer travel patterns. Before any changes are made, customers in Sydney's south-east can be assured that they will be informed of any modifications to their services. We expect this plan will be released next year for public feedback before any changes are then

refined and rolled out. This will ensure that customers, the community and stakeholders are involved in the development of the network where possible and are adequately informed of the proposed changes. I appreciate the community's patience as we work to deliver a transport system to keep pace with Sydney's current and future transport needs.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (16:27:34): In reply: I know that educational standards are at an all-time low in New South Wales, but I need to remind the member for Manly that Parramatta is not in the eastern suburbs. The member for Manly might need more education and a geography lesson—

Ms Anna Watson: Not yet; not yet.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL: Yes, not yet; not yet. I find it remarkable that Government members who have spoken on this petition—

Mr Alister Henskens: The petition does not name an area.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL: The member for Manly started his speech by talking about Parramatta.

Mr Michael Daley: Dee Why, Avalon, Parramatta—

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL: Everywhere but here. It gets to the heart of the fact that this petition refers to eastern suburbs bus services to which members of this Government did not refer, but spoke about every suburb in Sydney. It is no wonder the transport policy of the Minister for Transport and Roads is, "Don't catch public transport." Lo and behold, no-one is catching the light rail—it is dead empty. But people in the Eastern Suburbs love and want their buses, and they are packed every single day. Time and time again they use them. We know that by reducing and getting rid of these buses that capacity is reduced.

I refer to the EMM report that was commissioned by Randwick council. The only way that the Government's capacity measures will be reached at all is if they sardine people onto the light rail at crash capacity. We are in the middle of a pandemic: We should be spreading people out and not jamming people onto this dog piece of infrastructure, which the Minister also called it. Not one Government member talked in this Chamber about the implications of these bus services. They have spoken about every other suburb in Sydney. It is very clear. All we are saying is stay out of the eastern suburbs, do not touch our buses, do not take away the jobs. They love them and want to keep them. They do not want to catch the light rail. Just stay away.

Petition noted.

Private Members' Statements

RURAL AND REGIONAL ECONOMIES

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (16:30:43): The Nationals have created a permanent State economic depression across rural New South Wales for their own political benefit. That is the explosive claim by Friendlyjodies, who spent several days in Griffith and Narrandera filming documentaries on regional decline and National Party corruption. The Nationals, according to Jordan Shanks, is operating like an in-Parliament mafia. It blocks new investment. It funnels funds to its corporate mates. It gags the councils and makes them beg for funding. And it silences local media with defamation threats and by withholding advertising revenue. According to Jordie, the Nats are starving small towns of services and resources. As a result, all the young people leave and move to bigger cities. Only older people—dyed-in-the-wool Nationals voters—stay. So the towns rot away, while The Nationals win all the elections.

At first glance this seems a far-fetched conspiracy theory. But can anyone explain what is happening to small towns in my electorate? And why? Deniliquin, Finley, Hay, Hillston, Wentworth and Berrigan, were vibrant and thriving towns in the 1980s. Family farms growing a range of produce gave the Murrumbidgee and Murray its character and a sense of a community. Schools would be overflowing with students. On weekends an array of sports would fill all the ovals. High-profile AFL players would return to the town of their birth to finish their careers. A new business would spring up every week. On Friday night the town's main street would buzz with big groups of people going to the local clubs and other venues.

Growing up near Griffith we had a wonderful hospital that would treat all our needs. We had a 50-metre pool and a well-serviced lake hosting weekend water sports. The brand new Wade High School built in our region showed the then Government's commitment to our regions. While fantastic people remain in our towns, we have been neglected like you would not believe. Now main streets look deserted, full of decrepit buildings and big "for sale" signs. As water flows out of the town, so do services, jobs and opportunities. Big corporations fill the void created by departing family farmers.

Twenty years ago people in the Murrumbidgee actually lived longer than those in Sydney, on average. Now we die more than three years earlier on average, according to NSW Health data. So what is happening in these small towns? According to Friendlyjardies, The Nationals cartel has taken over and uses rural New South Wales to enrich its members. This week's documentary looked at the town of Narrandera, in the heart of The Nationals' Steph Cooke's electorate of Cootamundra. It told the saga of the Narrandera to Tocumwal rail line. In the middle of Australia's food bowl, this rail line has been out of use for the past 30 years. This has made life difficult for local farmers to transport their produce to Melbourne for export.

In the run-up to the by-election The Nationals in New South Wales announced plans for the Narrandera to Tocumwal rail line reactivation. It spent more than \$500,000 of taxpayers' money, our money, on a feasibility report. But after the election, the member for Cootamundra decided to keep this report secret. Nothing has been done to activate the rail line. Wes Hall, a well-respected Narrandera councillor—

Mr Adam Crouch: Point of order: The member knows full well that if she wants to attack another member of Parliament she can do so by substantive motion. Private members' statements are not allowed to be used to attack other members of Parliament.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. The member must speak about her own electorate and must not make reflections on other members except by way of substantive motion.

Mrs HELEN DALTON: The report was kept secret and the councillor was sacked from the committee. Worse still, he received a nasty letter from the mayor, who said that they wanted transparency and, without that, the National Party would withhold funding if word got out. Wes Hall no longer works for the council—a good man lost. This is just one example of how the Nats maintain control, help themselves and neglect their voters; there are dozens more. It is time we all stood up to the cartel and fought to revive rural New South Wales.

LISMORE ELECTORATE FLOOD PROTECTION AND MITIGATION

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (16:35:25): I continue to talk about floods and the Lismore electorate—more importantly, the things that we need to do to help with flood protection and mitigation. I begin by thanking the emergency services Minister. I asked him for a briefing, particularly on the *Independent Review of the NSW State Emergency Service Operational Response: Northern Rivers Floods March 2017*, authored by former NSW Deputy Police Commissioner Dave Owens. The review made 36 recommendations and I had asked for advice on where they were up to. Today the Minister's adviser, the commissioner and the deputy commissioner briefed me on that. I have been watching the issue closely. I am pleased to say that, of the 36 recommendations, some 34 have been implemented. Two have not been implemented yet but are afoot; one of them has to do with finding a suitable place for SES headquarters in Murwillumbah, in my electorate of Lismore. It is good to know that all of that is happening.

I also asked them for any observations they have on the *Lismore Citizens' Review of March 2017 Flood*. A group of well-known and well-respected citizens came together and did its own review, and has been engaging directly with the Government on that. There are a few things afoot. The 2017 flood was so catastrophic. The velocity of the water that hit both Lismore and Murwillumbah was unprecedented. Locally I know that councils would like to do more, but they need an increase in the resources available for the voluntary house/land purchase buyback scheme. I am told that only about \$2 million is available at State level to contribute to this program, which is done on a 50-50 split. Some councils say that is okay, but those with a very low rate base say that they just cannot contribute their portion in the same way. Certainly it needs some more resources, and that is one of the things that I have been following up. I also asked a question on notice in this place about the scheme. The answer was:

The department will consider whether there is a need to examine ways to improve the scheme to better meet council needs, including consideration of the current available funding pool.

I will continue to advocate on that, because we really do need more than that \$2 million. That buyback scheme is really useful. There are other things that we need to do. In some places we have levees—we have one in Lismore, and there are various ways levees are constructed if they are suitable and communities want them—but we would also like some natural flood mitigation measures. We would particularly like them in the Northern Rivers through the Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative, which I have spoken about in this place before. It is something that actually covers Lismore, Kyogle, Richmond Valley Council, Rous County Council, Tweed Shire Council—three councils in my electorate of Lismore—as well as Ballina Shire Council and Byron Shire Council

It brings together a holistic approach to the management of water within our catchments. It will use best practice approaches to catchment management modelling and natural flood mitigation. It targets improvements in stream bank condition and river health that contribute to reduced flood risk within the catchments. That initiative is costed at about \$150 million, and I know it would require at least \$3 million to actually scope out that properly.

That is another advocacy that I am pursuing to make sure that we get as much flood protection and mitigation as we can. There is also more to be done with the Natural Disaster Relief and Response Arrangements [NDRRA]. There are guidelines, and they are good guidelines, but sometimes they are not fully implemented. We need to implement them so that councils are not out of pocket upfront, and can do the work and get the money immediately.

FOOD SECURITY

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:40:35): Australia ranks close to the highest in the world for food security. With a population of around 25 million, we produce enough food to feed 60 million people and produce around 93 per cent of the food we consume. But the Black Summer bushfires and the pandemic exposed food vulnerabilities, and my constituents want action to guarantee security into the future. Food security means access to high-quality, affordable, nutritious food. Despite the abundance of food in this country, there is an allocation problem, with around 17 per cent of inner-city residents experiencing food insecurity. Many rely on OzHarvest, but donations of food have disappeared with the loss of corporate catered events due to COVID-19, and it now receives City of Sydney funding to purchase food. Councils feeding people is not a sustainable solution to food insecurity. Meanwhile, food destruction from oversupply has skyrocketed from disruptions to exports under COVID. This food could be redistributed if, for example, we invested in storage facilities close to food sources.

Climate change presents massive threats to food security, with more frequent and extreme weather events, including floods, prolonged droughts and rising temperatures. Last season's fires killed large amounts of livestock, and burnt through crops and orchards. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change identified the agriculture regions of the Murray-Darling Basin and south Western Australia as climate change hotspots. Food production across the nation is expected to fall by over 15 per cent from climate change alone. The impact will be felt globally, because many countries rely on Australia for crops like wheat, barley, oats and pulses. A plan to secure food supplies must include mitigating climate change, as well as innovating to adapt to the new climate.

Increased floods and wind events, overproduction, overgrazing and deforestation add to land degradation, which could impact significantly our ability to produce food in the future. Intensive water use and contamination from mining in food-producing regions diverts water from food production, causing clashes between farmers and mining companies. Sustainable and affordable alternative energy sources now mean priority can be given easily to agriculture over thermal coal and coal seam gas mining.

Urban encroachment into peri-urban regions reduces productive land. Sydney's food bowl provides 20 per cent of the city's food demand, but the Institute for Sustainable Futures estimates that could shrink to 6 per cent in just over 10 years as Sydney's population pushes residential development closer to agricultural land. Food production close to the city builds resilience. There are fewer food miles and less spoilage during transit, which is important for highly perishable items such as Asian greens. Transportation routes are less prone to disruption from flood or fire. Sydney is also less prone to drought than other agricultural regions in the State.

I welcome the new urban agricultural land set aside in the *Horsley Park Urban Farming Master Plan 2019*, but we need to invest in technologies that can bring food production into the city. Hydroponics, aquaponics and aeroponics need less land and can occur in urban contexts to produce highly nutritious food. The city can also attract a young workforce into agriculture and provide significant economic opportunities. Internationally, demand for biofuels has diverted food to fuel, increasing food costs. The situation locally must be monitored and must look at growth in other organic materials, such as plastic replacements. Australia's heavy reliance on fertilisers is a growing threat, with major sources of phosphorous dwindling and nitrogenous fertiliser production energy intensive and vulnerable to oil production and price volatility. Innovation will be needed to reduce our dependence on phosphorous and nitrogen fertilisers.

Declines in honey bee populations from the varroa mite and pesticide use are causing significant threats to global food production. Honey bees pollinate many crops, including crops grown in Australia, and we need to protect and expand populations, as well as other pollinators like native bees. Wild fish catches are in sharp decline for almost all species. Prawn catches in Australia have dropped to half. The lack of no-go sanctuary zones where species can regenerate must be addressed urgently. It is estimated that each person in Australia wastes \$239 worth of food every year. Food waste makes up 35 per cent of municipal waste and costs the economy billions. We need to get more efficient with food use. Sydney's food distribution relies heavily on Flemington markets, which is at capacity. We need to plan for new distribution options spread across the city. We cannot take our fragile food security for granted. I believe the Parliament needs to address these challenges through a comprehensive food production and supply inquiry.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (16:45:42): I commend the member for Sydney for his private member's statement. He raised a wide variety of issues and certain issues that are important not just to this

Chamber but to people right across the State. I take up his comment on peri-urban areas. As a councillor on The Hills Shire Council, I dealt with challenging planning issues around the encroachment of urban areas upon agricultural land. It was very important to ensure that agricultural industries continued to supply vegetables and fruit to the Sydney food bowl and that supply was not impeded by the encroachment of urban housing. The member for Sydney also mentioned vulnerable persons in our community. I commend the great work being done by organisations like Foodbank Australia in western Sydney, which, with the help of volunteers and corporate sponsorship, does a wonderful job.

CANTERBURY ELECTORATE PLANNING

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (16:46:51): I draw to the attention of the House current revelations at ICAC and how they relate to my electorate of Canterbury. On 12 October 2020 New South Wales was shocked to learn that the Premier had been in a relationship with the disgraced former member for Wagga Wagga, Daryl Maguire, which she was required under the ministerial code of conduct to have disclosed while discharging her duties. In July 2018 Mr Maguire was called to give evidence at an inquiry by the ICAC into the former Canterbury council. That inquiry, which was named Operation Dasha, is yet to be the subject of a final report. As I do not wish to prejudice the conclusions ICAC may reach about that matter, I will simply quote from a report by the ABC on 13 July 2018 regarding Mr Maguire's evidence. The report states:

Mr Maguire, the Liberal MP for Wagga Wagga, told the ICAC he pursued Mr Hawatt on behalf of Chinese "friends" from the company Country Garden who he was trying to help get established in Australia.

In a phone conversation played before the inquiry from May 2016 Mr Maguire said his friends were "mega big with mega money" and wanted to invest in as many as 30 development-approved properties.

Mr Adam Crouch: Point of order—

Ms Anna Watson: You can't take points of order during private members' statements.

Mr Adam Crouch: Yes, we can.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: This is about my electorate. This is about planning decisions that this scumbag and your Government allowed to happen in my electorate, okay?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order!

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: I have a right to talk on behalf of my community that has been screwed over by your Government because you blokes have stuffed up the planning. I am entitled and I am right to speak.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order!

Ms Anna Watson: Stop the clock, please.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: The member for Terrigal does not know how angry we are that we have nothing in our electorate. We do not have a hospital and that guy has been traipsing through the electorate.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Terrigal has taken a point of order. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. The member for Shellharbour will resume her seat.

Mr Adam Crouch: As I said earlier in relation to a different member, my point of order relates to Standing Order 73. If the member for Canterbury wishes to attack any member of Parliament in this House—

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: I am not attacking a member of Parliament. I am putting on record my dissatisfaction on behalf of my community.

Mr Adam Crouch: —it must be done by way of substantive motion.

Ms Anna Watson: Okay, Crouchy. You've made your point.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the point of order. The member for Terrigal has the call.

Mr Adam Crouch: As I said, my point of order relates to Standing Order 73. The member for Canterbury knows that if she wants to attack a member of Parliament or cast aspersions on them, she must do that by way of a substantive motion. Mr Assistant Speaker, I ask you to direct the member for Canterbury to confine her remarks to her electorate.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. I ask the member for Canterbury to refer to her electorate in her private member's statement.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: I am telling the story about my electorate being screwed over by this Government and how Daryl Maguire, whose electorate was 400 kilometres away from Canterbury, was interfering in the planning process in my electorate. Government members have done nothing—absolutely nothing.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I ask the member for Canterbury to confine her remarks to her electorate.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: As the State member for Canterbury, I was surprised to learn that Mr Maguire was involving himself in planning matters in my electorate—as has been stated on the public record. Mr Maguire never spoke about matters concerning Canterbury planning in this House or anywhere else. I am furious on behalf of the people of my community, who have had to live with disgraceful overdevelopment. We have absolutely no social infrastructure. Anyone who drives along Canterbury Road knows how disgraceful it is. There was a report in 2017 about how disgraceful the Canterbury Road corridor was. These matters have been ventilated at ICAC because of the Operation Dasha report. That is what I am ventilating here. I am absolutely furious that this former member had any involvement in my electorate and I did not know anything about it.

The reference to Mr Maguire being involved with developments along Canterbury Road is troubling to me and to my community. How dare he! Who did he speak to in Planning? Who did he speak to in Transport? Planning decisions by the New South Wales Government and the former Canterbury council have turned Canterbury Road into a nightmare. We have nothing. Since I was elected as the member for Canterbury, which was four years ago, I have been begging. Every single year I have been calling on the Government to help us. I asked the Government to at least support our community with a hospital. The State budget will be announced on 17 November and my electorate will get absolutely zero. This guy has been allowed to traipse through my electorate and its disgusting development that has absolutely no social infrastructure. A July 2017 review by the administrator of the Canterbury Bankstown council states:

[The] Canterbury Road Corridor is a noisy, polluted and harsh environment, generally unsuitable in its current state for housing.

Despite that, the local environmental plan was endorsed by the Liberal Government that allowed thousands of dwellings to be built along Canterbury Road when the development is not sustainable and not right. Some of those buildings have been built and, while they have generated profits for developers, they are demonstrably the result of poor planning on an inappropriate scale. I have exhausted the time allowed for my speech because the Government Whip wants to run a protection racket. But I will be back. *[Time expired.]*

Mr David Harris: Point of order—

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

Mr David Harris: My point of order relates to the previous point of order. Standing Order 73 refers to current members of Parliament, so it is incorrect to cite it when interrupting a member speaking about a former member of Parliament. Standing Order 73 relates to a current member of this House or the other place, but does not apply to people who have left the Parliament.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I thank the member for Wyong. Do not canvass my ruling again.

Mr David Harris: Can we get a written ruling?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I will send the member one in the post.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (16:52:59): There are so many victims of abuse in 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 an ex-intimate partner. Not surprisingly, 99 per cent of the time the abuse and the deaths involve coercive controlling behaviours, with these behaviours following an escalating controlling pattern of behaviour leading to physical abuse or the death of an intimate partner. The death of a victim of that type of abuse often leaves behind bewildered and devastated families and friends, who are left to suffer the consequences of the actions of an obsessed, controlling partner or ex-partner. This burden will remain with them for the rest of their lives.

One such family is the Reddy family, whose beloved daughter and sister, Preethi, was cruelly snatched from them on 3 March 2019 by an ex-intimate partner—a murder case that exhibited what can now be called the classic signs of coercive controlling behaviour. Nithya, Preethi's sister, told of her story to the *Illawarra Mercury*. I will recount some of her story and her journey going forward. She said:

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

Through their advocacy and financial support, Nithya and her family are supporting the Illawarra Women's Trauma Recovery Centre, which is the first of its kind in Australia and, actually, the first of its kind in the world. Nithya observed:

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

The centre is supported by Dr Karen Williams, a psychiatrist who works in the Illawarra. She said:

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

Nithya acknowledges that the majority of perpetrators are men and the majority of victims are women, but also acknowledges that men can be victims too. That is why we need intergenerational services to break the cycle: So that mothers and children who have been victims can receive help and so that girls and boys who have seen domestic violence at home do not 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.

Nithya believes that there is much misunderstanding around coercive control. It is a very dangerous form of domestic abuse, as it disables women. Her sister did not think that she was in danger. Nithya did not think that her sister was in danger. But the evidence around domestic violence shows that physical violence often is preceded by coercive control, which then escalates into physical violence. Nithya said she knew her sister's stance on violence and she did not believe Preethi's former boyfriend had been physically violent during their relationship, but she said he had shown signs of coercive control. That is the type of behaviour that the bill named in Preethi's honour aims to eradicate. Nithya believes that his first act of physical violence after he met up with Preethi on the night of her murder was his final act of control. The following is a poem written by Nithya:

Through the storms and shadows that abound,
Through the shrouds of darkness all around,
Lay well my precious free spirit and rest beyond it all.
Above that shrill of the bell,
The toll of our own empty hell,
Which shall evermore
Renew its endless core.
Because in a mortal sphere of sorrow,
Crowded in fear of a bleak amorrow,
Lurks a world which knows not of its own bloody plight,
Nor, despite in plain sight,
Of a treachery and a harrow.
Yet still here does your light
Forevermore lend its bright
To brave souls who fight the fight
At that foul gate of a same fate.
For these are they who long await,
Till hitherto, for abate.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (16:57:55): I commend the member for Shellharbour for her ongoing interest in helping to tackle the very difficult problem of domestic violence in our society. I note for the House that during his term the Attorney General has made a large number of changes within this sphere, including things such as body-worn camera evidence, which enables police to provide good-quality, on-the-spot evidence to the court to assist victims in achieving what they need and to assist the courts to make decisions. The Attorney General has also recently announced extensions to audiovisual links to enable witnesses and victims to give evidence away from the courtroom, which assists them to provide evidence in a safe environment; and changes to directions to juries that allow for no presumption to be taken from delays in reporting of domestic violence offences, which assists juries in coming to appropriate decisions.

WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (16:59:04): I stand here today in strong support of the New South Wales Government's commitment to increasing female representation on our local councils at the next local government elections on 4 September 2021. I am staggered to read the statistics that women represent only 31 per cent of all councillors across the great State of New South Wales. As the member for Goulburn, which covers five local government areas—one of which has no women at all on its current council—I take this opportunity to encourage more women to consider standing for their community at the next local government elections. The role of councillor is one I am very familiar with. In my personal experience, the most effective councils are those that best represent the diverse communities they serve. Councillors are elected to represent the needs of their communities and make crucial decisions about infrastructure, facilities and local services. I believe

that in order for a local council to reach optimal performance, those who are elected must be a diverse cross-section of their local region.

In most aspects of society, we are successfully closing the gap on gender equality; however, there is more to be done in local government. I was pleased that the New South Wales Government recently announced a campaign to encourage female representation, with the aid of 10 inspirational former and current councillors sharing their experiences through a series of informative workshops and programs for potential candidates. The workshops run through to November and will provide prospective candidates with the knowledge and tools required to stand for election. They include topics such as the role and functions of councillors, planning and executing campaigns, fundraising and using technology to reach voters. I note that, once elected, councillors will also benefit from induction training and an ongoing professional development program to ensure they have the skills necessary to complete their roles effectively. Whilst formal qualifications are not required, great communication skills, organisational and time management skills, the ability to work in a team and an eagerness to learn are key attributes of a successful councillor, regardless of gender.

The role of councillor can be a very rewarding one and involves working with residents and businesses to improve the lifestyle and amenity of the community. I look back at my own experiences and those of the community in which I served with great admiration and gratitude. In my role as mayor of Boorowa Council I was surrounded by many passionate community advocates, without whom I would not be here. Progress can be made only when we are surrounded by a team that shares our belief in what is possible, that has the courage to create a vision that is greater than the here and now, and that is willing to push beyond its size or stature to create new expectations in community leadership.

One of my proudest moments in community leadership was hosting more than 20 per cent of my community, with everyone giving over two hours of their time to tell us about their hopes for the future and what they saw as some of our opportunities and challenges as a community. I always knew our community was proud, but in that light bulb moment I watched a community put its trust in me and my fellow councillors—trust that we would listen, work with them to meet our challenges and rise to opportunities. I know quite a few local women who come to mind when I think of community-mindedness: women with great initiative who are hard workers, with a high level of personal drive. I stand here today to encourage them to consider standing for election to a councillor role to help make a real difference in their local community.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:02:40): I commend the member for Goulburn for her private member's statement encouraging women, in particular, to take up roles within local government. The member outlined quite succinctly the importance of local government within our community and the great role it plays in helping to govern—particularly on those issues that go right to the heart of the residents in those local government areas. On the issue of women in local government, I take the opportunity to acknowledge a number of women from The Hills Shire Council—particularly the current mayor, Dr Michelle Byrne, and previous deputy mayor Reena Jethi. I also recognise Robyn Preston, the member for Hawkesbury, who was an outstanding councillor on The Hills Shire Council.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (17:03:38): This month is NSW Small Business Month. This year small businesses in New South Wales have faced unprecedented challenges in a time of economic downturn due to our 100-year COVID pandemic. Throughout this time of struggle and support, some businesses have been able to thrive and drive our economy forward to recovery. The Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards recognise small businesses in the shire that deliver the fundamental principles of quality customer service. Those fundamentals involve the business's presentation, product value for money and overall customer service. I congratulate Bixie Colour, Caringbah, on winning the overall business of the year award and winning the hairdresser category in the 2020 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. Bixie Colour is a specialist hair colour salon with a team of colourists, stylists and cutters.

Mr Chris Minns: Did they give you a treatment?

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: It does not look like it. They are selected and trained by Sheree Knobel, colourist for Jen Hawkins, and one of Sydney and Australia's most respected colourists. I congratulate Groundbake Bakery, Cronulla, on winning the bakery/cake shop category in the 2020 local business awards. Groundbake specialises in naturally leavened sourdough, gluten-free bread, puff pastry pies, sausage rolls and scratch made sweets and cakes. They are no stranger to these awards, previously winning in 2017 and finalists in 2018 and 2019. I congratulate Port Hacking Cafe, Caringbah, on winning the cafe category in the 2020 local business awards. They offer a range of specialist coffees and teas alongside freshly cooked breakfasts, sandwiches and wraps to order, cakes and weekly chef specials. Port Hacking Cafe were also finalists in 2015 and 2016.

I congratulate Pharmacy 4 Less, Caringbah, on winning the pharmacy category in the 2020 local business awards for the second year in a row. They offer a wide range of services to the Caringbah community, such as vaccinations, blood pressure checks, asthma care and quit smoking programs. The 4YOU Club offers benefits to members such as further discounts and vouchers. This helps many young families and pensioners purchase their medication during a time of lower household consumption and difficult financial conditions. I congratulate Autocraze, Caringbah, on winning the automotive services category in the 2020 local business awards. Autocraze was founded in 2014, focusing and specialising in vehicle wheels and tyres. Autocraze also specialise and provide services for lift kits, bull bars and coil covers.

I congratulate Bliss Day Spa, Caringbah, on winning the beauty services category in the 2020 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. Bliss Day Spa specialises in a wide variety of facial and body treatments, as well as advanced treatments such as botox and fillers. Bliss Day Spa provides individualised treatments for its clientele—ranging from ages 10 to 90. Bliss Day Spa prides itself on a clean and hygienic work environment. This is certainly something that has been very important over the past months and is particularly crucial in the beauty industry. I congratulate Dance Works Studio, Caringbah, on winning the performing arts category in the 2020 local business awards. Dance Works Studio is an adult dance school for people aged 17 and over, offering lessons for all dancing levels—from beginner to advanced—in jazz, ballet, lyrical, Broadway, funk, tap, hip-hop, heels and showgirl.

I congratulate Hire a Bridesmaid, Caringbah South, on winning the specialised business category in the 2020 local business awards. Hire a Bridesmaid are engagement and wedding planners. Kerstyn Walsh started the business after seeing her friends stressed organising their weddings, leaving her "quietly outraged". Hire a Bridesmaid have developed a "wedding 101" online course to assist couples in planning their wedding, which can be a very overwhelming time. I congratulate all of the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards winners. Their ongoing perseverance through these challenging times provides employment to many, drives forward the economic recovery and provides key essential services to the greater community. I congratulate Ladies Running Errands, Caringbah, on winning the sole operator category in the 2020 local business awards. I congratulate all of the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards winners. Their ongoing perseverance through these challenging times provides employment to many, drives forward the economic recovery and provides key essential services across the Cronulla electorate and the broader Sutherland Shire.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:08:05): I acknowledge the member for Cronulla and his address concerning the business awards in his electorate. I note his comments concerning the local hairdresser and bakery, both of which he did not claim to attend recently—that only leaves us with the dance studio and Hire a Bridesmaid. In New South Wales there are 786,000 small businesses and they employ over 1.65 million people. They are the backbone of New South Wales. The whole New South Wales Parliament backs small business within our communities. We understand the important role they play in providing not only a great economy but also great employment for the citizens of this State.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (17:09:38): I move:

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

- (1) The interruption of any business before the House for the consideration of any messages from the Legislative Council regarding amendments to the Road Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2020.
- (2) The House to continue to sit after the conclusion of community recognition statements to consider any such messages.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (17:09:57): The practice of the House is that at this stage on a Thursday afternoon there is a bipartisan understanding that country members want to get away, that divisions will not be called and that the suspension of standing orders such as this will not proceed. I do not remember a time during my 15 years in this place where that convention of the House has been disturbed. I speak not only as someone with 15 years of experience—eight of which were as shadow Leader of the House—but also as someone who has sat on the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee and entertained many discussions where, on an immutable bipartisan basis, the convention of Thursday afternoons is not disturbed. Having said that, I have had a discussion with the Leader of the House and, on the understanding that the amendments to be returned from the other place are not controversial and it is more than likely there will not need to be a division, we will acquiesce to this motion but no others today in any circumstance.

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

Motion agreed to.

*Community Recognition Statements***INNER WEST YOUNG CREATIVES AWARDS**

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (17:12:03): Congratulations to Marrickville locals Lily Cameron, Kiet Phan, Zoe Hamra and Augustine Flett who have been recognised at this year's Young Creatives Awards. Hosted at the Marrickville Library by the Inner West Council, the Young Creatives Awards showcase emerging inner west artists and aspiring authors competing for a \$500 prize and an opportunity to share their work with the inner west community. Entries were inspired by a piece of literature found in the library's collection. Inner west writer Lily Cameron's thoughtful essay titled "Self Touch" was inspired by her mother. It was described by local writer and judge Nadia Wheatley as "clever, complex and challenging." Local artist Augustine Flett won for his work *Blue Print*, a spliced-together photograph of Marrickville Library. Congratulations to Kiet Phan and Zoe Hamra who won in their respective age categories with their fictional pieces titled "Pills" and "Vegemite". The inner west is brimming with fantastic young talent. Congratulations to all the winners, runners up and all those who took part.

RUSSELL O'GRADY

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:13:00): I acknowledge local constituent Russell O'Grady and his relentless dedication to service, despite certain adversity in his journey. Russell is a well-known Northmead resident who spent 32 years serving customers at McDonald's Northmead. Russell became one of the first individuals with Down syndrome to gain full-time employment within McDonald's New South Wales. Russell's work has helped remove some of the stigma surrounding individuals such as himself in employment, raising awareness for the differently abled within our communities. Recently, Russell appeared on *The Ray Hadley Morning Show* on 2GB to discuss his life. Since retiring nearly two years ago, Russell has been enjoying his time playing ten-pin bowling and being a diehard supporter of the Parramatta Eels. Many of us admire Russell and the example he has set for our community. I wish Russell all the best for the future and I hope that he thoroughly enjoys his retirement.

NOVA FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (17:14:04): I acknowledge the extraordinary work of Nova for Women and Children, which this month has expanded into the Lake Macquarie area. It has opened The Hub, a drop-in centre where women experiencing homelessness can make use of a safe space to have a shower and something to eat, receive support from dedicated workers and receive referrals to other services. Nova has exceeded all expectations for the 2019-20 financial year, helping a massive 1,454 women and children, many of whom were fleeing domestic and family violence. I thank chairperson Louise Rak, secretary Kate Davies, treasurer Rayleen Ableson, vice-chairperson Katy Mooney, board members Rozyta Englert, Janine Johnston and Marette Gale, CEO Kelly Hansen and the dedicated staff members for all the work they do. Nova does so much for the most vulnerable members of our community. Bravo.

QUEENSLIFF HEADLAND

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:15:05): I acknowledge the work of community members in my electorate of Manly who have campaigned for improved access to Queenscliff Headland from Manly Beach. After many years of campaigning and petitioning, the Northern Beaches Council will finally investigate and carry out concept design and preliminary work for an accessible ramp at Greycliffe Street and Bridge Road, Queenscliff. I particularly recognise Paul and Tracey Oates, who led the charge to replace the stairs—built in the nineteenth century—to better accommodate young families with prams, the elderly and those who are less mobile. The site is a pinch point on the council's 36-kilometre Manly to Palm Beach Coastal Walk project, and its implementation is vital to ensuring our community becomes more accessible for everyone.

JACK SCOTT FINAL

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (17:15:56): The Jack Scott Final was played on Saturday 17 October 2020—a rematch of the 2019 grand final between Randwick Rugby Magic and Sydney University Lionesses. It was a gritty battle. The game is very special to me, as Uni is my old club but Coogee is home to the mighty Wicks. A battle of these two great clubs always puts me in a precarious situation. Both teams came out firing in front of a passionate crowd. A tight arm wrestle in the first 10 minutes saw Randwick gain momentum and dominance; however, Uni were able to lead 15-13 at half-time. While Randwick maintained pressure the entire game, Uni took away the silverware, narrowly defeating Wicks 22-17 and cementing three back-to-back titles. While every player gave it their all, the player of the match was Lori Cramer. Well, you know what they say: Anyone but Uni.

GYMEA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (17:16:54): During Small Business Month I bring to the attention of the House the wonderful GyMEA Chamber of Commerce. Established in the 1950s, the GyMEA Chamber of Commerce comprises over 60 local businesses from the bustling GyMEA Village shopping strip. For over three decades, the chamber's annual GyMEA Village Fair has attracted more than 50,000 visitors across the day. It hosts nearly 200 stallholders, offering something for the entire family. Unfortunately, the 2020 GyMEA Village Fair, which would have been held this Sunday, will not be going ahead due to COVID-19. I very much look forward to seeing it back—bigger and better than ever—next year. I acknowledge the local business owners who govern the GyMEA Chamber of Commerce and conduct regular meetings for chamber members to discuss issues relating to community, business and the village environment. I recognise president and secretary Esna Lee, vice-president Rocky Pitarelli, treasurer Kirsty Fox and liaison and promotions officer Cathy Asimus. I extend my best wishes to all members of the GyMEA Chamber of Commerce.

MACQUARIE WOMEN'S BOWLING CLUB

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (17:17:49): Happy birthday to Macquarie Women's Bowling Club in Dubbo, which last week held a special event to commemorate its sixtieth anniversary. Unfortunately, Dubbo has seen a decline in the number of bowling clubs over the past few years; however, the Macquarie Club, and in particular the women, are still going strong. On the special day, 39 past and present members got together in a COVID-safe manner and had a wonderful morning reminiscing about the very proud history of the club. The occasion was celebrated with a great cake ceremony, with the cake made and decorated by club member Betty Cosier. Club president Ruth Shanks, AM, and longest playing current member Margaret McManus had the honour of cutting it. After the ceremony and lunch, the players hit the green for a wonderful afternoon of bowls. I congratulate the club and all of its members on the special occasion and wish them all the best going forward.

STEPHEN GRIMMER

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:18:40): I acknowledge the contributions of East Maitland RSL sub-Branch president Stephen Grimmer, who has led the chapter for three years and served as vice-president for two. Stephen is a serving squadron leader in the Royal Australian Air Force and began his military career 37 years ago as a radio apprentice, working his way through the ranks and earning his commission. Earlier this year State RSL Auxiliary Coordinator Pauline James, AM, asked for Stephen's help to encourage members to knit yellow poppies for the Invictus Games. He asked Pauline to send him the pattern because, as he put it, "Before I asked anyone else to do it, I thought I should try it myself." Stephen mastered the pattern and soldiered through, knitting a poppy a day. Stephen says his work for the RSL is a way to give back to the community, and his enormous contributions will be sorely missed when he accepts a posting to the United States at the end of the year. I thank Stephen for all he has given to the veterans community in Maitland. I wish him and Fiona every joy and success during their time abroad.

GUNNEDAH SHIRE COUNCIL

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (17:19:33): I congratulate the Gunnedah Shire Council on taking out the government category of the NSW Resilient Australia Awards this week. Over recent years, the Gunnedah community has been hit hard by drought. In response, the council has committed \$1 million towards initiatives to support the community, businesses, farmers and individuals to survive the drought's impact. I was pleased to support the council's successful application for a further \$1 million from the New South Wales Government towards the Community Resilience Program. I congratulate to Gunnedah Shire Council on its initiative to assist the local community through the devastating impact of drought, and on taking out the government category of the NSW Resilient Australia Awards.

PENRITH PANTHERS

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (17:20:14): The date was Sunday 22 September 1991. I was eight years old and that morning I made my first Holy Communion. It is also known as the date the Penrith Panthers won their first premiership against the Canberra Raiders, defeating them 19-12. Like any good Penrith family, my mum turned my first Holy Communion party into a street party to celebrate the Penrith Panthers' victory. The next Panthers premiership win was in 2003, and the one after that will be this Sunday 25 October against Melbourne Storm! The people in my electorate live for this. I note that Llandilo Public School held Panther Pride Day today. Go the mountain men! They are a good young side that has come through junior league. We are all cheering on the Panthers for a great victory on Sunday.

HOCKEY COFFS COAST

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:21:15): Representative honours keep flowing for Hockey Coffs Coast players. Ella-Ruth Beynon-Whitelaw is the latest in a long line of talented juniors to be selected in New South Wales squads. Her achievement follows a stellar season with Beaches Hockey Club, where she is a goalkeeper in the women's first grade team. Ella has worked hard on her game during the Centre of Development program and has been rewarded with selection in the New South Wales under-15s squad. Others are also doing the Coffs Coast proud. They include Breah Fischer, Joshua Perry, Hayley Fischer and Ambrose Page, who have all been included in Hockey NSW's Athlete Acceleration Program, which is part of the selection pathway into the under-18s New South Wales State teams. Hockey Coffs Coast president Joel Matthews said, "It is always a great thrill for our athletes to be selected into representative programs. It is the culmination of a lot of hard work and practise." I congratulate all involved at Hockey Coffs Coast, which is gearing up for its grand finals on 31 October.

CESSNOCK GOANNAS

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:22:09): The mighty Cessnock Goannas won the grand final of the real NRL—the Newcastle Rugby League competition—over the weekend. I am very proud that they beat South Newcastle 20-6. All credit to the South Newcastle team, which put up a mighty fight and played it hard to the end. I particularly acknowledge the fact that the last time the Cessnock Goannas won a title was in 2003. Since then, the Goannas have lost six grand finals, five of which were under the guidance of current coach Todd Edwards. He is a fellow I grew up with. Toddy is a great bloke and, after seeing him heartbroken on five previous occasions as coach, it was fantastic to see him take home the trophy on the weekend. I say well done to captain Reed Hugo and a team chock full of local lads. I wish them good luck next year.

HORNSBY KU-RING-GAI HOSPITAL

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (17:23:10): I recently toured the new paediatrics department at the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital with the member for Hornsby. As part of the \$265-million stage two redevelopment, paediatrics is the second department to open in the six-storey clinical services building. The new facility will help the staff to deliver excellent treatment for sick and vulnerable children, while providing comfort for their families. During my visit I spoke with paediatric consultant Dr Joshua Steadson and clinical nurse specialist Donna Lowe, who expressed their appreciation for the improvements made by the New South Wales Government to the hospital and discussed their concerns about the health issues facing our young people. Outpatients, pharmacy and the intensive care unit are the next departments scheduled to move into the new building later in the year. I am proud to be part of a government that has made a record investment in hospitals and medical services throughout the State to ensure our health professionals have the best resources to treat our citizens.

WOODENBONG, TENTERFIELD AND KYOGLE SHOWGROUNDS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (17:24:19): I congratulate Woodenbong, Tenterfield and Kyogle showgrounds on their combined receipt of \$332,308 announced today under phase two of the Government's Showgrounds Stimulus Funding Program. The big winners will be the local communities of Woodenbong, Tenterfield and Kyogle, who can now improve their showground facilities, generating work for local tradies and suppliers—something that is particularly important during the COVID-19 pandemic. I note Lynne Parker, Bruce Petrie and Kevin Donaghy from Woodenbong, Tenterfield and Kyogle respectively. Showgrounds are central meeting places for local communities, and they host events that showcase our best and brightest talents, as well as local goods and wares. The showground managers have been sweating on the funding announcement, so I know that they will be absolutely delighted by today's news.

RUBY MARGAN 100TH BIRTHDAY

GWEN TEULAN 100TH BIRTHDAY

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (17:25:17): Earlier this month I had a video call with two wonderful ladies at Georges Manor who had both turned 100. One of them, Ruby Margan, was one of six children and lived in Marrickville before moving to Revesby, where she has spent most of her life. Ruby is a mother to four children—Dennis, Allan, Christine and Shane—a grandmother to nine and great-grandmother to four. While living at Revesby, Ruby was well known for the care and attention she gave to her garden, which resulted in her being awarded second place in a Bankstown council garden competition. The other centenarian, Gwen Teulan, was born Gwendoline Lucy Laverack on 4 October 1920 in Walmer Private Hospital in Marrickville. She was the second child of Cecil Bolton and Mary Josephine Laverack, who were married in September 1915. Gwen married Lawrence Stephen Teulan in 1947, and in 1948 their son, John Joseph, was born, followed by their daughter, Jennifer Ann, two years later. It was delightful talking to these ladies on their very special day. I wish both Ruby and Gwen a happy 100th birthday.

CENTRAL COAST POLICING

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (17:26:20): I thank officers from the Tuggerah Lakes Police District and the Brisbane Water Police District for their exemplary efforts in protecting The Entrance community during an armed confrontation with a man yesterday morning. All officers demonstrated a high degree of professionalism and maintained the appropriate level of integrity in the discharge of their duty. All officers under the command of Superintendent John Gralton and Superintendent Tony Joice do a fantastic job keeping our community safe. The Central Coast recently received a number of new recruits who are training as probationary constables to complete their Associate Degrees in Policing Practice, and two have already been allocated to vacant positions. Let us hope that more are permanently stationed on the Central Coast. As I always say, our local police do a fantastic job and we need more of them in the region.

RECLAIM THE NIGHT SYDNEY

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (17:27:16): For 42 years Reclaim the Night Sydney has fought against gendered violence and sexual assault. The first march in 1978 was inspired by women's marches against sexual violence in Europe and the UK. Reclaim activists continue their call for women to be safe on our city's streets and in their homes, as well as in the workplace and on university campuses. Due to the pandemic, this year activists will virtually reclaim the streets, with the march being live streamed on Facebook. In order to adhere to COVID-19 restrictions, only 20 feminists will be marching. One in 10 Australian women in a relationship have reported incidents of domestic violence during the pandemic, with two-thirds saying that the violence started or became worse during the lockdown. It shows how necessary grassroots organisations like Reclaim the Night are in raising awareness of the ongoing epidemic of violence against women. I thank this year's organisers—April, Chloe, Lucy and May—and I stand with the feminists in my electorate who continue the fight to end gendered violence.

NON-RESIDENT NEPALESE ASSOCIATION

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:28:14): There are over 280 people of Nepalese ancestry in the Holsworthy electorate, and more than 600 in the Liverpool City local government area. I recognise the Non-Resident Nepalese Association [NRNA] for the work that it does to promote Nepalese culture, language and food, and for the support it provides to people of Nepali origin across Australia. It acts as a conduit to bring those of Nepalese ancestry together to help foster strong community connections. I particularly congratulate and thank local Holsworthy resident Mr Deb Bahadur "Dave" Gurung for the work that he has done as the association's New South Wales vice-president to help promote and grow the NRNA and connect more Nepalese Australians. I look forward to the NRNA building into the future and I thank it for creating connections for the many Nepalese residents in my electorate, as well as those across New South Wales and the rest of the country.

RANDWICK JUNIOR CRICKET CLUB

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (17:29:10): I am a cricket tragic, so it was an honour for me to face the first ball against Milia as part of the Randwick Junior Cricket Club's Master Blasters program to help spread awareness of the opportunities for kids who are keen to play cricket. The program is inclusive and promotes an active way of life. It has come on in leaps and bounds over the past couple of seasons. After originally starting with around 10 girls, its numbers have since grown. New South Wales is leading the charge for female registrations, making up more than a third nationally. I am incredibly proud of my local cricket clubs and the work they are doing to ensure an inclusive environment that encourages young women to give cricket a go. Cricket has always been a great sport. But as we face a summer of social distancing, there is no better COVID-safe, inclusive and fun sport to play than cricket. I say to all the kids thinking of giving cricket a go this summer: Have a crack. I promise they will have a blast.

DELUNGRA MEMORIAL BOWLING AND RECREATION CLUB

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (17:30:10): I recognise the mighty efforts of the Delungra community in raising more than \$10,000 through the Delungra Memorial Bowling and Recreation Club to support a young mum undergoing treatment for leukaemia. The team at the bowling club stepped up to collect donations and this quickly grew into a number of fundraising events, including a charity auction and hair shaving. Club president Gail Pennington initially set a goal of \$1,000, but the community's energy and drive quickly saw that figure surpassed. I congratulate the community on getting behind this effort and handing over a cheque of \$10,280 to the young mum that will allow her and her family to focus on her recovery.

GOROKAN HIGH SCHOOL

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (17:30:53): Gorokan High School recently decided to go pink to raise funds for the Love Your Sister cancer-vanquishing charity on 28 August. Staff and students dressed entirely in

pink, wearing accessories such as hats, wigs, glasses, face masks, bow ties and tutus. Pink Day at Gorokan High School started 13 years ago, when the mothers of three students in the same year group were diagnosed with breast cancer. Today it is a special tradition and a part of the school's culture. The day's activities were limited due to COVID restrictions, but students and staff still competed for best dressed and best-decorated classroom, and took part in a charity raffle. They raised \$1,486, which is a fantastic result considering that Pink Day did not proceed with its usual full-day activities. The charity proudly passes on 100 per cent of every donation to scientific research, no matter the diagnosis. I express my gratitude to staff and students for their generous support to help raise funds every year to fight cancer on Pink Day.

WENDY ESCOTT

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (17:31:54): I congratulate Wendy Escott on her nomination for the 2020 Westfield Local Hero awards. She is the amazing woman behind Studio ARTES in Hornsby. With six eager volunteers and a double garage, she started an organisation that has given adults living with a disability the chance to develop their artistic talents. Fast-forward 20 years, and Studio ARTES has three sites, 260 members and employs 100 staff. I have many of their artworks hanging in my office, including an amazing portrait of me painted by Daniel Kim—and let me tell you, it is very hard to make me look decent! It has been a tough year for Studio ARTES due to COVID, but it has switched many of its classes online using Zoom. I was thrilled to drop in one day to see participants working on their video editing skills. Studio ARTES hosts classes five days a week, featuring everything from dancing to budgeting to shopping. It even runs a radio program out of a purpose-built studio. It is an amazing organisation and I am so proud to have it in my electorate. Wendy is certainly one of Hornsby's local heroes, and I thank her for the drive and determination that has seen Studio ARTES succeed.

DOWN THE TRACK YOUTH PROGRAM

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (17:32:57): I acknowledge the amazing work that the Down the Track team at Lake Cargelligo has done in reaching, supporting and truly caring about at-risk children and youth. The program has 32 participants, aged between 10 and 20 years of age. I commend the staff and coordinators for the results thus far in assisting these young people and making sure that they do not fall through the cracks of society. The organisation runs several programs for both boys and girls that teach them the life skills they need to succeed, providing mentoring they would otherwise not receive. This allows them to go forward in life being proud of who they are and confident of what they can achieve. This quality service also offers social, emotional, physical and academic support to help participants move forward to a positive future. I look forward to supporting the team in any capacity I can and I encourage them to keep up their vital work.

TRIBUTE TO ED CAMERON

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (17:33:46): I pay tribute to Ed Cameron, who sadly passed away on 25 September 2020 following a battle with lung cancer. Ed was the longest-serving captain of the Yarramundi Rural Fire Brigade, having been appointed in 2003. He joined the NSW RFS at Regentville in 1991 before moving on to Yarramundi in 1995. He was a worthy recipient of the National Medal as part of the New South Wales Premier's Bushfire Emergency Citation. Ed was also honoured with lifetime membership of the Yarramundi Rural Fire Brigade in 2019, and a fire pit was built at the station in his honour. His passing is a big loss to our community, which will always be grateful for his brave service. He always did everything in his power to assist others and taught his firefighting mates his skills and knowledge. My thoughts and prayers are with Ed's wife, children and friends.

WENTWORTHVILLE UNITING FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:34:38): I acknowledge Wentworthville Uniting Football Club. Former Matilda Tracey Wheeler grew up playing at the club before being a member of the national squad from 1994-2000 and a member of the 2000 Sydney Olympic team. The club is a great local sporting organisation for the Cumberland and Parramatta area. The club was established in 1965, comprising the Methodist churches of Old Toongabbie, Toongabbie East, Pendle Hill, Seven Hills and Wentworthville along with the Church of Christ Home for Boys at Pendle Hill.

The club began with one junior team in the New South Wales Protestant Churches Soccer Association and played on the field at the Church of Christ Home for Boys. Years later the club had many teams and needed more space. The club used Jones Park at Mays Hill and the grounds at Girraween High School and Marsden Hospital. In 1992 the former Holroyd Council made Freame Park available to Wentworthville Uniting Church Soccer Club as its official home ground. The club is now part of the Granville and District Soccer Football Association. I congratulate the club on a great season.

PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:35:37): I make this community recognition statement on behalf of the entire State. Many excellent departments and staff work in Parliament with and for members of Parliament and in their electorate offices, but I recognise one in particular: the Parliamentary Library. Each and every one of its staff is amazing to deal with. Whether the request is for newspaper articles, footage or research, the staff are efficient, helpful, accurate and just downright incredible. I have privately thanked the library staff regularly over the years but have always been a little cautious about thanking them publicly. My big fear is that they might be recognised for an efficiency dividend and that would be a great tragedy. I salute each member of the library staff and all of the excellent and wonderful talented staff right across the New South Wales Parliament.

CHARLIE AND ANTHONY BARTLEY

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (17:36:28): I congratulate Dubbo brothers Charlie and Anthony Bartley, who will put the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic behind them when they perform as part of the *Magic Mike Live* production in Sydney this December. Some people may remember Charlie from his appearance on *So You Think You Can Dance* in 2009 when, as a 19-year-old, he took the leap of faith into reality TV. He wowed the country as he finished as runner-up in the second series of the program. He has always been an inspiration to his younger brother. The brothers are talented dancers in their own right who have forged their own careers in a high-energy and very competitive industry. During the lockdown they returned to Dubbo for a period, but they are now back in Sydney teaching at dance studios. I know they are very excited to be working with Magic Mike—Channing Tatum—on the live show that spawned from the success of the movie franchise. I also know how dedicated Anthony and Charlie are to their craft, and I wish them all the very best when *Magic Mike Live* hits the stage for the first time on 17 December.

WORLDPRIDE 2023

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (17:37:31): I acknowledge the one-year anniversary of Sydney's successful bid for WorldPride, which will be held in 2023. During the week I was glad to join the member for Newtown and former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull at celebrations at Universal. It was wonderful that we were all able to go to a gay bar on Oxford Street to celebrate this great win. Today CEO of WorldPride Kate Wicket was able to brief the Parliamentary Friends of the LGBTIQ Community, who all look forward to working with the organisers towards that celebration in 2023 and, hopefully, hosting an event in this Parliament.

EASTERN SUBURBS FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION WOMEN'S COMPETITION

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (17:38:10): I have the privilege of being the patron of the Eastern Suburbs Football Association women's competition, a role I take seriously as I seek to encourage women of all ages to play sport, exercise and look after their health and welfare. On Sunday we saw the grand finals across all grades kick off at Heffron Park. The all-age women's division one final was played out between Coogee United Football Club [FC] and Waverley Old Boys. While I am a former Waverley Old Boys defensive player I promise I took no side during this heated match. The final was a wonderful display of athleticism, passion and talent. While both teams gave it their all, Coogee United FC walked away with the silverware, with a score of 1-0. However, it would be remiss of me if I did not also congratulate my old club, Waverley Old Boys, as the men's All Age 3s and All Age 7s both won their respective finals. I congratulate them on a good job.

BRYCE WOODS

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (17:39:04): I recognise Inverell's Bryce Woods for his recent achievement in being named as the Northern Inland Football's Community Coach of the Year for this season. Bryce has been a tireless volunteer for the Inverell Football Club over a number of years, not only undertaking the coaching role for teams but also grounds keeping and coordinating the volunteers for set-up and pack-up on game days. I congratulate Bryce on his award and commend him and all the other volunteers across the Northern Tablelands for their help in making sport happen each weekend. Without the volunteer army there would simply be no sport and in Bryce's case no football in Inverell.

MITCHELL GIBBS

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (17:39:47): I congratulate Deputy Captain Mitchell Gibbs on receiving the NSW Government Community Service Award. The award recognises individuals in New South Wales who give their valuable time, service, skills and energy to the community. Mitchell is an experienced firefighter with 16 years experience. He is currently an officer at Berkeley Vale Rural Fire Brigade and a coordinator of the Central Coast Remote Area Firefighting Team. During the 2019-20 fire season Mitchell assisted with a number of out-of-area firefighting deployments across the State as well as providing extensive support locally to the Central

Coast S44 fires and incident calls generally with Berkeley Vale brigade. Mitchell provides extensive assistance to training at a district and State level, particularly in the specialty areas of working in remote areas and safe work on roofs. He has also undertaken training as one of the NSW RFS Down the Wire rescue crewmen, assisting with search and rescue operations for fires and floods. I congratulate all the nominees and winners, particularly those volunteers from the Wyong electorate serving our community.

TAREN POINT BOWLING CLUB

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (17:40:48): I acknowledge the wonderful Taren Point Bowling Club. Whilst COVID-19 has presented numerous challenges for community organisations, Taren Point Bowling Club showcased its strength at a difficult time by utilising the lockdown period to undertake internal and external improvements. Once back on the greens the bowls committees worked hard to ensure that all championships were completed and to provide additional opportunities for members such as Night Pairs, Twilight Bowls and the inaugural Youth Championships.

I commend those members of our community who work hard to support Taren Point Bowling Club, including bowls and partnership manager, Chris Green; general manager, Tim Wolfe; chairman, John Canute; deputy chairman, Paul Sullivan; treasurer, Lyle Keats; and directors, Colin Walker, Ross Bull, David Scott, Ruth Costanzo, Mick Hamson and Mark Willey. From the open bowls committee I recognise Garry Williams, Harold Thomsett and Richard Nixon. From the women's bowls committee I recognise Christine King, Carolyn Wynen, Narelle Mullen, Marion Taylor and Barbara Holden. I extend my best wishes to all at Taren Point Bowling Club.

CHIPPING NORTON CHARGERS FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:41:46): I congratulate members of the under 13 boys Chipping Norton Chargers football team for winning their grand final on 10 October 2020. The team won with a 3-2 victory and it was an impressive effort from the boys. I commend Chipping Norton Chargers Football Club for being a longstanding and active part of the local sporting community. The club was established in 1982 and has continued to cater for around 500 young players of all ages and abilities across the electorate per season. The club has had a long history of success amongst teams at all levels, both locally and across New South Wales. Once again I congratulate members of the under 13 Chipping Norton Chargers football team on winning their grand final this season and wish them the best of luck for next season.

GALSTON COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (17:42:31): I acknowledge the amazing people involved with the Galston branch of the Country Women's Association [CWA]. Having had to suspend meetings due to the current restrictions, the group's members are still trying to reach out to community members who may need a helping hand. They understand many are now looking for jobs, so they are offering the community a resume template as well as complementary editing and resume preparation. They will even print it for anyone who does not have access to a printer. They have also joined forces with the Hills District CWA and have been selling re-usable and washable face masks for adults and children for just \$5, along with sharing their favourite CWA recipes for people to try at home. During CWA Awareness Week in September the group's members highlighted the issues surrounding domestic violence in the hope that they will see more people get help. I thank the members of the Galston branch for their amazing work. Despite the challenges of not being able to get out in the community they are still doing their bit to help those doing it tough at this time.

DAPTO PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Dapto Public School on their annual open day and art gallery. I particularly enjoyed the novel (And COVID safe) way the school included parents and friends in their open day and their art gallery, by displaying their art on the outside of the school fence for all to see. You could simply stroll down the footpath and enjoy the display at your leisure. Congratulations on the theme of the display, Mona Lisa reimagined, with your students being able to interpret their own version of the Mona Lisa. Congratulations to your art teacher Mr. Hedger for the idea, it was something different for the Kids and the community. I'm sure the display brought joy to students and parents alike. I join with the School Principal Mr. Friedrich in saying that we hope the gallery brought a little positivity to our part of the world given it hasn't been too positive lately, I'm sure it has. Congratulations to all our budding artists and teachers at Dapto Public for their innovation in bringing their art front and centre for all to see.

OAK FLATS FALCONS

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Oak Flats Falcons for their Great win against Thirroul 3-0 In the District League – First Grade Championship on Saturday

3rd of October, at Thomas Gibson Park. The Falcons took out the 2020 District League First Grade championship with an impressive 3-0 victory over Thirroul. This being the Falcons second League championship win since the club began some 45 years ago, the Falcons have endured a 42 year "drought", as the last time they won was in 1978, a very long wait, but worth it I'm sure. Congratulations to all the players, coaches, officials, and fans, it's a great achievement for the club and the district. A special mention needs to go to Mark Vinton, Mark continues to play for Oak Flats in the Masters team and has reached an unbelievable 38 years playing and coaching with the Falcons, congratulations Mark. Here's wishing the Oak Flats Falcons Football Club ongoing success.

VOLUNTEERS FOR PALLIATIVE CARE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—I thank the outgoing members of the Maitland Volunteers for Palliative Care board Kerrie Mackay, Kate McLaughlin and Pam Thrift for their stewardship during one of the most challenging times in our history. Maitland Volunteers for Palliative Care have served our community for 30 years, offering compassionate support to people living with a terminal illness. In normal circumstances volunteers provide hospital or home-based patient and carer support, administrative support, or assistance with fundraising – all of which enhance the care provided by professional healthcare staff. For much of this year, volunteers have been unable to perform their face-to-face work in the community. Their fundraising activities have been severely curtailed, and even training and networking opportunities have been affected by COVID-19 public health orders. I welcome 2020-21 board members Lynette Clark, Tracy Grant, Sophie Abela, Wendy Kennedy, Jannifer Reynolds and Belinda Campbell, and salute their commitment in stepping into their roles during this time of great uncertainty. Thank you for being part of an organisation that helps people and their loved ones through their time of greatest need.

CONGRATULATIONS TO SRH MILK HAULAGE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—Whether it's hauling harvesting equipment, transporting livestock, carting grain or moving refrigerated fresh produce, trucking is essential to the agricultural industry. Today I congratulate Regina and Scott Harvey, and their daughter Blair, whose family business SRH Milk Haulage has won a national award for safety and innovation. A quarter of a century ago the Blairs started their business with one milk tanker. Today they have 63 trucks and 100 tankers, and they operate in NSW, Western Australia and Victoria. The business moves three million litres of milk a day. The Harveys want every one of their drivers to come home from work safely, and to do the right thing for employees and customers alike. They have introduced new vehicles with special seats that help detect fatigue, and this was significant in the business receiving the TruckSafe John Kelly Memorial Award in the Australian Trucking Association's 2020 National Trucking Awards. Congratulations Scott and Regina for leading SRH Milk Haulage through a quarter of a century of business, including drought, flood and now pandemic, to win this most prestigious transport award.

SAFETY ON SPOKES

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today, I recognise the launch of the Bicycle NSW Safety on Spokes campaign which I had the pleasure to attend this morning here in Parliament. Everyone deserves to travel safely on our roads and Bicycle NSW are incredible advocates for safe cycling in NSW. The Balmain Electorate is home to countless keen cyclists who use local roads to get around our city as a clean and healthy active transport alternative to motor vehicles. I praise the ongoing efforts of Bicycle NSW to protect cyclists and make our roads a safer place for everyone. From reporting NSW 'Bike Fails' to making submissions on major road projects, Bicycle NSW is a true example of a caring, community centric organisation that puts safety first. I would like to thank the whole team at Bicycle NSW: Alistair Ferguson, Loretta Fong, Bastien Wallace, Kim Lavender, Kirra Zhigunov, Angie Macken and recently retired Ray Rice. I know I speak on behalf of everyone in our community when I say thank you for making our community a safer place.

LIZ LAWRENCE

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Speaker, in an age when media outlets quickly appear and disappear, one colossal figure has endured for more than half a century. Today it's my pleasure to recognise Narrandera's Liz Lawrence, who has been a journalist and editor for the Narrandera Argus newspaper for an incredible 54 years. Liz started her cadetship for the paper in 1966, writing her first stories on a Remington typewriter in a male-dominated newsroom. Over the years, Liz has consistently given her region a voice and held government to account – covering everything from council to courts to charity drives. While regional media shrinks, the Argus continues to grow. Recently, the paper has expanded to cover Lockhart, Coolamon and Coleambally – restoring a sense of community in towns that had lost their information source. During Covid-19 lockdowns, the Narrandera Argus was one of the few country papers to keep publishing, as Liz did stories from home. This shows her dedication to her town and her ability to adapt to change. Well done Liz, for surviving and thriving in a tough, volatile industry.

VIGOUR PILATES

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—During Small Business Month, I acknowledge Vigour Pilates for winning a Sutherland Shire Local Business Award in the Health Improvement Services category. Founded in 2011, Vigour Pilates was established by Bernadette Milross with the goal of educating and offering a personal pilates experience. Bernadette and her team aid all members of our community, from training the elderly to improve balance and strength, to coaching athletes to improve performances, and supporting the injured to rehabilitate and strengthen. I recognise Bernadette and Vigour Pilates instructors Lana Worthington, Courtney Hall and Jaclyn Griffin for continuously supporting clients through their journey and discovery of new ways to move with fluidity and ease. I congratulate Vigour Pilates for this well-deserved win and extend my best wishes for the future.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE BUSINESS CHAMBER

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—This Small Business Month I acknowledge the Sutherland Shire Business Chamber for its growing presence in our community. Since its commencement in 2017, the award winning, dynamic and constantly expanding group has seen its membership double. Today, the Chamber's reach includes around 1,000 local businesses. Despite the challenges of 2020, particularly for small business, the Chamber has continued to provide a platform for members to grow their businesses and help them succeed. This includes the facilitation of virtual networking events, enabling members to learn and seek advice from business leaders and each other. I acknowledge the Board of Directors who volunteer their time to contribute to the success of the Chamber and its members. I recognise President David Querzoli and Vice President Hima Gupta, Secretary Frank Farrugia, Treasurer Kirsty Fox, Jeanne Zweck-Mint, Joel Curtis and Paul Sheaffe. I commend the Sutherland Shire Business Chamber for its ongoing commitment to supporting local businesses.

ROTARY INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN'S AWARDS 2020

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—I would like to recognise the announcement of Christine Cleary as a finalist for the 2020 Rotary Inspirational Women's Awards. Christine has been nominated in the Health Category. She is a member of the Baulkham Hills Rotary Club which assists within the Seven Hills Electorate. The Rotary Inspirational Women's Awards short list was announced by the organisation's patron and Governor of New South Wales, the Hon Margaret Beazley AC QC and the New South Wales Minister for Mental Health, Women and Regional Youth, the Hon Bronnie Taylor MLC on Wednesday, 14 October. Rotary has said that this year's Inspirational Women's Awards has received the most amount of nominations on record since its inception. This is terrific news as it means more women are being noted by their communities for their charitable works. I wish Christine all the best for winning the award and I extend my well wishes to all those who nominated for the Rotary Inspirational Women's Awards 2020.

NORTH WEST SYDNEY CENTRE FOR VOLUNTEERING AWARDS 2020

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge North West Sydney award recipients of The Centre for Volunteering's 2020 Volunteer Awards and their involvements in the Seven Hills Electorate. I congratulate North West Young Volunteer of the Year Harrison Bayssari. He is 18 and has is the youngest ever CEO at the Parramatta District Rugby League Referees Association where he manages 70 referees who adjudicate 180 local games each week in the playing season. North West's Senior Volunteer of the Year is Elaine Todd of Baulkham Hills. She has aided in more than 25 roles at the Royal Rehab at Ryde over the past 5 years. Elaine has a close, on-going connection with Royal Rehab with family members having worked there over the years. Well done to the North West Volunteer of the Year Linda Strickland. She established Hawkesbury's Helping Hands which assists local homeless persons. Currently, her program feeds 2,500 persons per week. Our volunteers are incredibly valuable to the community and I thank the individuals and organisations who won awards this year for their efforts and community involvement.

YPS TRYATHON FITNESS CHALLENGE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I rise to announce that the 2020 YPS TRYathon fitness challenge event to tackle homelessness has kick started as of Monday this week and will run for three months with the ambition of raising awareness and funds to support our youth living on the streets. YP Space Coordinator Debra Tougher and Caseworker Alicia Gordon are calling on the community to make a stand against homelessness in our region by participating in either a 300 kilometre cycle, 63 kilometre walk or a 15 kilometre swim, with all funds raised going directly into identifying suitable accommodation solutions for our rough sleepers. As youth advocates, Debra and Alicia know only too well the hardships our homeless young people face each and every day in the Port Macquarie-Hastings in coping with a wide range of factors including anxiety and depression, isolation, education, unsafe environments and health related issues. It is therefore Debra and Alicia's hope that the community will dig deep and sponsor this terrific event, which aims to raise \$15,000 via their GoFundMe page.

I applaud Debra and Alicia for shining a spotlight on youth homelessness in our region because like them I passionately believe every child deserves a safe place to call home.

MERRYLANDS SOCCER FOOTBALL CLUB (SFC)

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—Merrylands Soccer Football Club (SFC) was established in 1972 by founding member Mr Joe Grubba. The Club President Mr Darren Ney and the committee members all volunteer their time to ensure its success. Merrylands SFC work tirelessly to provide an environment where fun, fitness and family co-exist. The Under 14 division 1, the girls won the Grand Finals this year with a score of 7-0! This was made possible with their team coach Ronnie and team manager Siran who volunteer their time to facilitate weekly training sessions and weekend competitions. Team players include Georgia, Rebecca, Abuk, Anger, Jemma, Hadia, Hannah, Angelina, Erica, Veronica, Tayla, Samiha, Elissa, Jasynta and Samira. On the day of Grand finals Samira received Most Valuable player, scoring 3 out of the 7 total goals. Soccer has provided the girls with teamwork, commitment, confidence, persistence and hard work, but most of all a fun environment facilitating fitness and a sense of family. Well done Merrylands Soccer Football Club on your hard work and commitment to providing a platform for these young teens to grow their passion in fitness and soccer.

CIVIC DISABILITY SERVICES

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—I congratulate Civic Disability Services on its efforts to keep supported employees in work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since May, Civic has been delivering freshly cooked meals to the Sutherland Shire Council chambers for councillors and staff before meetings of the full council or committees. These meals range from fish and chips to slow-cooked lamb shanks. Civic Kitchen and Catering provide supported employment to people with disabilities who've struggled to enter mainstream employment, allowing these people to develop their skills such as customer service and food preparation for future employment. Michael Stanton, who was worked with Civic for two years, is one employee who has benefitted from the Civic supported employment program. Civic, like many other businesses, felt the impacts of COVID-19 when Civic cafes were forced to close and operate as takeaway only.

SUPERINTENDENT PETER GLYNN

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer)—I am thankful for the tireless dedication of our local police service. I recently had the opportunity to catch up with the new superintendent for the Ryde Local Area Command (LAC), Superintendent Peter Glynn. Superintendent Glynn brings 24 years of experience to the job having previously served in the North Shore and Eastern Suburbs. The Ryde LAC covers the majority of the Epping electorate and I am pleased to know the safety of residents is in good hands. The Ryde LAC has 203 sworn police officers and 25 administration staff across four police stations. The LAC also has dedicated Domestic Violence Officers, Youth Liaison Officers as well as Multicultural Liaison Officers that specialise in community outreach and engagement. Thank you Peter, for your work and your commitment to keeping crime down in our local area.

REVEREND JEFF TYM

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—I would like to recognise Reverend Jeff Tym for his 15 years of service to the Parish of St Barnabas in Coonamble. Reverend Tym has been the longest serving clergy in the Parish's 150-year history. Reverend Tym, who has retired from the Parish, will remain in Coonamble with his wife Wendy and will go to full-time farming for as long as he can. In the 15 years that he has served the Parish, he has baptised 191 children, taken 370 funerals and done 24 weddings. One of the highlights of Reverend Tym's time preaching in Coonamble was working with people in the Indigenous community. I thank Reverend Tym for his service to the Coonamble community and wish him well in his retirement.

TARONGA ZOO CELEBRATES ITS 104TH BIRTHDAY

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker, today I acknowledge a much-loved institution of the North Shore electorate, Taronga Zoo as it celebrates its 104th birthday. When Taronga first opened its gates in 1916 it was home to 844 animals, but more than a century later, it is now home to more than 4,500 animals from 350 unique species. Taronga Zoo is now a world leader in conservation efforts, and have many programs that are protecting endangered species not only here in Australia, but overseas. I would like to acknowledge the Chairman of Taronga Conservation Society Australia Board, Steve Crane, Executive Director and Chief Executive Cameron Kerr, all the board members, executive team, staff, keepers, and volunteers. Thank you all for your hard work and dedication to conservation research, environmental research, and providing locals and the people of NSW a terrific place to learn about the world's precious wildlife. To mark the occasion, Taronga's oldest resident Esmerelda, the Aldabra Giant Tortoise, enjoyed a specially prepared watermelon birthday cake and spread of salad greens. Happy birthday Taronga Zoo.

CONGRATULATIONS TO LOANI TIERNEY

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker, today I acknowledge Loani Tierney, Mosman Council's Environment Education Officer who has been recognised by Local Government New South Wales at the Excellence in the Environment Awards 2020. She was awarded the Louise Petchell Memorial Award for Individual Sustainability. This award recognises individual achievement by a council officer or elected councillor in contributing to environmental improvement and sustainability. It was named in honour of Louise Petchell, Sustainability Manager at Penrith Council who passed away unexpectedly in 2009, and is awarded in memory of her pivotal success in many Excellence in Environment Awards. Held annually, the awards aim to recognise outstanding achievements by NSW councils in managing and protecting the environment. Locally here in North Shore we have a great community ethos to become more environmentally sustainable and we are conscious about how we treat the environment. We live in one of the most beautiful parts of the state and so it is encouraging to see our local councils engaged with environmental sustainability. Congratulations to Loani on receiving this award.

ASHFIELD AQUATIC CENTRE

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—This weekend's opening of the new Ashfield Aquatic Centre comes just in time for summer and will provide inner westies with a state-of-the-art, world-class swimming facility. Swimming pools are vital community assets that improve both our physical health and mental wellbeing. The former Ashfield Pool opened in 1964 and is where generations of local kids learnt to swim. It was the home of the Ashfield Amateur Swimming Club for over 50 years. In 2019, the Inner West Council committed to upgrading the old 50 metre Ashfield pool into a modern recreational centre. The wait is now over, with doors of the new aquatic centre opening this weekend. The centre's two main facades are adorned with bold, contemporary works by internationally acclaimed local artist Georgia Hill. Georgia's black and white abstract work titled Ripple Through was inspired by the rich and diverse history of Ashfield. Congratulations to Inner West Council particularly Councillors Mark Drury and Lucille McKenna, the Ashfield Amateur Swimming Club, and to all Ashfield and inner west residents who can enjoy yet another piece of world-class public infrastructure from Inner West Council.

SUMMER HILL HSC

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Congratulations to Year 12 students across the Summer Hill electorate sitting their HSC exams. This has been an unprecedented year, but the class of 2020 has taken all the disruption, chaos, and difficulty of learning virtually in their stride and are a beacon of resilience. I acknowledge the many high achievers who despite all the challenges, have come through this pandemic with fantastic academic and personal achievements. Congratulations to the following HSC students: From Marrickville High School, Anna Oanh Le, From Dulwich High School of Visual Arts and Design, Sonnet Cure, Isabella Leslie, Massimo Zanni, Lillian Farry and Mateo Lucero. From St Maroun's College, Hai Grace Le, Vyrion Gonzales, Mickael Sassine and Joanne Lee. From Bethlehem College, Jessica Clemente, Barbara Farhart, Zoe Ibrahim, Eleni Spiliopoulos, Jennefer Antoun and Antonia Ortado. And From Casimir College, Peter Iknomopoulos, Nicholas Katsaros, Tiffany Lu, Peter Markopoulos, Lara Smith, Marissa Tselikas, Bernadette Velosa and Ashley Vu. On behalf of the inner west community, I wish all students sitting their HSC the very best. In just a few weeks, you will have made it through one of the most difficult school years on record and we can't wait to see what you achieve next.

DOMINO'S PIZZA MOREE

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I acknowledge Moree Domino's Pizza franchise and franchisee Jill Adams who have assisted Moree Secondary College's class of 2020 in fundraising for their formal next month. Domino's Moree managed to raise a total of \$776 for the year 12 formal during a dedicated fundraising day which saw \$2 from every pizza sold last Wednesday. The money raised will go toward the cost of tickets for the students, photography costs and thank you gifts for various organisations who have also contributed to the formal. Domino's doesn't stop there, in September, the local store wanted to "thank" local businesses who stayed open through the COVID-19 pandemic and have struggled through the worst of times providing a free lunch to fellow businesses. I commend Jill and her staff at Domino's, for their hard work, dedication and passion in giving back to the Moree community. Well done!

MOREE PLAINS GARDEN CLUB

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise the Moree Plains Garden Club for its achievement in keeping its membership of some hundred avid gardeners together during this time of social distancing. President Libby Smith and Secretary Angie Smith have kept club members informed through the monthly newsletter of interesting garden stories and interactive questions about special specimens such as the one in this week's newsletter on roses by Fred Nolan.

Gardeners Megan Adams, Charlie and Suzie Boyle, Ian and Jackie Reardon, Ian and Sophia Morrison, Dave and Leonie Doran shared their gardens last year and I trust it won't be too long before the Moree Plains Garden Club activities can return to normal.

KU-RING-GAI HOUSING STRATEGY

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—I again recognise the draft Ku-ring-gai Council Housing Strategy, which has been previously strongly opposed by the local state MPs, Alister Henskens and myself. I acknowledge local residents for successfully fighting Council to reasonably preserve the unique characteristics of the area, mindful of the increase in new dwellings in the past decade to cater for population growth. On Tuesday night Ku-ring-gai Council again considered its draft housing strategy, and it is now clear they will not pursue the increases in dwelling heights. The strategy will be amended by council staff before being submitted to the Department of Planning. While ideally there should be further review of the strategy by councillors before submission, I commend Council for retreating in the face of community opposition.

WORLD FOOD DAY

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse)—Last Friday 16 October was World Food Day. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation chose "Grow, Nourish, Sustain. Together." as this year's theme highlighting the importance of food security, especially considering the COVID-19 health crisis. On World Food Day, I joined The George Institute's Food Policy Team who work globally to reduce death and disease caused by poor food choices. The George Institute, associated with the University of NSW, undertake research to find solutions to the world's major health problems. My colleagues Mark Coure MP, Lee Evans MP and I learnt more about Health Star Rating labels on packaged foods and the Institute's innovative FoodSwitch program including a mobile app allowing people to scan barcodes to work out the nutritional value in foods. I thank George Institute COO Tim Regan, Dr Alexandra Jones, Executive Director Professor Bruce Neal, Professor Simone Pettigrew, Fraser Taylor, Professor Jacqui Webster and Matt Cross for hosting me for a second time. I also acknowledge the leadership of Board Chair David Armstrong and Members Dr Srinivas Akkaraju, Yasmin Allen, Gina Anderson, Melinda Conrad, Catherine Brenner, Professor Rodney Phillips, Dr Meena Thuraisingham, Professor Vlado Perkovic, Professor Robyn Norton AO and Professor Stephen MacMahon AO.

INTERNATIONAL PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS REMEMBRANCE DAY

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—Mr Speaker, October 15 is International Pregnancy & Infant Loss Day, a solemn day when bereaved parents from New South Wales, Australia, and around the world pause to remember their babies who have passed away. This annual day of remembrance honours the approximately 106,000 thousand babies who lose their lives to miscarriage, stillbirth and newborn death each year. Miscarriage, stillbirth, and newborn death are truly tragic events and the death of a baby is an intensely painful and isolating experience and can happen to any family. With 1 in 6 Australian women experiencing pregnancy or infant loss throughout their lives, the difficulty that these women and their families often face is an important step in providing the networks and resources for them to better cope with the challenged of adjusting to life without their baby. I would like to today acknowledge those within my electorate of Coogee, and across Australia who have experienced pregnancy or infant loss and commend you for your strength and resilience in the face of such a challenging experience.

RUNNING FOR PREMATURE BABIES

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—Running for Premature Babies was founded by Sophie Smith and her late husband Ash after the loss of their prematurely born babies to complications in 2006. When their babies were in hospital, Sophie and Ash realised that most of the machines that kept their boys alive were donated, and that the hospital relies on community fundraising for a significant proportion of the equipment in the unit. What started as a quest to run the SMH Half Marathon and raise \$20,000 for one new humidicrib in the Royal Hospital for Women's Newborn Intensive Care Unit in Randwick has now grown into this fantastic organisation which has done so much for our Coogee community. Running for Premature Babies has now raised over \$3 million for life saving neonatal equipment, and to date over 5000 babies have directly benefitted from this fundraising. I would like to extend a massive thank you to Sophie and everyone who has fundraised for Running for Premature Babies. Your efforts are greatly appreciated by our entire community.

BOON LUCK FARM

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I congratulate Boon Luck Farm for being gold medallist winners in the 2020 Delicious Harvey Norman Produce Awards for their Tiger Striped Peanuts. Palisa Anderson established Boon Luck Farm in 2016 at Tyagarah, in Northern New South Wales to grow rare and unusual produce using sustainable farming techniques. The farm is a certified organic operation stretching over 45 hectares using regenerative farming techniques to provide amazing produce such as the tiger striped peanuts. The Delicious

Award recognises not only the best Australian produce but, also the people behind the produce. The annual award this year recognised the difficulties the gold medallists faced in 2020 to produce and deliver during a time of unprecedented change and highlights the dedication of Palisa Anderson to her craft.

ANTI-POVERTY WEEK WRITING COMPETITION

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield)—I bring to the attention of the House the extraordinary efforts of students in my Electorate who participated in the Anti-Poverty Week Writing Competition 2020. Anti-Poverty Week is held around the 17 October which is the United Nations Day for the Eradication of Poverty. I want to acknowledge the Australian International Academy, Homebush Public School, MLC Burwood Junior, MLC Burwood Senior, St Martha's Catholic Primary School, Homebush West Public School and Strathfield Girls High School who produced outstanding work. It was a joy to read the many poems, interviews, short stories, journal entries and narratives that went to the heart of poverty as seen through the eyes and perspectives of young people. I commend the joint winners of this competition: Suhaan Akhter, Year 7, Strathfield Girls High School, and Miranda Lin, Year 4, from MLC Burwood. Runners up are Jenny Xu and Qing Wei, Stage 3, Homebush West Public School. I congratulate all the students, and the teachers that encouraged the students to enter, and thank you for taking the time to reflect on the circumstances of those with less. Your insights and empathy have shown me that there is great hope for our future.

BANKSTOWN SOUTH INFANTS SCHOOL

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I would like to commend Mrs Leila Samrout and Mrs Denise Nicoll of Bankstown South Infants School on receiving the prestigious Metropolitan South Operational Directorate Principal's Network Award on 16 October 2020. The Principal's Network Awards recognises individuals who have made a significant contribution to their Schools and toward the promotion of public education in New South Wales. Mrs Samrout was recognised for the invaluable support she provides to her kindergarten students, in ensuring they are supported and provided with a wide range of learning opportunities within the classroom as well as outside school hours. Mrs Nicoll was recognised for her accomplishments as the Preschool School Learning Support Officer, including supporting successful projects and events held by the School such as its Space Week 2020. I congratulate Mrs Samrout and Mrs Nicoll on this fantastic achievement, and would like to also acknowledge Bankstown South Infants School Principal Ms Kimberlee Collas and P&C President Mrs Helen Hafda for their ongoing leadership within the school and broader community.

CHESTER HILL NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I recognise and commend Chester Hill Neighbourhood Centre for its continuing efforts in supporting the local community. Since its establishment in 1969, the Chester Hill Neighbourhood Centre has provided vital services across the Bankstown LGA, with a particular focus on the residents of Chester Hill, Bass Hill, Sefton and Villawood. Despite the difficulties presented by COVID-19, the Chester Hill Neighbourhood Centre continues to offer invaluable programs, including computer lessons, arts and crafts, fitness and cooking workshops offering participants a hands-on learning experience. The Centre oversees the Roundabout Youth Centre in Sefton, which provides recreational, educational and support services to young people between the ages of 12 and 18, and has proudly cared for the Chester Hill Community Garden providing year-long opportunities for people of all age groups to enjoy community garden workshops and lessons. The Centre also provides bus services for a number of community uses, including before and after-school care and day trips for older and less-abled residents. I acknowledge Chester Hill Neighbourhood Centre President David Crawford, Vice President Ron Naylor, Treasurer Phillip Gray, Secretary Raymond Robb, Manger Dale Donadel, Committee Members and volunteers, and thank the executives for their service to our community.

JACARANDA FESTIVAL

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)—During the next 4 weeks Grafton becomes the Jacaranda City. The Jacaranda Festival normally attracts approximately 35,000 visitors to Grafton to view this phenomenon and participate in the multitude of events from the Queen Crowning to business house dress-ups and culminating with the street parade. Due to COVID-19, and for the first time in the 86 year history of the festival, this cannot occur. Nonetheless I want to commend the Festival Committee led by Nick Buckler, and in particular the Festival Manager, Mark Blackadder, for coming up with innovative ideas to keep the Festival spirit alive. This year visitors, and locals, can undertake walking tours to see the trees in all their glory, watch the online movie series, participate in online kids' workshops and partake of the famous jacaranda ice creams as they participate in a primarily digital festival, as well as the local shops getting in the spirit by decorating their premises in purple. I want to commend the Committee for ensuring that the Festival spirit is alive and well and look forward to enjoying the event in 2021.

GENEROSITY OF THORNTON PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—I commend the Thornton Public School community for the citizenry and generosity shown by their quest to donate 64 hand-made blankets to domestic violence and homelessness service provider Carrie's Place. The blankets are destined for the arms of Lower Hunter women and children who are experiencing domestic violence, and people who are homeless or at risk of losing their home. Thornton teachers and blanket project co-ordinators Yvonne Fletcher and Anne Osborne worked with their colleagues, parents and grandparents of students to produce knitted squares that were sewn into blankets. The school community has completed 32 blankets to date, and they were recently presented to Carrie's Place with each bearing a tag that read: "Wrapped with love from the students, teachers and community of Thornton Public School". In addition to the 32 blankets still in production, the school plans to hold a food drive in the lead-up to Christmas and donate the bounty to Carrie's Place ahead of the holiday season. Thank you, Thornton Public School.

SALUTING AUSTRALIA'S TOP MUMPRENEUR

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—I rise to acknowledge the challenges faced this year by South Coast businesswoman Kay Saarinen and to congratulate her on winning the national AusMumpreneur Awards, which celebrate the outstanding achievements of Australian mothers in small business. Kay is the founder of Eco Seed to Skin by Saarinen Organics, which this year was a finalist in all four AusMumpreneur Award categories. Seed to Skin took first place in handmade excellence, second in people's choice product and sustainable business ethics, and third in regional business excellence. This top-class combination placed it as overall winner. I first met Kay earlier this year when the Far South Coast was reeling from the devastation and loss caused by catastrophic bushfires. I visited her again mid-year and was blown away by the amount of work Kay and her husband Gregg had already put in to rebuild their property. It is truly amazing that Kay managed to not only survive the fires, but thrive to the extent that her small, rural business came through a national competition with top honours. Congratulations on achieving such stellar success, Kay, while staying true to your ecologically friendly and sustainable ethos.

LEANNE PRIOR

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)—Leanne Prior has been a School Learning Support Officer, commonly referred to in schools as an SLSO, for many years. The role of an SLSO is to work with students with disability and additional learning and support needs. When Leanne commenced work at Glendale East Public School four and a half years ago, so did Kindergarten student Sarah. Leanne and Sarah have been working together ever since. To Sarah and her family, Leanne is more than a SLSO. She greets Sarah at the gate of a morning and does a hand over to get their day started. She has a great understanding of Sarah's needs and is very proactive in her role. Recently, former Glendale East Public School Principal, Nathan Forbes, presented Leanne with a NSW Department of Education Regional North Excellence Award on behalf of Executive Director, Tim McCallum. Nathan nominated Leanne for her dedication in supporting students with disabilities and for always going above and beyond in all that she does. Congratulations Leanne for the recognition of the great work that you have done and continue to do.

DEBBIE BRADLEY

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)—Nothing says dedication like 40 years of service. Debbie Bradley started her career at Wallsend Hospital in 1979 after completing her nursing training and specialised in oncology and palliative care at the John Hunter Hospital's Melanoma Unit. Debbie progressed to the Nurse Unit Manager of F3 in 1997, and began working in different roles across the Hospital, including bed manager, after hours manager, nurse manager of the operating suite, operations manager and service manager of surgery. In 2006 Debbie started her role as General Manager of Belmont Hospital and was in that position until she became the General Manager of John Hunter Hospital in 2013. Debbie retired in March 2020. In 2009, Debbie was awarded Hunter New England Health Manager of the Year for her work at Belmont Hospital, and has the honour of being the longest serving, the first female, and the first Aboriginal identifying General Manager of John Hunter Hospital. Debbie was an amazing leader to her team and focused on ensuring that patients received excellent quality care, and she encouraged staff to provide the level of care they would expect to receive. Thank you Debbie, for your service.

NEW SOUTH WALES POLICE FORCE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—The New South Wales Police force is tasked with ensuring our community's safety and protection. Everyday Police officers across the State courageously risk their lives to ensure our families can go about their lives without the fear of crime in our neighbourhoods. On 9th October 2020, the NSW Police Force welcomed 192 new probationary constables at the NSW Police Academy at an attestation

ceremony. 130 men and 62 women from class 343 are now trained and ready to undertake 'on the job' training. These officers will also have the opportunity to complete the Associate Degree in Policing Practice at the Charles Sturt University before being confirmed to the rank of constable. It is imperative that the Officers protecting our community are efficiently trained and have the highest qualifications possible. It is a proud day when citizens of this State are ready to do everything they can to serve and protect our community. I extend my sincere thanks to the entire NSW Police Force for their sacrifice and dedication to protecting the residents of this State. I congratulate the 192 probationary constables and wish them all the best in their policing careers.

NATIONAL DAY OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA (TAIWAN)

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On 8th October 2020, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, Sydney, held a Gala Dinner in celebration of the 109th National Day of the Republic of China (Taiwan). It was a fantastic evening that brought together many members of NSW Parliament, City Councils and most importantly, the Taiwanese community. Taiwan is a great friend of Australia that is connected through trade, investment and people-to-people links. Taiwan is one of Australia's largest merchandise export markets. Australia and Taiwan are further connected through education, tourism and the arts. Taiwan has been a promoter of peace and stability within the region and has remained committed to sovereignty and democratic values. It has been a tumultuous year for the world, however, Taiwan have shown resilience during this time. I congratulate the Taiwanese community of Australia and furthermore, the Republic of China (Taiwan) for their 109th National Day. I would also like to thank Fiona H.C Fan, Director General, Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, in bringing together many communities to celebrate this glorious occasion. I look forward to further engaging with the Taiwanese community. Happy National Day to the Republic of China (Taiwan)!

HORNSBY HEIGHTS SCOUTS

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)—Today I would like to acknowledge Charlie Hildebrandt, Damon McStravick and David Leverton from Hornsby Heights 1st Scouts on receiving their Grey Wolfe Award. The Grey Wolfe Award is the highest award a Cub Scout can receive and these three young men have shown great leadership for their younger cubs. To achieve the Grey Wolf Award, Cubs need to work through many different interest areas along with Scouting skills and lead a hike with some of the Cub Unit. Charlie led his hike from Galston Gorge to Crosslands in Hornsby Heights. Damon's hike was from Pennant Hills Park to Epping Oval. David led his hike from Pennant Hills to South Turramurra. All ran without incident with the Cubs navigating their way with map and compass. I would like to congratulate Charlie, Damon and David on their hard work and despite all the restrictions have been able to achieve their goal of the Grey Wolfe Award this year. The boys will now move up to Scouts and I have no doubt they are destined for great things as they continue with Hornsby Heights 1st Scouts.

ALEXANDER WARDROP – TRANSFORMING LISMORE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—Recently, I had a productive meeting with Alexander Wardrop, a local young man with a vision to rejuvenate Lismore and to transform the city into an artistic hub on the North Coast. I was impressed by his proposal, which identifies the desire to engage with the Bundjulang artistic community, and his genuine interest in Lismore. I have shared his proposal with the Minister for Arts, The Honourable Don Harwin MLC, and local organisations, including NORPA, Arts Northern Rivers and the Lismore Chamber of Commerce and Industry. During his study at the Lismore High School, Alexander was active in his school community and held a leadership position as the Prefect for Promotion. He completed secondary schooling in 2019. Alexander is now working as a barista at the Duck Pond Café, a popular café in South Lismore which is owned by his grandmother, Noreen. Alexander told me that he wants to be a successful filmmaker. In the past three years, he has produced 10 short films. It is his dream to attend film festivals around the world, promoting his films. It was a pleasure to meet a talented local young man who is following that big dream.

A CENTENARY CELEBRATION OF MS VIDA WHITWORTH

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—On 29 September 2020, Ms Vida Whitworth, of Midginbil, celebrated her 100th birthday. This centenary celebration is an extraordinary milestone. Recently, The Tweed Valley Weekly newspaper published a wonderful story about her, which I read with great interest. Ms Whitworth moved to Midginbil, a peaceful small village located approximately 27 km south-west of Murwillumbah, five years ago to live with her daughter Dianne Selinger. As a gardener extraordinaire, when Ms Whitworth first moved to her daughter's property, it was her mission to keep their garden flourishing. It was fitting that her neighbour presented her with a centenary rose to mark this special occasion. Ms Whitworth has five children, 10 grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren and soon-to-be four great-great-grandchildren, whom she dearly loves. Ms Whitworth said that the key to her long and extraordinary life was keeping herself busy and taking life one day at a time. What sound and wise advice. Ms Whitworth married her late husband, Mr Arthur Richard

Whitworth, in 1939 and they were together for 50 years until Mr Whitworth passed away. Fifty years of marriage is indeed an outstanding achievement. I wish Vida Whitworth many more happy and healthy years ahead.

ROCKDALE ILINDEN FC

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—Congratulations to the Rockdale Ilinden Football Club who have been crowned the 2020 National Premier League NSW Men's Premiers for the first time. The premiership was sealed a few weeks ago with a 2-1 come from behind win against North Shore Mariners. They now face off against Sydney United 58 for the 2020 Championship after defeating Sydney Olympic 3-1 on Saturday night. This is a fantastic effort from first year coach Steve Zoric, club staff and the entire playing group after navigating a tough and disrupted season. Congratulations to this great club on an outstanding season, and good luck for Sunday's grand final.

ALFRED CHARLES MCGRATH OAM

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to remember Mr Alfred Charles McGrath. Sadly on the 12th of June 2019, Mr McGrath passed away. Mr McGrath, a resident of Oatley, was previously awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for service to veterans and their families. Alf was the RSL of Australia Oatley Sub-Branch's treasurer and life member since 2002. Additionally, Mr McGrath was also president of Oatley RSL and Community Club from 2005 until 2009, as well as director and life member since 2018. Alf also worked tirelessly with the NSW Fire Brigade being a former senior executive. Further, Mr McGrath was the treasurer of Mortdale Bowling Club and an honorary auditor for Oatley Probus. I had the opportunity to present Alf with a St George Community Award, and in both 2011 and 2012 he was recognised by Council with their Volunteer of the Year award. He also received a Public Service Medal in 1991. Vale Alf.

PENRITH SELECTIVE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney)—As the end of the 2020 school year is quickly approaching, I wish to offer my congratulations to the incoming student leadership team of Penrith Selective High School. The leadership team for 2021 includes, Captains: Kokulaan Santhakumar and Ashvini Dolamulla, Vice Captains: Shameer Iftikhar and Elizabeth Santoso and Senior Prefects: Zach Wan and Alynna Arago. Student leader's play an important role and I have no doubt these students will make positive and valuable contributions across their school community.

HELLENIC PONTIAN GENOCIDE WREATH-LAYING CEREMONY

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—On the 26th of May last year, I was invited to the Hellenic Pontian Genocide Commemoration wreath laying ceremony. The Commemorative Committee is the joint society of Australian Greek groups in Sydney and Wollongong whose ancestors originate from the Black Sea area known as Pontos. The committee's main aim is to raise awareness of the genocide in Pontos and the neighbouring regions of Thrace and Asia Minor. In 1994, the Greek parliament voted unanimously in favour of recognising the Pontian Genocide and instituted May 19 as Remembrance Day. Our NSW Parliament formally recognised the Armenian, Assyrian and Greek genocides in 1997. According to the 2016 Census, NSW has 132,831 people claiming Greek ancestry, 29,497 people born in Greece and 81,685 people who speak Greek at home, while 128,353 people follow the Greek Orthodox religion. I am proud to represent an area that is home to many Greek families, and it was my pleasure to attend the wreath laying ceremony. I would like to thank the Committee for their warm hospitality on the day.

TROY DOWLEY

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Speaker, I am privileged to recognise Troy Dowley, born and raised in Gol Gol, and servicing this small township as Captain of the Rural Fire Services, a position he has held for more than 20 years. At 15 years of age he became a volunteer with the NSW Bush Fire Brigade and has now served 37 years as a fire-fighter, assisting not only our region but Pilgla, Sydney and on several occasions Canberra and Adelaide. However, the most memorable was in the Strike Group caught in the township of Batlow early 2020, a unique and unforgettable situation. Servicing our long highways Troy also responds to motor vehicle accidents. However his day brightens when driving the fire truck for Santa or the bugler for Anzac Day, providing great excitement for our community. Troy initiated the Gol Gol Fire Services communication strategy, has been awarded a National Medal for Service and was recently voted onto the Board of Directors of the RFSA. I commend and thank Troy for his long standing service to his community, state and nation.

CASTLE HILL COVID FUNDING BOOST

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—It was recently my pleasure to announce \$56,000 worth of NSW Government funding to provide a one-off boost to local suppliers, labourers and community groups in these difficult economic times. The Hills Basketball Stadium, which hosts the ever-successful Hills Hornets has

received \$12,320 in funding for a new air-conditioning system. The Dural Men's Shed has received \$28,477 in funding for new machinery and equipment as part of their White Lion Program, as well as a fit-out of the Centre of Health and Exercise. Kellyville United Football Club has received \$9,780 for new safety fencing around their home ground at Caddies Creek Reserve. Finally, the Oak Tree Retirement Village in Dural received \$6,000 in funding for 3 new defibrillators so that the residents can be as close to medical help as possible should they require it. These projects reinforce the NSW Government's commitment to, firstly, ensuring our community groups are well looked after, and, secondly, recognising the importance of stimulus at a local level in periods of economic recovery.

GARAGE SALE TRAIL

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I would like to take this opportunity to mention the upcoming Garage Sale Trail – a national initiative with the goal of promoting reusing and rehoming. The Hills Shire Council are supporting this initiative which helps pre-loved items avoid landfill. The initiative was started by Sydney locals Andrew Valder and Darryl Nichols, with the event growing exponentially from the 30 garage sales held their first year. Last year 140 councils across Australia (including the Hills Shire) participated in the trail, with over 18,000 garage sales and 400,000 people partaking in a sale. This resulted in the sale of 3 million items, saving them from going to landfill, with the average household making \$319. This year the garage sales will be encouraged to be staged in a COVID-Safe way. I encourage all in the Hills to consider hosting a sale, or shopping at a sale on the 21st and 22nd November; it's good for the environment and cheap too!

COOLAC OVAL

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Speaker, it was great to be part of Coolac Cricket Club's first game of the season and to unveil new cricket nets and picket fencing at Coolac Oval. The upgrades and improvements were made possible through the NSW Government's Stronger Communities Fund and Coolac is a fantastic community which deserves state of the art facilities for locals and visitors to enjoy. I'm a passionate believer in sport and its ability to bring the community together. These upgrades will also help young players develop their skills and means they don't have to travel to bigger centres to practice and train. Well done to the Club for their hard work and I look forward to many more cricket matches at Coolac.

TEMORA HIGH SCHOOL

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Speaker, well done to the teachers and students of Temora High School who recently supported Mental Health and Well-Being day. Students from Years 7 to 11 participated in many activities including a 'dance flash mob' performance, team building exercises, indoor and outdoor games. A colourful obstacle course on the school oval put students skills to the test while teachers sprayed them with powdered paint as a fun way to celebrate this special day in the school calendar. The day coincided with Kirra Pendergast's visit to local schools to advise and educate students and parents on cyber safety and social media risk management. Ms Pendergast shares her advice about the positives and negatives which need to be understood when engaging in the cyber world. Keep up the great work at Temora High School.

LISA SOKHA NAGATSUKA

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I wish to acknowledge the efforts of Khmer dance teacher Ms Lisa Sokha Nagatsuka, founder of Cambodian Living Arts & Culture (CLAC). Ms Nagatsuka formed the dance group with the aim of preserving the Khmer culture and traditions, particularly in the area of dance, so that it can be enjoyed by current and future generations. Cambodian classical dancing is beautiful to watch and superbly choreographed, with dancers displaying elaborate costumes and elegant hand gestures. Dancing is extremely important to the Cambodian community and is an important part of their culture. As such, Lisa Nagatsuka's troupes of dancers perform at many festivals, weddings and charity events, including Cambodian New Year and the Buddhist festivals at Wat Khemarangsaram. Ms Nagatsuka is a dedicated individual, committed to her craft and eager to teach not just her young pupils but their parents as well, involving them at all stages of performance. I thank Ms Lisa Saokha Nagatsuka for her efforts in promoting the Khmer culture through dance and for her passion for the revival of traditional Cambodian arts and culture for the benefit of the Cambodian community here in Australia.

SALVATION ARMY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I would like to commend the Salvation Army for the assistance they have provided for young people during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the pandemic began, more young people have sought assistance from the Salvation Army, particularly in the area of financial services such as the Moneycare program. This program offers free and confidential financial counselling to people, and has been in increasing demand among young people affected by firstly the bushfires and more recently by COVID-19. Currently the Australian Bureau of Statistics states the youth unemployment rate in Sydney's southwest is

20.7% which includes the electorate of Fairfield. In Fairfield, youth unemployment has been a growing problem, exacerbated by the national pandemic-driven recession. This is the reason why the Salvation Army's financial services have been much appreciated and their assistance and advice for our youth has been invaluable. I acknowledge the work of the Salvation Army during throughout the pandemic and helping out our young people with sound financial advice and I thank them for their efforts.

CLAUDIA FURNESS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—In August, my office was contacted by Claudia Furness. Claudia is a qualified science teacher and a carer to her son, Fox, who is on the autism spectrum. Fox attends Aspect at Thornton and was approved for the Assisted School Travel Program—until Claudia was informed that she was not eligible for the program because she is a recipient of the Carer's Allowance. This advice came after she complained that Fox was spending up to two hours, on a one-way trip on the bus, far too long for any young person, let alone a young person with Fox's needs. Claudia organised a meeting between myself and other parents of children with autism who were also experiencing unacceptably long travel times on the school bus. As a result of her advocacy, the ASTP was reinstated for her son, and the bus company agreed to halve the bus route, and in doing so dramatically cut travel times for the children on the bus. Claudia's advocacy for her son and other children is truly commendable.

PHIL AND KAREN BUCKNER

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—Today I would like to recognise Philip and Karen Buckner of Dudley for their untiring efforts in protecting and enhancing our local environment. Phil and Karen were brought to my attention by Mr Don Owers. One outstanding achievement was the construction of a stone step pathway to Dudley Beach. This herculean effort was assisted by another local, Gary Jenness, and was a project that replaced the original wooden steps which had decayed. The Buckners had assisted in installing these steps over twenty years ago, and it is wonderful to see their commitment to Dudley and our area has not waned over the years. Both Phil and Karen Buckner have been active in many Landcare projects including tree planting and the unending battle against asparagus weed which has, unfortunately, infiltrated a large portion of local bushland. They have also worked to promote active transport. This sort of community-minded spirit is what makes me so proud to be the Member for Charlestown, and I would like to thank Phil, Karen and Gary for working so hard to get these steps installed.

LOCAL SPORTING ADMINISTRATORS

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—I acknowledge the outstanding work of the many local sporting club administrators who have volunteered their time over the past 12 months. Mostly mums and dads, they have worked tirelessly and have done an excellent job responding to a drought, bushfires and now a pandemic. It seems their efforts in adapting to the new social distancing rules have been successful. After a short disruption, their perseverance has allowed the community, and in particular, many thousands of children, to re-engage with their weekly sport. There is no doubt that club sport brings together the community in a unique way and gives people the opportunity to try new things and meet new people. As I drive at the weekends through towns like Bowral, Mittagong or Picton I am heartened by the sight of so many children on the sporting fields. No doubt, these activities lead to a healthier society. Not just physically, but mentally too. As we move into a new and busy summer, I take the opportunity to extend my gratitude to their dedication and acknowledge the enormous contribution they have made to a better community in my electorate of Wollondilly.

NSW SMALL BUSINESS MONTH

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—I extend my gratitude to the Picton Chamber of Commerce for supporting the NSW Government's small business month. Now in its fourth year, there has probably not been a more critical period for small business in my area with the effects of a drought, bushfires and now COVID-19. Small business is the backbone of our economy and, prior to the pandemic, employed more than 1.5 million people and contributed almost \$400 billion in sales and service revenue in New South Wales. An innovative and profitable small business sector is the key to future economic growth and job creation. I am, therefore, very pleased that on October 21st, the Chamber hosted an event at the Moses Barnes Café in Picton entitled "How to Set Prices and Not Go Bust." This session looked at price modelling, including the impact of discounting, quoting and other key pricing issues like covering administration and marketing overheads. I thank the New South Wales Government and the Picton Chamber of Commerce for this initiative and the on-going support and advice they provide to this vital sector of our economy.

JON FROST

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—Mr Speaker, I rise to congratulate Taree local Jon Frost after he was named NSW Vocational Student of the year at the NSW 2020 Training Awards. It was Jon's role in

Service NSW that inspired him to take his passion for customer service and IT to the next level with a Certificate IV in Information Technology Support. At times Jon struggled with balancing his responsibilities of full time work and study but by working with his trainer he overcame those difficulties. And since gaining his qualification, Jon has been rewarded with a promotion to Service NSW's new Product Digitalisation Team. Jon has also formed strong links with his community through Rotary and grass roots engagement championing and promoting Service NSW's offerings and as a result been awarded the 2018 service NSW 'DNA CEO award.' Jon's hard work and dedication should be an inspiration to anyone thinking of pursuing a career through vocational education and training. I again congratulate Jon on being named NSW Vocational Student of the Year and wish him the best when he represents NSW at the Australian Training Awards in November.

WARREN BLISSET

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—Mr Speaker, I rise to congratulate Group Three Junior Rugby League President and Forster local Warren Blissett who was recently named volunteer of the year for the East Coast region in the NSW Rugby League Volunteer of the Year Awards. Warren was key to ensuring the Group Three Junior Rugby League could continue amid the COVID-19 pandemic running approximately 79 games per week for 9 weeks. This made it one of the biggest community sporting competitions in NSW. His dedication to the sport doesn't end there, Warren also juggles the hats of junior vice president and registrar of the senior league and is a match day coach of the Group Three referees. He's also been key to growing the female participation in Group three Rugby League which has grown from 20 girls to 451 girls in three years. Warren is a true pillar of the Myall Lakes Community and more than worthy of the East Coast region's volunteer of the year title.

WENDY ROBERTS

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)—South Coast resident Wendy Roberts has been announced as a finalist in the Rural category of the Rotary Inspirational Women's Awards for her ongoing dedication to our community. Having served the Erowal Bay Brigade of the NSW Rural Fire Service since 1961, she was recently named Citizen of the Year at Shoalhaven City Council's 2020 Australia Day Awards. She has been involved in many other local organisations including the Crossroads Brigade, Jervis Bay Lions Club, Girl Guides, Camp Quality, War Widows and Meals on Wheels. Wendy, thank you for your outstanding leadership and devotion to public service and all the best at the ceremony on November 15. Community groups are the heart and soul of rural and regional Australia, and behind every organisation are teams of people like you giving up their time to help others.

VELMA WALKER

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)—Finalists for the Rotary Inspirational Women's Awards 2020 have been announced, with South Coast resident Velma Walker being recognised for her dedication to serving her community, which began when a book of raffle tickets was passed to her at age 14 while attending a picnic with a friend. Mrs Walker has given 30 years to the RFS, as well as volunteering with the CWA, Rotary, Quota, the Albatross Music Society and State Choir. The passion, enthusiasm and dedication to the community displayed by Mrs Walker over her decades of service is outstanding. Velma, thank you for everything you do and best of luck at the virtual awards ceremony on November 15.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I shall now leave the chair until the ringing of the long bell.

[The Assistant Speaker left the chair at 17:43. The House resumed at 19:07.]

Bills

ROAD TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2020

Returned

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I report a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments. I direct that the Legislative Council amendments be taken into consideration forthwith.

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.

No. 1 **GRNS No. 2 [c2020-187B]**

Page 5, Schedule 1. Insert after line 27—

[25A] Section 188(1A)

Insert after section 188(1)—

- (1A) For the purposes of subsection (1), if a person is a corporation, the person must—
- (a) nominate an officer of the corporation to undertake to ascertain the nomination details of the person who was in charge of the vehicle at the time the offence occurred, and
 - (b) require the nominated officer to complete a statutory declaration as to the efforts undertaken to ascertain the nomination details, and
 - (c) provide the authorised officer or court, as the case may be, with the statutory declaration of the nominated officer.

No. 2 **GRNS No. 3 [c2020-187B]**

Page 5, Schedule 1. Insert after line 30—

[26A] Section 190 Use of statutory declarations as evidence

Insert "or (1A)" after "188(1)" in section 190(3).

No. 3 **OPP No. 1 [c2020-184G]**

Page 9, Schedule 1. Insert after line 18—

[36A] Section 279A

Insert after section 279—

279A Reports on liability of corporations for camera recorded offences

- (1) Revenue NSW is to prepare a monthly report that contains the following information for the month—
 - (a) the number of penalty notices issued to corporations for camera recorded offences, categorised by each particular offence,
 - (b) the number of offences against section 188(1) alleged to have been committed by a corporation, whether dealt with by penalty notice or court attendance notice,
 - (c) the number of times the registration of a registrable vehicle was suspended because the registered operator of the vehicle was a corporation that committed an offence under section 188(1).
- (2) As soon as reasonably practicable after preparing a report, Revenue NSW is to make the report available to the public on a NSW Government website.
- (3) In this section—

camera recorded offence has the same meaning as in Part 7.3, Division 2.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (19:07:55): I move:

That the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

I thank the Legislative Council for its amendments.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The question is that the Legislative Council's amendments be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

**The House adjourned pursuant to standing and sessional orders at 19:10 until
Tuesday 10 November 2020 at 12:00.**