



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Tuesday 9 February 2021

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 9 February 2021

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Sessional Orders

SESSIONAL ORDERS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (12:00): By leave: I move:

That this House agrees to the proposed amendments to the sessional orders as follows:

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

That the sessional order relating to standing order 108A be amended by omitting in paragraph (2) "until 31 December 2020 and then one each sitting day thereafter."

REMOVAL OF A MEMBER ON GROUNDS OTHER THAN DISORDER

That the sessional order relating to standing order 249B be amended by omitting "until 31 December 2020" and inserting instead "until 31 December 2021."

ABSENCE OF QUORUM AND SUBSEQUENT COUNT-OUT

That, during the current session, unless otherwise ordered, Standing Order 41 shall read as follows:

41. If a Member states that a quorum is not present in the House:

- (1) The Speaker shall count the House.
- (2) If a quorum is not present, the Speaker shall order the bells to be rung for 4 minutes and will allow a further 10 minutes for all Members to reach the Chamber.
- (3) Members shall present themselves for the counting of the quorum by entering the left and right doors to the Chamber from Speaker's Square and, after a quorum has been established, each Member will exit via the Chamber side doors to the Speaker's corridor and the Wentworth Room.
- (4) If after the allotted time a quorum has not been formed, the names of the Members present shall be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings and the Speaker shall set down any business then before the House as an order of the Day for a later time and adjourn the House until the next sitting day.
- (5) If the next sitting day has not been appointed, the House shall adjourn to the next succeeding business day.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (12:01): The Opposition agrees to the amendments to sessional orders.

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

Motion agreed to.

Announcements

CHAMBER SOCIAL DISTANCING

The SPEAKER: Before I call for general business notices of motions, I will make two announcements in relation to the coronavirus environment that we are operating in. The first is that members are not currently adhering to social distancing within the Chamber. I ask members to do so. It is important that we set the right example.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

The SPEAKER: I remind members that a sessional order was introduced in response to the COVID pandemic that varies Standing Order 134 and requires that notices be "dated, signed and emailed" to the Table Office. Members can meet this requirement by emailing the Word document to assemblynotices@parliament.nsw.gov.au, by taking a photo of the hard copy and emailing it to assemblynotices@parliament.nsw.gov.au or by scanning the hard copy and emailing it to assemblynotices@parliament.nsw.gov.au.

To help the Table Office with the administration of the notices of motions, please provide the Table Office with your notice of motion by 1.30 p.m. on Tuesdays or by 11.00 a.m. on Wednesdays and Thursdays using one of those methods. If you deliver a general notice of motion today, please take a photo of the notice of motion or scan a copy of the notice of motion and email it straightaway to assemblynotices@parliament.nsw.gov.au. Not only is that in accordance with the standing order, but it is also respectful of the staff who otherwise may be put in a compromising situation. I thank members for their cooperation. That requirement will be implemented fairly rigidly from today. Members have until 1.30 p.m. today to send a copy of their notice of motion to assemblynotices@parliament.nsw.gov.au.

Bills

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

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendment.

Schedule of amendment referred to in message of 25 August 2020

No. 1 **AJP No. 1 [c2020-116A]**

Page 4, Schedule 1. Insert after line 12—

[5A] Section 137B

Insert after section 137A—

137B Keeping of animals

- (1) A by-law has no force or effect to the extent that it purports to unreasonably prohibit the keeping of an animal on a lot.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (12:21):
I move:

That the Legislative Council amendment be disagreed with.

I address the amendment made to this bill in relation to the keeping of animals in strata schemes, which was passed in the other place. The existing bill debated would amend the Strata Schemes Management Amendment Act 2015 to ensure that a strata by-law has no effect if it purports to unreasonably prohibit the keeping of an animal on a lot. The amendment passed by the Legislative Council also dictates that the keeping of an animal on a lot is reasonable unless the owners corporation can demonstrate that it is not in the best interests of the animal to reside on the lot. While I acknowledge the passion the Hon. Emma Hurst brings to the matter, the New South Wales Government will not support the amendment for a number of reasons.

Firstly, the amendment was inserted without any consultation with the New South Wales strata community, including owners and tenants. The amendments put forward in the other place are an example of how the Parliament should not legislate. Over one million people in New South Wales call a strata scheme home. The proposed amendments to the strata scheme legislation should be the subject of proper consultation with the strata community. Rigorous consultation is the foundation of good policy development. It ensures our laws work in practice and have the support of those impacted and the community. A statutory review of the Strata Schemes Management Act is currently underway, with public consultation due to close on 7 March 2021. The review will examine a wide range of matters, including the issue of by-laws relating to the keeping of pets. The Government intends to consider the public feedback provided as part of that consultation and will use it to develop a workable policy on the keeping of pets in strata schemes.

Secondly, the amendment provides for only one factor to be taken into account when deciding what is a reasonable prohibition on the keeping of an animal: the needs of the animal. This means the amendment requires the owners corporation to base its decision about the keeping of an animal exclusively on the needs of the animal, such as toileting, feeding and exercising. This is clearly unacceptable. The amendment fails to consider other important relevant factors that should be taken into account, such as whether the property is suitable for the keeping of any animal or whether the animal will be a nuisance to other lot owners. Living in a strata scheme requires consideration of the impact of your actions on other lot owners. It is important that the potential impact on other owners is factored into any decision about the keeping of pets.

This was recognised by the Court of Appeal of the Supreme Court of New South Wales in the recent decision of *Cooper v The Owners*. The decision overturned a by-law that imposed a blanket ban on the keeping of pets. The Court of Appeal determined that such a blanket ban was overly restrictive and contravened the Strata Schemes Management Act. The decision sets an important precedent that is binding on lower courts. Any response

to the issue of pets in strata schemes must take into account this decision and the amendment fails to do so. I note that the member for Sydney has foreshadowed amendments that the Government will be supporting. I acknowledge the willingness of the member for Sydney and Ms Emma Hurst in the other place to work cooperatively on these amendments, which we believe are sensible and necessary given the recent Court of Appeal action and decision.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:26): I move:

That the motion be amended by inserting "and the following further amendments be agreed to:

No. 1 Keeping of animals

Page 2, clause 2. Insert after line 7—

- (1A) Schedule 1[5A] commences on whichever of the following occurs first—
- (a) a day or days to be appointed by proclamation, or
 - (b) the date that is 6 months after the date of assent to this Act.

No. 2 Keeping of animals

Page 4, Schedule 1. Insert after line 12—

[5A] Section 137B

Insert after section 137A—

137B Keeping of animals

- (1) Each of the following has no force or effect to the extent that it would unreasonably prohibit the keeping of an animal on a lot—
 - (a) a by-law,
 - (b) a decision by an owners corporation under a by-law.
- (2) It is taken to be reasonable to keep an animal on a lot unless the keeping of the animal unreasonably interferes with another occupant's use and enjoyment of the occupant's lot or the common property.
- (3) The regulations may specify circumstances in which the keeping of an animal unreasonably interferes with another occupant's use and enjoyment of the occupant's lot or the common property.
- (4) A by-law that prohibits the keeping of an animal on a lot is not harsh, unconscionable or oppressive if it does not unreasonably prohibit the keeping of an animal on a lot.

Note. Section 150(1) provides that the Tribunal may declare a by-law to be invalid if it is harsh, unconscionable or oppressive.
- (5) An owners corporation is taken to have given permission for the keeping of an animal on a lot if—
 - (a) it made a decision about the keeping of the animal in contravention of subsection (1)(b), or
 - (b) a decision of the owners corporation is required before the animal may be kept on the lot and the owners corporation failed to make a decision within a reasonable time.
- (6) If a report has been tabled in Parliament under section 276A, the Minister must not recommend the making of a regulation under this section unless the Minister has considered the report.
- (7) Subsection (6) is repealed 5 years after the commencement of this section.

No. 3 Keeping of animals

Page 5, Schedule 1. Insert after line 20—

[13A] Section 276A

Insert after section 276—

276A Review of keeping of animals

- (1) The Minister is to review this Act as it relates to the keeping of animals on lots in strata schemes, including by addressing the following matters—
 - (a) the circumstances in which it is reasonable to prohibit the keeping of animals,
 - (b) the impacts of kept animals on the health and wellbeing of residents,

- (c) the barriers faced by residents in the keeping of animals and by persons who require assistance animals, including vulnerable persons,
Example. Persons fleeing domestic violence.
 - (d) the welfare of kept animals,
 - (e) how to limit any adverse impacts of kept animals on common property, including the adequacy of existing laws to deal with this,
 - (f) to resolve disputes about the keeping of animals,
 - (g) the effects of a change to the by-laws for a scheme that prohibits the keeping of an animal that was lawfully kept on a lot before the change.
- (2) The review is to be undertaken as soon as possible after the commencement of this section.
 - (3) A report on the outcome of the review is to be tabled in each House of Parliament within 6 months after the commencement of this section."

There has been a great deal of public interest in and debate about keeping companion animals in apartments. I thank all the constituents who have shared their views with me. At the outset, I thank the Hon. Emma Hurst of the Animal Justice Party and the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation for the time we have spent negotiating an outcome that benefits both strata communities and companion animals. There has been a lack of clarity in law around keeping animals in apartments and this has led to a number of strata communities engaging in costly legal battles to resolve disputes. The amendments that I have put before the House strive to provide that clarity. No two companion animals are the same and no two strata buildings are the same. That makes a one-size-fits-all approach very difficult to achieve and legislate.

As someone who lives with a companion animal—my rescue dog, Max—in an extremely pet-friendly apartment building, I know firsthand the importance of pets to a person's health and wellbeing. The amendments I present to the House get the balance right by ensuring that the vast majority of apartments will be pet friendly while acknowledging that there will be some limited circumstances when it will not be in the best interests of the animal or other residents for pets to be kept in an apartment. The amendments require that these circumstances be informed by a robust consultation process. The amendments build on the Animal Justice Party amendment in the other place and follow the recent Court of Appeal ruling that required links between by-laws that ban pets and impacts on the lot owners.

While the court's ruling required a connection between pet bans and impacts, it did not define when an impact on another owner or resident is reasonable. Relying on it creates new uncertainty that could result in disputes. My amendments provide the statutory clarification needed by giving the Minister powers to set regulations that determine when it is reasonable and, conversely, unreasonable to prohibit the keeping of animals on a lot. Such prohibitions will be limited to circumstances where the keeping of an animal unreasonably interferes with another occupant's use and enjoyment of their lot or common property. The amendments set out the consultation required before the regulation can determine any grounds deemed reasonable for an apartment to impose a pet ban or for a strata committee to refuse permission to keep an animal.

The review must consider the following: the circumstances in which it is reasonable to prohibit the keeping of animals; the impacts of kept animals on the health and wellbeing of residents; the barriers faced by residents in the keeping of animals and by persons who require assistance animals, including vulnerable persons such as someone fleeing domestic violence; the welfare of animals kept in apartments; how to limit any adverse impacts of kept animals on common property, including the adequacy of existing laws to resolve disputes; and the effect of any change to the by-laws for a scheme that prohibits the keeping of an animal that was lawfully kept on a lot before the change.

A statutory review into strata laws has already commenced, including on the keeping of pets. NSW Fair Trading will need to ensure that its work now captures the considerations set out in the amendments. We have seen through COVID-19 an increase in pet ownership as more people work from home and socialise less. Companion animals are vital to people's health and wellbeing, and provide support during difficult times, but we must ensure that an increase in pet ownership does not lead to expanded cruelty. New demand for companion animals must be matched with a ban on cruel puppy farming practices. I will work with the Animal Justice Party and other colleagues to address that this year. With the passage of these amendments, and following the consultation process, it is my hope that strata communities will have a number of options to choose from about how best to address and support companion animals in the most appropriate way for their buildings.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (12:30): I speak in support of the amendments moved by the member for Sydney. The bill as amended will provide a common-sense solution to the highly contentious issue of keeping pets in strata schemes. The amendments do two things. Firstly, they provide that neither a by-law nor a decision

by an owners corporation under a by-law can unreasonably prohibit the keeping of animals on a strata lot. Secondly, they require a review of the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 as it relates to the keeping of animals and require that a report on the review be tabled in both Houses of Parliament within six months of the date of assent to the bill. These amendments remedy the deficiencies in the amendments tabled in the other place and for that reason the Government supports the amendments moved by the member for Sydney.

The amendments strike a balance between the interests of those who wish to keep an animal in a strata lot and those of other residents who may be affected by the keeping of an animal. The amendments achieve this balance by enshrining the principle that owners have the right to use and enjoy their lot as they wish, as long as it does not unreasonably interfere with the ability of other owners to use and enjoy their lot or the common property. Your home is your castle, and as long as your pets do not have an impact on your neighbours, you should be free to keep them. However, this bill does not give strata residents carte blanche to move in with half a dozen Great Danes or a choir of loud tabby cats. These changes are a considered response that will allow the growing number of strata owners to own a pet.

Importantly, the amendments allow the regulations to prescribe specific circumstances in which the keeping of an animal unreasonably interferes with another occupant's use and enjoyment of the occupant's lot or the common area. This detail is crucial. The regulation-making power provides the Government with the flexibility to ensure the regulations are up to date and reflect the needs and values of the day. This is in stark contrast to the amendment passed by the other place, which offered little assistance to owners corporations as to what would be an unreasonable prohibition on the keeping of animals on a lot. The Government welcomes the opportunity to work with the strata community to develop a comprehensive regulation.

The third amendment before the House requires the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation to review the Strata Schemes Management Act as it relates to the keeping of animals and table a report in both Houses of Parliament within six months of the date of assent. This amendment addresses the deficiency in the amendment passed in the other place, which was rushed and inserted without consultation with the strata community. The requirement for the Minister to review the Strata Schemes Management Act as it relates to the keeping of pets ties in with the statutory review of the Act currently being undertaken by the Department of Customer Service. The poll on the statutory review website has already attracted over 9,000 votes on whether owners corporations should be allowed to ban pets. Eighty five per cent of respondents have so far said no to this question. The review will help the Government to develop modern and comprehensive regulations. The amendments are the crucial first step towards creating a comprehensive and sensible government policy on the keeping of pets in strata schemes. I commend the member for Sydney for moving the amendments.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:34): On behalf of The Greens I support these amendments and note that a number of factors have brought us to the situation we are in now. People love their pets. In fact, around 63 per cent of Australian households own a pet. However, for most people who live in a rental home or strata building, draconian laws are banning pets even when they have no impact on neighbours. This makes it extremely difficult for households with pets to find a new home when they need one. Our rental laws and strata laws both make things even tougher for people with a pet, with only 2 per cent of rental properties allowing pets. This means that many pets end up in animal shelters because renters cannot take their pets with them when they are forced to move house.

The current model by-laws for strata buildings include an outright ban on pets, which has been so unfair and so hurtful for so many for so long. Every Australian State and Territory now has some form of protection for pet ownership in strata—except for New South Wales. This negatively impacts not only people currently in New South Wales strata schemes but also the many more pet owners wanting to move to strata living for a number of reasons. The restrictions on keeping pets make it extremely hard for pet owners to find a decent place to live. For those living in strata buildings, protections ensure that neighbours have a right to enjoy their home. But there is no reason to ban pets outright. That is why our strata laws—and indeed our rental laws—need to change.

Last year I was pleased to sponsor an ePetition calling for an end to blanket pet bans in New South Wales strata schemes, organised by strata pet owner Jo Cooper. The petition was signed by 17,182 people, so unfortunately we did not get to debate it in this Chamber. Jo has been campaigning on this issue in her apartment block for many years. After a five-year legal battle, she was finally successful in the Court of Appeal, which found in favour of Jo and agreed that the by-law that banned pets from the block of flats was unfair. It is clear that this is an unfair situation, and it should not be up to individual owners to have to take legal action against owners corporations to be able to resolve this issue.

That is why, when the bill originally passed this Chamber and went to the other place, it was pleasing to see the amendment moved by the Hon. Emma Hurst of the Animal Justice Party succeed with the support of The Greens to prevent any by-law that unreasonably prohibited the keeping of an animal on a lot. My Greens colleague in the other place Abigail Boyd, who herself has two dogs and lives in strata, spoke in support of that

amendment, saying, "It is well past time that people living in strata have the same rights as everyone else to have their furry friends living in their home with them." We hear the Minister saying there was no consultation on those amendments, but the community concern voiced around this issue made it clear that some action needed to be taken.

That amendment, which recognised the significance of animals to so many in our community, passed the Legislative Council; however, it does not look like it will get support in this place. These are the things that have put us in this situation. The Government and the Minister are in a difficult position where the community is overwhelmingly supportive of an end to pet bans, the court has raised concerns on the issue, and the community and the upper House are joined in their views. There is no doubt that the pressure from property owners and this anti-pet pro-investor Liberal-Nationals Government is what has led us to the situation we are now in. We now come to the amendments before us. The amendments that the member for Sydney has brought to this Chamber are a weakening of the amendment that was passed in the upper House. But, in recognition of the member for Sydney, they are a massive step forward on what currently exists.

The amendments will prohibit pet bans while providing for regulations to offer flexibility to determine where a ban would be reasonable. In addition, the circumstances in which a ban can be imposed will be limited to when a pet would interfere with the enjoyment of another occupant's lot or common property, with consultation to determine such circumstances. The amendments make it clear that it is reasonable to keep a pet in a strata building unless the animal unreasonably interferes with the use and enjoyment of common property by another occupant. Options for regulations will specify when the keeping of a pet might unreasonably interfere—and I can let everybody in this Chamber know that I and Abigail Boyd in the other place will be closely watching the consultation and drafting of those regulations. I make it very clear that The Greens will not hesitate to disallow those regulations if this Government moves to make those regulations in a way that does not follow the intention of this amendment and the wish of the community, which is to recognise that pets are part of everybody's family and to allow our furry friends to be in our homes.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (12:39): I am pleased to lead for the Opposition on the member for Sydney's amendments to the Strata Schemes Management Amendment (Sustainability Infrastructure) Bill 2020 before the House today. The Opposition does not oppose these amendments and did not oppose the Legislative Council amendments from the Animal Justice Party. However, we believe that the amendments before us today from the member for Sydney provide far greater clarity around the keeping of pets in strata schemes. Certainly we welcome a framework to implement the Court of Appeal decision, which facilitates having pets in strata schemes. We believe that a lack of clarity could in fact land people in another five years of standoffs in the courts about whether pets should be allowed.

Currently, the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 only allows tenants or residents with assistance animals the legal right to have an animal in their home. This is despite an estimate from the Law Society of New South Wales that more than two-thirds of households include pets. We know pets are beneficial to the mental, physical and social health of their owners. Pet ownership can be especially important for older people and people with a disability, given the role companion animals can play in keeping people connected. Of course, pet ownership has soared in Australia over the past year, from the earliest days of the COVID-19 pandemic, including among the one million residents of strata schemes. I am sure that some of them have bought pets following the Court of Appeal decision, so we do need to provide some clarity for those people. In the other place the Animal Justice Party amendment to the bill provided that:

- (1) A by-law has no force or effect to the extent that it purports to unreasonably prohibit the keeping of an animal on a lot.

In October 2020 the Court of Appeal found that a strata by-law that places a ban on pets breaches the New South Wales strata schemes legislation and is invalid. It found a blanket ban on pets is "harsh, unconscionable or oppressive". That was a great win for Jo Cooper, who had been fighting to have her dog in the Horizon apartment building for five years at a cost to both sides of tens of thousands of dollars. It is disappointing that it took that level of personal investment for something that should have been pretty straightforward—perhaps something that this place should have set frameworks around some time ago. The amendment by the member for Sydney responds to the Court of Appeal decision by providing that:

- (4) A by-law that prohibits the keeping of an animal on a lot is not harsh, unconscionable or oppressive if it does not unreasonably prohibit the keeping of an animal on a lot.

The amendment further provides:

- (3) The regulations may specify circumstances in which the keeping of an animal unreasonably interferes with another occupant's use and enjoyment of the occupant's lot or the common property.

This is far more in keeping with the Court of Appeal decision. I look forward to seeing those regulations and will certainly be monitoring them very closely, both for myself and for the people of New South Wales. We need to

be very careful to make sure that those regulations lean towards facilitating people having pets in units rather than creating another level of red tape that actually prevents that from happening. That is in keeping with both the decision and community expectations that people should be able to have pets in strata schemes. Wideranging consultation on the development of the regulation will be crucial to clarifying those circumstances in which it is not reasonable to keep a pet in a strata scheme. Certainly it must not be an ever-growing, exhaustive list but one absolutely driven by a narrowly defined examination of what is an unreasonable impact on the other residents of those buildings.

I have a number of questions for the Minister that I hope will be clarified. The Government's discussion paper on the statutory review of New South Wales strata scheme laws notes the keeping of animals in strata schemes has attracted contention and been the source of disputes. The paper seeks feedback on four options: maintaining the status quo, having by-laws that cannot unreasonably prohibit the keeping of pets, the permitting of blanket pet bans, or enshrining the Court of Appeal decision in the Strata Schemes Management Act. I believe it is the latter option that members seek to do in this Chamber today.

If the amendment is agreed to then there will be two simultaneous consultation processes underway concerning pets and strata schemes. I understand that the development of the regulation will be extended beyond the broader consultation on the strata Act and I want an assurance from the Minister that we will not end up with two conflicting proposals. I hope that they will all be tied up and will not delay the development of the regulation beyond six months. Given that the commencement of the statutory review was not well advertised by the Government and that it has been conducted over Christmas, what actions will be taken to ensure that stakeholders, strata owners and residents can have their say? Thousands of people have signed petitions and raised concerns about this particular issue. Will there be targeted consultation with those people and with animal welfare groups?

During COVID, shelters have seen a huge influx of customers buying pets. They will assume that now, following the Court of Appeal decision, they can keep their pets. I ask that those groups also be consulted, not just the peak stakeholder groups that you would normally consult in relation to the statutory review. From what I can gather from talking to the community, not many people are aware that this review is even happening. Given that this issue is so close to people's hearts, it is really important that we go beyond the usual suspects and talk to the people who are dealing with it every day. I also seek clarification from the Minister on the approach that will be taken following the finalisation of the statutory review. If submissions to the review are at odds, will there be another amendment? Those things are very important to consider in making sure that this is done seamlessly and that we are not back here in another six months. We also must not facilitate a process by which residents of strata schemes continue to fight it out in the courts to be able to keep their much-loved pets in their apartments.

The Opposition supports the overarching right to pet ownership but we acknowledge that there may be circumstances where it does not work—where it is excessive and unreasonable in terms of interference with the use of common property or where it is not in the interests of the animal or of other residents. The member for Manly said that it would be unreasonable to have half a dozen Great Danes in the unit. I have a Great Dane and they actually sleep a lot; it would probably be worse to have half a dozen kelpies in a unit.

Mr Kevin Anderson: What have you got against kelpies?

Ms JULIA FINN: They need to run about 20 kilometres a day.

Mr Kevin Anderson: So you're saying six Great Danes is good, but not kelpies?

Ms JULIA FINN: No, six Great Danes are not good in a unit, but they are pretty sleepy and placid. They take up a lot of space but are very sleepy, placid dogs. Kelpies are great but need lots of space to run around. I acknowledge the work that the member for Sydney has done and thank him for his efforts in bringing forth this amendment, as well as the work done previously in the other place by the Animal Justice Party. I acknowledge the Minister for bringing this forward so soon after the Court of Appeal decision and the amendment in the other place. I hope that there will be a very wideranging and well-advertised consultation on this. It is incredibly important. We all love our pets and we all want people to be able to have pets in units, but we need to clarify that that is not an unlimited right. People need to be responsible for their relationships with their neighbours as well as for taking good care of their pets. We welcome the amendments.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (12:49): I thank the member for Sydney for his outstanding contribution to this debate because now I feel comfortable that if I downsize and move into an apartment, I will be able to take with me my Siamese fighting fish, which may well have been denied by the strata body. As a member who represents an area that is regarded as having the highest population density in Australia—Green Square—the laws proposed by the member for Sydney's amendments have significant application. Over the past 10 or 15 years a major transformation that has occurred in Greater Sydney is the movement of families into apartment living. That

has created huge planning demands upon government and councils for open space and for a variety of other associated infrastructure activities. It has also created the demand for companion animals.

It needs to be understood, though, that strata titles legislation is in effect an instrument of land law. A person who owns an apartment within a strata scheme is granted by the State a certificate of title and they own that property or the air space within that property as if it were a parcel of land. They are entitled to the rights of an owner and they are entitled to enjoy that ownership in accordance with the way in which they are entitled to the quiet enjoyment of their property. Because they are strata residences, the quiet enjoyment that they take may impact upon an adjoining owner's entitlement to the quiet utilisation of their property. Consequently, laws are required to entitle owners to have companion animals and provide a mechanism of regulating for their use.

Anybody should be entitled to have a companion animal and other owners within a strata complex are entitled to enjoy their use of their property without being unreasonably impacted by somebody else's companion animal. The solution to the problem of strata bodies unreasonably refusing a person's access to companion animals was the decision by the Court of Appeal. Whether for reasons of mental health or a general entitlement of life, people are entitled to have companion animals provided they do not adversely impact on others. The State also has an interest in ensuring that the companion animals themselves are not impacted by the mechanism by which they are looked after by their owners. As a result, a reasonable balance had to be struck bearing in mind the rights of people as holders of certificate of title or the rights of people as leaseholders who are also entitled to the quiet enjoyment of their property.

Everybody made a significant contribution—such as the member for Sydney, who intervened at the appropriate time; the Hon. Emma Hurst, who until recently was a constituent of mine; and, not to be overlooked, the member for Newtown and Labor members in the upper House. Without those Labor members adopting their position on this legislation, we would not have reached the point of considering amendments in detail. One also should recognise the contribution of the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, who rationally concedes that the amendments before this House are an appropriate resolution to a very difficult question. It still will not be an easy solution that enables disputes to be resolved quickly, but it certainly sets out and restores a fundamental principle. I commend the amendments moved by the member for Sydney to the House.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (12:54): It is obvious that members on this side love pets. That is why this amendment is being supported so well in the House today. The member for Sydney told the House about his rescue dog. The member for Granville spoke about her great Dane and the member for Heffron spoke about his Siamese fighting fish. In solidarity, I refer to my pet Clancy. In all seriousness, I support the amendment moved by the member for Sydney to the Strata Schemes Management Amendment (Sustainability Infrastructure) Bill 2020. As other members have mentioned, this amendment expands on an amendment originally moved in the upper House by the Animal Justice Party, which was supported by Labor and the crossbench. The shadow Minister and the member for Granville, whose contribution and work I acknowledge, has said that Labor supports the removal of blanket bans on pets. Importantly, we support the introduction of a reasonableness test, which this amendment achieves.

It is our belief that pet owners must be given the opportunity to keep companion animals responsibly, ethically and cooperatively. However, strata corporations must also have recourse available to them when residents' pets interfere with the peaceful enjoyment of other residents' homes or the common property. Labor is also concerned that much of this debate has been litigated in the courts and in the media, revealing a huge gap in the legislation that is long overdue for correction. Hopefully this amendment will end the uncertainty for pet owners, strata managers and prospective purchasers of apartments who may want to keep pets or who may have an apprehension about other lot owners' pets.

I note the comments of the Minister regarding the Strata Schemes Legislation Undertaking Statutory Review and the Minister's preference that this amendment be discussed at a later time. I remind the Minister that this Coalition Government has been governing for 10 years and this matter has been discussed over and over again by the courts and the media; the ongoing litigation has been very public. This matter has been debated for 10 years but nothing has been done. Now is the time for this Parliament to make this sensible change that we have been waiting for. I also note the Minister's comments concerning no consultation. Again, I remind the Minister that this conversation has been had amongst strata communities for the past decade in which this Government has been in office. It is preposterous to suggest that there has been no time for consultation.

While this amendment removes the blanket bans at a strata level, it does not compel landlords to allow pets in rentals. Both sides of the argument has caused significant confusion at times during this debate about the effect of these amendments and whether they would compel landlords to allow pets. I make it clear that this amendment does not give rise to that outcome and neither did the amendment moved by the Animal Justice Party in the upper House last year. That is a debate for another day and we should be careful not to muddy the waters of today's debate on the amendment to the strata sustainability infrastructure bill. I commend the amendment to the House.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:59): I support the Strata Schemes Management Amendment (Sustainability Infrastructure) Bill 2020 introduced by the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation and as amended by the member for Sydney. My wife and I are foster failures. We took on a foster rescue puppy from our local animal shelter, of which I am the very proud patron. We took Fitz on board in our strata apartment approximately six or seven months ago and, of course, he is now a permanent feature. We took on the foster role and failed dismally at it as there was no way we could ever hand him back. I am a proud pet owner living in a strata apartment. I thank the Minister, and the member for Sydney for bringing forward these amendments.

The bill before the House contains amendments passed by the other place, which, as the Minister outlined, were not supported by the Government because they were inserted without consultation with the strata community. So it was the amendments that were brought forward from the other place that the strata community had not been consulted about. Obviously, there has been wide consultation with regard to strata and pet ownership, but the bill did not provide that certainty for strata owners like my wife and I or take into account the decisions of the New South Wales Court of Appeal in the *Cooper v The Owners* case.

The amended bill removes the uncertainty and is responsive to the needs of the strata community. We are very happy living in strata, but are even happier that we have Fitz with us. The amendments provide that neither a by-law nor a decision by an owners corporation under a by-law can unreasonably prohibit the keeping of an animal on a strata lot. It is important that the amendment applies to both a by-law and a decision under a by-law. This means that if a by-law states that a pet can be kept only with the approval of the owners corporation, it cannot unreasonably prohibit the keeping of the animal. Having companion animals is incredibly good for people who are living by themselves. It improves their mental health and provides great companionship for both dogs and owners. As an MP I spend a lot of time away, and Fitz is an amazing companion for Jill when she is home alone and Parliament is sitting. He plays a very important role in our family.

Mr Stuart Ayres: You could be very easily replaced.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: I was going to say: I could be very easily replaced. He is a lot cuter than me, let me tell you! The amendments also require the Minister to review the Act as it relates to the keeping of animals and table a report on the review in both Houses of Parliament within six months. The amendments are a considered response to the Court of Appeal decision in the Cooper case that determined that a by-law that imposes a blanket prohibition on the keeping of pets with no reference to the impact on other lot owners is oppressive. However, the decision was not an exhaustive statement of when a by-law can be harsh, unconscionable or oppressive.

It therefore leaves open the possibility that other by-laws relating to pets could also be found to be harsh, unconscionable or oppressive. This means that there is currently no certainty about when a pet's by-law is valid. For this reason the amendment provides that if a by-law complies with the new provisions, it is not harsh, unconscionable or oppressive. This is an important provision that can help to ensure certainty for strata owners. The amendment will also help to provide certainty by allowing the regulations to prescribe circumstances where the keeping of an animal unreasonably interferes with another occupant's use or enjoyment of their lot or the common property.

The requirement for a review of the Act as it relates to the keeping of pets is a sensible response to the amendments passed by the other place and is welcomed by the Government. The Government supports this review, as it will be undertaken alongside the broader statutory review of the strata scheme laws and will be considered as part of the development of the regulations. I commend the Minister, who is in the House, for that. Public consultation on the statutory review of the Strata Schemes Management Act commenced in December 2020.

I thank the Minister for bringing the bill to the House. I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Sydney in providing a balanced and fair approach to this issue. I am a proud foster failure and a very proud patron of the Central Coast Animal Care Facility, which has a no-kill policy. The staff there do an amazing job. Dee and her team are absolutely outstanding. Not only do they have a no-kill policy but they also rescue animals from other facilities that have a kill policy. I commend the Minister and the member for Sydney for these amendments, and I commend the amendments to the House.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (13:03): Before the Minister speaks in reply, I acknowledge and thank all members who have contributed to this important debate, which is a good way to start the parliamentary year. This bill, which is supported by all members, is the result of good faith collaboration between upper House and lower House members, and I highlight the leadership of the Hon. Emma Hurst from the Animal Justice Party and the work of the Minister. It has been very heartwarming to hear people's stories of their own companion animals. I hope that that passion and caring concern for their companion animals continues on into other areas of animal welfare reform, which I think is going to be important for this place to continue to deal with. I thank all

members for dealing with what is a complex issue in a very important way and I acknowledge the important consultation process that will now begin to help set the regulations.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (13:05): In reply: I support the amendments by the member for Sydney. As always, it is great to work with the member for Sydney. We always end up with good outcomes—that robust debate and that contest of ideas ends up with good policy and ultimately the people of New South Wales benefit. The amendments provide that neither a by-law nor a decision by an owners corporation under a by-law can unreasonably prohibit the keeping of an animal on a strata lot. They will provide that it is reasonable to keep an animal unless doing so unreasonably interferes with another occupant's use and enjoyment of their lot or the common property. The amendments will enable regulations to be made specifying the circumstances in which the keeping of an animal unreasonably interferes with another occupant's use and enjoyment of their lot or common property. They will also require the Minister to review the Act as it relates to the keeping of animals and table a report on that review in both Houses of Parliament within six months. The Minister is to consider the report before recommending the making of a regulation.

The Government supports the amendments. They strike the right balance between the interests of those who wish to keep animals in strata schemes and those who might be affected by the keeping of animals. The amendments achieve that balance by enshrining the principle that strata residents have the right to use and enjoy their lot as they wish, as long as that does not unreasonably interfere with the ability of other residents to use and enjoy their lot or the common property. In that way, the amendments codify the recent decision handed down by the New South Wales Court of Appeal in *Cooper v The Owners – Strata Plan No 58068* [2020] NSWCA 250, giving certainty to both pet owners and strata owners.

That decision overturned a by-law that imposed a blanket ban on the keeping of pets. The court decided that a by-law could be harsh or unconscionable if it limits the ability of a lot owner to use their property on a basis that has no connection to the impact on other lot owners. Some stakeholders have objected to the Court of Appeal decision. Some are unhappy that it interferes with the property rights of strata lot owners to use their property as they wish, while others are unhappy that it limits the ability of owners corporations to make the by-laws they wish to govern their scheme. However, the Government's view is that a balance needs to be struck between allowing lot owners to use their property as they wish and not unreasonably interfering with the rights of other owners to also enjoy their lots and the common property.

In the Government's view, the member for Sydney's amendments are a reasonable response to its concerns with the amendment that was passed in the other place. The Government is concerned that the original amendment required only very limited factors to be considered when deciding whether it is reasonable to prohibit the keeping of an animal. Those factors relate exclusively to the needs of the animal, rather than the impact of the animal on other lot owners. It is concerned also that the amendment passed in the other place does not provide sufficient certainty for the strata community about when an animal can be kept in a lot. The member for Sydney's amendments deal with that in two ways. Firstly, they ensure that by-laws which comply with the new provision cannot be found to be harsh, unconscionable or oppressive; and secondly, they allow the Government to make regulations that specify circumstances in which the keeping of a pet would unreasonably interfere with another occupant's use or enjoyment of their lot or the common property.

The member for Sydney's amendments require that a review of the Strata Schemes Management Act, as it relates to the keeping of animals, be undertaken, with a report to be tabled in each House of Parliament. The amendments also require consideration of that report before regulations under the new provision are made. The Government supports this review as it will be undertaken concurrently with the broader statutory review of the Act, which opened for public consultation in December 2020. It has always been this Government's intention as part of the statutory review to seek the views of the community on how well the laws governing pets in strata properties are operating and find ways to improve those laws.

The scope of the review into the keeping of animals is wideranging and ties in well with the Government's existing work as part of the statutory review. This review, alongside the wider statutory review, will assist the Government in exercising the new regulation-making power that is an important part of the amendments moved by the member for Sydney. It will also give us time to consult with stakeholders further and understand the circumstances in which keeping a pet would unreasonably interfere with another occupant's use or enjoyment of their lot or the common property and therefore outline the circumstances when owners could make a by-law prohibiting pets, or certain types of pets. I make this point very clearly and I back the member for Manly, who said "these amendments do not give carte blanche for strata residents to move in with half a dozen Great Danes or a choir of loud tabby cats".

This power is welcomed as it will allow the Government to provide the strata community with greater certainty on how to make valid by-laws for the keeping of animals. These changes are a considered response to allow the growing number of strata owners to own a pet. The Government will use the period of six months

between assent to this Act and the commencement of the new provisions on pets to consult on how those regulations should be drafted to make the laws work best for the strata community. In conclusion, these amendments will help the strata community respond to the desire of many residents to keep pets, while balancing this against the need to protect the amenity of other residents and providing certainty about the application of the law.

I thank the member for Sydney for bringing forward these balanced and fair amendments to the bill. I also thank other members of this place for their contributions: the member for Manly and the member for Newtown, who, despite throwing shade on the collaborative work done between members of both Houses to achieve this sensible outcome, tried to claim it as her own. However, success has many fathers. I also thank the member for Granville and assure her that consultation will occur as part of the statutory review. I can update the member for Granville and inform her that we will extend the consultation period of the statutory review for one month on this issue relating to pets: It will now end on 7 March. I thank the member for Heffron, and I am pleased to say that, when he thinks about downsizing, with this sensible outcome he now can take his Siamese fighting fish.

In reply to a comment from the member for Granville that nobody knows that consultation and discussion have been going on in relation to pets in the strata community, as at 4 February 9,451 people had participated in a poll on pets, 496 people had completed surveys or made a submission on both Acts, 938 had downloaded the document, and there had been over 1,300 visits to the web page. We are ensuring that people who live in strata properties have the opportunity to have their say. I also thank the member for Swansea for her contribution and the member for Terrigal—a proud pet owner in the strata community, who is obviously struggling to win a popularity contest in his family between him and his pet—

Mr Adam Crouch: And losing.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: —and is a proud supporter of the animal care shelter. I too am a proud pet owner. I own two dogs and they have a great time. These are sensible amendments and I thank the member for Sydney for bringing them to the House. I commend the motion to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The question is that the amendment of the member for Sydney to the motion of the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The question now is that the motion of the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation as amended be agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I move:

That a message be sent to the Legislative Council advising it of the Legislative Assembly's disagreement with the Legislative Council amendment and of the further amendments proposed by the Legislative Assembly.

Motion agreed to.

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

Announcements

ELECTORATE OFFICES

The SPEAKER: I welcome members to a new year of question time sittings. I am pleased that I or my chief of staff have visited more than 85 of the 93 electorates in New South Wales, which has been very interesting and useful. I thank all members for their welcomes, particularly those whose electorate offices we visited recently, and for your ongoing efforts to contribute to this Parliament. I certainly look forward to the year ahead.

CONDUCT OF MEMBERS

The SPEAKER: As we start the new year I ask members to remember that just as our example on COVID compliance measures is important, so too is the standard of behaviour that we display in this Chamber. I remind members that robust exchanges are welcome, as is good humour; however, disrespectful shouting or personal abuse is not. While I believe that the culture of this place has improved, we can do better to meet the public's expectations. I thank members for trying to move further towards that objective.

PARLIAMENTARY APPOINTMENTS

The SPEAKER: Recently the Parliament released a new communications, engagement and education strategy, which is aimed at strengthening engagement with the public and enhancing trust in the Parliament.

A copy of that strategy is being sent to all members this week. To lead work over the next six months the Department of Parliamentary Services has appointed Lisa Thomas as Director of Communications, Engagement and Education. Lisa started with the Parliament this week. Parliament has also seconded Steven Collins from the Public Service Commission into the important role of Aboriginal Liaison Officer to work with members and the administration on engagement with Aboriginal communities. I welcome Lisa and Steven to the Parliament and wish them well.

**DEATH OF THE HON. IAN MORTON ARMSTRONG, A FORMER MINISTER OF THE CROWN
AND MEMBER FOR LACHLAN**

The SPEAKER (14:18): It is with regret that I inform the House of the death on 15 December 2020 of the Hon. Ian Morton Armstrong, a former Minister of the Crown, who served as the member for Lachlan from 19 September 1981 to 2 March 2007. On behalf of the House, I extend to his family the deep sympathy of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained. The death of the Hon. Ian Morton Armstrong will be the subject of a motion of sympathy on a future day.

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

Documents

CALIFORNIA BUSHFIRES

The SPEAKER: I table a letter dated 17 November 2020 from Anthony Rendon, who is the Speaker of the Assembly of the California State Legislature, our sister State legislature, regarding the 2020 California wildfires.

Bills

RETIREMENT VILLAGES AMENDMENT BILL 2020

STRONGER COMMUNITIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (DOMESTIC VIOLENCE) BILL 2020

BUSHFIRES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2020

NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (RESERVATIONS) BILL 2020

DRUG SUPPLY PROHIBITION ORDER PILOT SCHEME BILL 2020

LIQUOR AMENDMENT (24-HOUR ECONOMY) BILL 2020

APPROPRIATION BILL 2020

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL 2020

PAYROLL TAX AMENDMENT BILL 2020

ELECTRICITY INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT BILL 2020

Assent

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

Governor

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

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

Notices

PRESENTATION

[During the giving of notices of motions]

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

Question Time

BUSHFIRE SUPPORT GRANTS

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:21): My question is directed to the Premier. The Premier has used public funds to, using her words, "curry favour" and has politicised bushfire relief. Her office shredded the

evidence and broke the law. Will the Premier appear before the parliamentary inquiry into her Government's roting of grants?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:21): There is a number of imputations in the Opposition leader's question, which I refute. But I will start by saying this: This time 12 months ago most of our State was either covered in haze or recovering from—or in fact still undergoing—the catastrophic fires that devastated lives and property. Not that the Government would ever want to promote how much it spends or invests when devastation has been wreaked through the State, but more than \$4 billion has been invested to support our communities across the State, the vast majority of which has come from the New South Wales Government. I had the privilege to visit 45 bushfire-impacted communities in a short amount of time with senior firefighters Commissioner Fitzsimmons and Commissioner Baxter, on occasion the Deputy Premier and on occasion Minister Elliott. I have seen the devastation, I have seen where the dollars are going and where they need to go, and I say to everybody involved, "Yes, you can politicise and ask whatever questions you like, but consider that many people throughout the State—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: The question was specifically: Will the Premier appear before the parliamentary inquiry into her Government's roting of grants? Will the Premier appear before the inquiry, as did the Deputy Premier?

The SPEAKER: The Premier has been generally relevant. She may continue.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Again I refute what the Leader of the Opposition has said in her question. In the Bega community, as the member for Bega would know, more than 1,000 homes were destroyed. In the Shoalhaven more than 1,000 homes—

Ms Trish Doyle: What about the Blue Mountains?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In the Blue Mountains more than 100 homes were destroyed.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gosford will remain silent. I call the member for South Coast to order for the first time. I call the member for The Entrance to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I reiterate that more than \$4 billion has been committed to the recovery efforts. I also emphasise that as I visited many communities throughout the State over the summer, many of whom had been impacted by the fires, the emotion on the ground—

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order—

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

Ms Yasmin Catley: There are many avenues that the Premier—

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

Ms Yasmin Catley: I want to know why the Premier—

The SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Ms Yasmin Catley: It is Standing Order 129. She is not answering the question. John Barilaro presented at that inquiry. Why won't you?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Again, in relation to the specific—

The SPEAKER: The member for Swansea is on her last warning. One more word and she will be out of the Chamber.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Firstly, in relation to the specific fund that is under question—which creates jobs, builds resilience and increases our preparedness—I am advised that applications for the second round closed only at the end of January.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129. The Premier is answering a question that only she has heard. The question I asked was: Will the Premier appear before the parliamentary inquiry into the roting of grants by her Government? A yes or a no, Premier. You are leaving communities behind. Yes or no?

The SPEAKER: The Premier is being generally relevant. The Premier may continue. The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: They do not like the truth or the answers. They do not like the truth.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Keira to order for the second time. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I note the assertion that certain communities did not receive the funding that they needed. The applications for funds closed only at the end of January and they are going through that process now. I appreciate that the Blue Mountains in particular has received attention. The advice that I have received is that \$30 million in Federal and State government bushfire support has been received by that council.

The SPEAKER: Has the Premier concluded her answer?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I would appreciate an extension if the Leader of the Opposition will give me one.

Ms Jodi McKay: I will give the Premier an extension of time if she actually answers the question that I asked.

The SPEAKER: The time has expired.

Ms Jodi McKay: The Premier asked for an extension.

The SPEAKER: It was not sought in time.

COVID-19 AND STATE ECONOMY

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (14:27): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Government has been protecting lives and protecting jobs in New South Wales?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:27): I thank the member for Manly for his question. As I alluded to in my previous answer, this time last year our communities were extremely raw—and some of them are still raw—from the devastating, catastrophic fires. This summer communities across the State were dealing with the COVID pandemic on top of that. In particular I take the opportunity in this place to thank the communities of the northern beaches. They underwent a stay-at-home request or a lockdown, as is common language, in relation to the outbreak that we had. In particular I thank the member for Manly for his efforts in supporting his community during that time, especially his local businesses, and for advising me on what was happening.

I extend that level of gratitude to Minister Stokes in Pittwater and, of course, to health Minister Hazzard in Wakehurst, who first and foremost was able to give good advice to the Government on the various issues occurring in that region. I say on behalf of the people of New South Wales that the sacrifice made by the people of the northern beaches meant that Greater Sydney could remain open and that many people were able to enjoy Christmas and New Year's in a way we did not think we would. It is interesting to note that in a period of two or three days there were over 40 cases of community transmission, which was a huge amount compared with what other States have gone through, yet the community of the northern beaches responded to our advice and accepted it. I am incredibly proud of the fact that a few days before Christmas on one day more than 69,000 people came forward for testing. That gave us confidence not only that the strategies were working but also that the community was working with us to help us solve a very challenging situation.

I also appreciate the impact on business and on people's wellbeing that the stay-at-home or the lockdown had in that community. I again extend my gratitude to the Treasurer and the Minister for Finance and Small Business in another place for making sure that small businesses were supported during that time; to—obviously from a health perspective—our health workers for providing advice and supporting businesses to prepare for gearing back in a COVID-safe way; and to the other services for supporting those who may have experienced isolation. What we experienced on the northern beaches was, I feel, a good example and a good case study of how New South Wales has chosen to deal with the pandemic. Every day is a challenge. Every day we do not know what risks lie ahead. But what we do know is what works. We know that what works is trying to keep the virus at bay and keeping health and safety the first and foremost priority for the Government, but also acknowledging that we need to work as hard as we can to keep the economy open and to keep our jobs going.

We need to make sure that not only are we keeping people healthy and safe, but also we are keeping them in work and we are keeping them united with their families where possible and able to go about their business in a COVID-safe way as much as possible. We know that in reality the virus has no boundaries. Anywhere you go in New South Wales, I thank the people of this State for respecting the Government's advice and helping us to achieve the results we have, but also for acknowledging that the path ahead will be difficult as we come out of what is perhaps the more intense part of the pandemic. We did not really know how the virus would respond to the Australian setting a year ago—we know much more today than we did last year—and the challenges that this

year will bring once JobKeeper and other support mechanisms are no longer there. Our Government is prepared. Since last year the Treasurer, the Deputy Premier, I and many members of the team have been working on strategies to ensure that business activity not only continues but also grows, and that people can feel more secure about their jobs and can come back to the workplace.

It was heartening to see in the past couple of weeks the extra numbers of people who are coming to our larger cities, because we know what the economic hit to jobs and the economy has been in the larger cities and, of course, in Sydney—Australia's truly international city. I acknowledge the great work done by the NSW Police Force. Were it not for its efforts, New South Wales would not have the strongest quarantine system in the nation. We are welcoming back home 3,000 Australians every week on behalf of the nation. We do so on compassionate grounds. We do so because we know that until we return all the Australians who want to get back home, we will not be able to turn our minds to doing other things that can support our efforts to create jobs into the future. I thank the New South Wales police for their efforts in working with Health and other State and Federal agencies. It is a mammoth task. In total, New South Wales has welcomed more than half of all Australians who have come back home. [*Extension of time*]

This is why I have been a very strong advocate of keeping open our internal borders in Australia. There is no reason why we should have closed borders within Australia. I completely appreciate and understand why we have our borders intact and tight as a nation, but within Australia all Australians should be able to move around freely.

[*Opposition members interjected.*]

I note that members of the Opposition have raised the Victorian example. Victoria had in excess of 180 cases per day before we closed that border. I stress again to the citizens of this State our deepest gratitude on behalf of frontline workers and everybody who has supported the Government's efforts. Without the community supporting our initiatives and our advice, we would not be where we are. In addition to our frontline health workers and our health experts—ably led by our Chief Health Officer, Dr Kerry Chant—and New South Wales police and emergency services, a special thanks goes to Service NSW and its entire customer service department.

Service NSW has demonstrated its capacity to be the contact point between our citizens and the Government. It makes sure that every time there is a support mechanism, every time we want people to be safe—whether it is through our QR code system or receiving information—that people receive the support they need. I thank Minister Dominello and his team. Early on in the pandemic we announced that a thousand extra staff would be employed to support the efforts of Service NSW. In New South Wales we accept that dealing with this pandemic is a whole-of-government approach. Health leads us through its advice but our success is because Team New South Wales has worked together with the community to be where we are.

COVID-19 VACCINE

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:35): My question is directed to the Minister for Health and Medical Research. Surveys show that up to one-quarter of the population is unlikely to get vaccinated when the COVID-19 vaccine becomes available. Given New South Wales has the largest health service in the country, will the Minister adopt Labor's proposal to appoint a vaccine rollout coordinator, launch a public information campaign and utilise State government workers, facilities and services to ensure the vaccine reaches everyone as soon as possible?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (14:35): I thank the member for Keira for his question. I indicate to him that each of the States and Territories, Labor and Liberal, has worked with, and continue to work with, the Federal Government on the vaccine rollout. It is fair to say that the past year has been an extremely challenging time for each State and Territory, and obviously for the community. We have all found it challenging to meet a once in 100 years pandemic where there is no playbook or guide. No-one has lived through a pandemic like this before. I thank my Labor and Liberal colleagues in each of the States and Territories for working very well together. The health Ministers are in constant communication with each other.

If it were this time last year, it would literally be a few days after our first four cases on 25 January—one was being investigated on the day but was confirmed the following day—three gentlemen in their forties and fifties and one 21-year-old young lady. As it moved along it became extremely challenging and, as I said earlier, no-one had a playbook. No-one knew what to do. But we did it, and we worked together. Each of the States and Territories through the National Cabinet, led by our first Ministers, has risen very well to the challenges of the pandemic compared to the rest of the world.

This time last year we could not have dreamed that within a year we would have a vaccine, let alone multiple vaccines. It does not matter that some challenges are still to be addressed. What matters is that each of the governments, including the Federal Government, has worked, and will continue to work, extremely well

together to ensure that as far as humanly possible the vaccines that are available—and others will become available—will be rolled out to the Australian community. The Federal Government has invested more than \$3 billion into those vaccines. The initial vaccine is the Pfizer vaccine, which is a novel vaccine—we have a novel coronavirus and a novel vaccine. It is a messenger RNA vaccine; the first of its type ever. I remind the House that vaccines normally take 15 to 16 years, possibly longer, to obtain and these have been obtained within 12 months.

Not all is known about the vaccines, but the fact of the matter is that we have a strong regulatory structure in Australia through the Therapeutic Goods Administration [TGA], which all State and Territory governments—Labor and Liberal—acknowledge. At this stage the Pfizer vaccine has been approved. Hopefully in the near future the AstraZeneca vaccine will be approved and other vaccines are coming down the line. It is fair to say that each of the State and Territory governments are satisfied with the work of the TGA and with the availability of the vaccines in a difficult and challenging time. We must keep in mind that to some degree the Federal Government had to take a stab in the dark as to which vaccines it chose to get contractual arrangements or options on. Its book is not closed in that regard; nor do any of the States' representatives have closed minds in regard to the vaccines that might come along. Whilst I appreciate the suggestions of the member for Keira, I note that no such suggestions have been made up until this moment in the House, and no such similar measures have been suggested by any other Labor government around—

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: I have written to the Minister about it.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: No such proposals have been initiated or considered absolutely necessary. I will say to the member that if he has suggestions I am happy to talk to him. We have tried to be as bipartisan as we can in this State and across the country. I am happy to talk about it. He can talk to me after question time. I am happy to put those issues to the Chief Health Officer to be considered at the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee meetings and any other meetings that occur with all the State and Territory governments.

REGIONAL JOBS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (14:41): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how the Government is creating jobs to grow regional communities?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:41): It is great to be back. I hope members had a great break and Christmas and reconnected with family. I thank the member for Cootamundra for her question and the work she does in rural and regional New South Wales. A big part of that was in an area that was battered by bushfires where she represented me. She is my Parliamentary Secretary and is working hard, especially across the south. At the end of the day, our job as a government is to create jobs. I do not like it when politicians say, "Look at the number of jobs we have created—200,000, 300,000, 400,000." Often politicians claim job creation.

The best thing we can do as a government is create confidence in the market and in businesses to invest and create jobs. Mums and dads who gamble their kids' futures and take the risk of mortgaging their homes to be part of the small business economy and the private sector are the ones who create jobs. As a Government we must help and support them and create that environment. We must lead, which we can do through a couple of avenues. One is infrastructure spending. The \$104 billion infrastructure spend over the next four years by the New South Wales Government will stimulate the economy, create jobs and create opportunities for those businesses.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gosford will come to order.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: More importantly, one area the Government can lead on is what happens in the public service. Last week throughout regional and rural New South Wales, as part of the regional vision launch we announced that when public service job vacancies are not location specific, those jobs will be offered as regionally preferred. That gives the Government an opportunity to lead in creating jobs in regional and rural New South Wales in the public service sector. We have also identified that we do not just want any public sector jobs in the bush or in the regions. By 2023 we are aiming to increase the level of executive roles in regional and rural New South Wales to a minimum of clerk grade 11 or 12. Why? I want the decision-makers of government in the public service to live, work and play in regional and rural New South Wales.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: If they live and raise their families in regional New South Wales, if their kids go to the same school or play at the same netball court, if they drink at the same pub, it means they will understand our communities and they will make better decisions. I was excited to announce that last week and I was excited last year that the Government is leading the way yet again with the decentralisation of another agency—the Department of Regional NSW—with four hubs across the State. We were in Armidale a little while ago where

I announced that the Old Teachers' College will become the Armidale hub. Up to 100 regional New South Wales public service jobs will be located there.

It is a beautiful old building. Funnily enough, an education Minister from the National Party or Country Party at the time who located and built that particular teachers college. It is funny that today, so many decades on, we are talking about decentralisation and more jobs in a regional setting like Armidale. I thank the members who trekked out to the electorate of Clarence and Grafton for the vision launch. In 2018 we launched a 20-year blueprint for regional and rural New South Wales to create jobs and invest in infrastructure. But it was not just a glossy statement; it was matched with the Regional Growth Fund. More importantly, every single cent of the \$4.2 billion that we have legislated in the House will be spent in regional and rural New South Wales. We will build dams, roads and rail. We will put in place special activation precincts.

In the beautiful town of Parkes in the electorate of the member for Orange, where the first special activation precinct is up and running, we are attracting industry and creating jobs. It is no different in Wagga Wagga for the independent member, Dr Joe McGirr. The Wagga Wagga special activation precinct is exciting for the people of Wagga Wagga. There is another special activation precinct in Moree and one in Williamstown. In Narrabri, because of gas, the catalyst and inland rail, there is—guess what—another special activation precinct. This is about driving investment and attracting private sector investment into regional and rural New South Wales. We have a vision. We have a plan. More importantly, we have the dollars to back our vision. It is about creating confidence in regional and rural New South Wales by luck or chance.

I know that COVID has been a terrible year for so many right across the globe and even in Australia. The year 2020 is one that you want to hopefully write off. We either went on a sabbatical and forgot all about it or, as a nation and as people and communities, we came together and withstood the threat of the virus. In 2021 we have learned something about it. As the health Minister has touched on, there was no playbook; there was no rule book. It was a bit of a hit and miss at times. But we got through it as a nation. Compared with the rest of the world, clearly every State in Australia has done it very well. [*Extension of time*]

A bonus that came off the back of COVID, when everybody was locked down and working remotely, was that people could work remotely off a digital platform and be part of the public service. They did not have to work in Sydney or the CBD. We have an exciting opportunity. People are looking to the regions, not just to visit during tourism—and we have seen a big boost to domestic tourism in regional and rural New South Wales. It was absolutely exciting. It did not matter where I went over the break and since coming back and touring the State: Sydneysiders and Australians are clearly visiting the regions. That is exciting for the bush. Off the back of drought we were doing it tough. All the rains have come. We have seen some of the biggest harvests in the State. Prices for land and cattle are through the roof. In 12 months things have changed in the bush. The opportunity off the back of COVID is that people have realised that they can live, work and play in regional and rural New South Wales. That is what we are attracting. There is already an exodus from Sydney and other metro cities into regional New South Wales.

Real estate in regional New South Wales is now climbing. There is prosperity and jobs. Agriculture and tourism are booming. But we cannot just sit on our hands; we have to prepare for the future. Droughts will come again. The mining downturn will come again. We will, of course, see opportunities where tourism will be impacted no different to what occurred last year. We have an opportunity to revise and we have revised the vision for 2020, identifying the sectors that will be important to the future with not just any jobs but bloody great jobs for our kids—jobs of the future that we have not even thought about. We want those catalyst industries in regional and rural New South Wales today. The Government is leading through regionalisation, decentralisation and investment in infrastructure across all our funds, from amenities for our kids to play at the local footy ground to the best education, health, hospitals, roads and rail. More importantly, we are creating an environment for the best jobs. That has to be our focus. If we have learnt anything from 2020 and from the past—bushfires, droughts, COVID, floods—we have to set up a new resilient New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Rockdale to order for the second time.

BUSHFIRE SUPPORT GRANTS

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (14:48): My question is directed to the Premier. The Calga Walkabout Wildlife Sanctuary lost around a quarter of a million dollars because of the bushfires. My community suffered \$163 million in economic damages. Why did the Calga Walkabout Wildlife Sanctuary and everyone else in my community miss out on any bushfire relief?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:49): I thank the member for Gosford for her question and for the private note she sent me regarding the way the Government is conducting its activities to

support the people of New South Wales. Unlike some of those members opposite I will not divulge what was in that private note, but I am deeply grateful for those words and I assume they were sincere.

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

Ms Liesl Tesch: I was hoping it would have a better outcome, Premier.

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

Mr David Mehan: It did not do her much good.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As I said, the New South Wales Government has invested and will continue to invest in those communities that are desperately recovering from the bushfires. Those members who are at the coalface have seen the way in which their communities are struggling to rebuild. I pay tribute to the Department of Regional NSW, under the auspices of the Deputy Premier. We promised that by June last year we would complete getting rid of all the material to allow people to rebuild. However, we know the rebuilding will take years for some communities. We know the infrastructural and environmental losses will take years to replenish.

The SPEAKER: The member for Swansea will cease interjecting.

Ms Liesl Tesch: Point of order: That is fantastic, Premier, but my community missed out completely.

The SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Ms Liesl Tesch: It is Standing Order 129, relevance.

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

Ms Liesl Tesch: My community missed out completely. Our postcodes received nothing.

The SPEAKER: I have heard enough from the member for Gosford. The Premier will continue.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I understand from the Deputy Premier that applications totalling one-quarter of a billion dollars' worth of grants closed at the end of January. I am not sure who applied and who did not.

Ms Liesl Tesch: It has been over a year. Three different grants were rejected.

Ms Kate Washington: Businesses have gone bust in the meantime.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the first time. I understand that it affects the member for Gosford's community, but if she keeps going she will leave the Chamber.

Ms Liesl Tesch: My community wants me to ask this question, Mr Speaker.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I appreciate that every community wants immediate attention. I wish that we could provide immediate attention to every single—

Mr David Harris: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This is a question specifically about the Central Coast.

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

Mr David Harris: Nambucca gets a rock wall on the coast, which has nothing to do with bushfires—

The SPEAKER: The member for Wyong will resume his seat.

Mr David Harris: —and we do not get a single cent.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Wyong to order for the first time. I asked him to resume his seat. I call the member for Wyong to order for the second time. That is enough.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I find it curious that the member for Wyong says they get nothing. We have built a new hospital in Gosford and one in Wyong.

[Opposition members interjected.]

Ms Liesl Tesch: We expect health and we expect education but we want bushfire support.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Gosford from the Chamber under Standing Order 249.

[The member for Gosford left the Chamber at 14.52 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]

Mr John Barilaro: You have got bushfire support: \$4.4 billion of bushfire support!

The SPEAKER: I call the Deputy Premier to order for the third time. This is an important issue but it does not justify members breaching the standing orders. The Premier has the call.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: For those communities that wish to apply for further funding or present their case those opportunities are ongoing and available. I will not understate the task ahead of us. I have seen it with my own eyes and spoken to people on the ground. Members who represent city electorates cannot underestimate the impact of the devastation in our regions. Some of our colleagues had more than 1,000 buildings destroyed in their electorates. Some of our colleagues had untold devastation to infrastructure and to the environment. Our State is going through the rebuilding process and we are committed to that process. It has been 12 months since the bushfires. During that time, as the health Minister stated, from Australia Day of last year our State was on high alert dealing with a pandemic. Our State has just been through four years of devastating drought, natural disaster, bushfires and COVID. Our commitment to support the community of our State will never weaken. It has only strengthened our resolve to support everybody in New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Wyong to order for the third time.

JOBS GROWTH

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (14:54): My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer please update the House on job creation and job-creation initiatives?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:54): Mr Speaker, welcome back. It is the first day of school for 2021 and we are entering our eleventh year of Government here in New South Wales. For 11 years the Opposition has been repeating every single year. I was thinking about this. My eldest daughter, Charlotte, was a baby back in 2011 when we came to office. We have almost got her through her entire primary education without experiencing a Labor government and she is going all the way through the HSC. She wants to go to university—master's degree, PhD, be Treasurer. She is going all the way. This is a generation of children whom we are saving from ever experiencing a Labor government.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Kogarah to order for the first time. I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Swansea and the member for Gosford from the Chamber.

[The member for Swansea and the member for Gosford left the Chamber at 14:55 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: That was quick. Who is next? Let us go back to 2011.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: There are two sides to the Chamber.

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

Mr Ryan Park: Will you adjudicate both sides?

The SPEAKER: The member for Keira will come to my chair. The Treasurer will continue.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Naughty boy. Off he goes; off to see the teacher on the first day back. Anyway, 500,000 jobs have been created since 2011 in New South Wales. For context, that is almost the size of the populations of Newcastle and Wollongong combined. We had a \$30 billion infrastructure backlog and since then have seen record investments across the board: \$107 billion of investment over the next four years, right across the State. This will drive economic growth and jobs growth, adding half a percentage point to economic growth and supporting around 100,000 jobs. For context, if members look at a comparable State like Victoria—which little Tim Pallas calls a "big build"—its investment is \$55 billion. I have not worked out what we would call ours, but it is certainly the biggest.

As we know, though, 2020 was a very difficult year for our State. The fact that we are where we are today, entering 2021, is testament to the resilience of our people right across the board last year—particularly the work of the public service—and our coordinated approach to both health and the economy. We have certainly led the way, but that response did not happen by accident. Members can see that around the world. We have laid strong foundations for this once-in-100-years event. We are open and ready to go. Looking at the record investments in health since 2011, we are now in a position to have the best tracking and tracing teams in the entire country, if not

the world. The Premier spoke about Service NSW, probably one of the unheralded aspects of the pandemic in terms of coordinating the back office of government.

Can you imagine the old Labor RTA trying to deal with a pandemic? Labor opposed Service NSW. You could not even get a bite to eat these days without Service NSW. The Minister's efforts in driving that response have been a great testament to him. I thank the Treasury team for the work that they have done over the past year and through the pandemic. That strong fiscal response and their financial management since 2011 have allowed us to invest more than every other jurisdiction. *The Daily Telegraph* pointed out recently that New South Wales outspent every State and Territory on COVID-19 support measures and we have more than quadrupled the spend of Queensland. That is because you cannot just turn this tap on. The strong fiscal management over that period of time has allowed that to happen. At the height of the pandemic we lost around 270,000 jobs. We have recovered around 221,000 since then, so 81 per cent of the jobs lost have been recovered. We are well on the road to recovery. Residential building approvals have risen by 1.8 per cent. New housing approvals are up by 15.9 per cent. Retail sales are up 18.2 per cent for the year. We have seen strong business and consumer confidence and, as I keep saying to the Minister for Health and Medical Research, that is off the back of the strong Health response, which has given businesses the confidence to invest. [*Extension of time*]

The State's participation rate at 65.5 per cent is now higher than it was before the pandemic began. We have seen jobs growth right across the board, but especially in education, mining, construction and utilities. It seems we are on a unity ticket. I thank the Leader of the Opposition. A little message on Jodi's website states:

As NSW Labor Leader, my vision will always start and finish with jobs.

I thank her for that, but I note that in over the past two years Labor has introduced only one bill on jobs.

Mr David Harris: A big bill.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It was a big bill. It was the NSW Jobs First Bill 2020—a great bill. It was introduced on 17 June. The second reading speech was made on 22 October and on 18 December, it lapsed. So Jodi is right when she says her focus starts and finishes with jobs, but it was finished before it even began. That was Labor's great COVID strategy and its great jobs action plan. But Labor members did not even have the time to come into this House and debate it. They talk about their legislative agenda but they did not want to debate their one bill on jobs and economy. I go back to the start. It is no wonder that this Government is commencing its eleventh year in office. As Labor members said to Anna Caldwell, they feel further away from Government than when Kristina Keneally lost to Barry O'Farrell. One Labor MP said, "We're not even in the ball park." Who was that? It was a Labor MP. [*Time expired.*]

Mr David Harris: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. I have nurses going home crying from overwork and the Treasurer is talking rubbish.

RODD STAPLES

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (15:01:5): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Roads. Why did the Minister remove Rodd Staples as the head of Transport for NSW, just weeks after the Premier gave him a positive performance review, at a cost of more than \$800,000 to New South Wales taxpayers?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (15:02): I thank the good member for his unexpected question. On this score, I want to say to the member for Kogarah that he is almost racking up a debate a day. He took on the member for Kiama on Jonesy on Wednesday night and he moved on to debating Minister Kean on Jim Wilson's program.

Mr Dominic Perrottet: What's going on?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I do not know what is going on. The only person who seems to be watching and listening is Jodi. But the point I make is that I was presented with a quote about the member for Kogarah before Question Time. It seems to me that he has come up with a policy in relation to tolls. He said he will reduce tolls. I will be very interested to see the fine detail from him in relation to that very soon. He has had a very busy summer. Just keep up the debating. We will find you another spot somewhere.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: That is so 1995, Chris.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: What is?

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Toll. Politics repeats itself.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Well, interesting. Specifically in relation to the question that was asked—

Ms Jodi McKay: I challenge his quote.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Do you want to listen to the answer?

Mr Clayton Barr: When are you going to start?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am trying to. Specifically in relation to the question I will quote myself from 18 November. I issued a press release spelling out the situation with Mr Staples. I am saying that just to help out my old mate the member for Kogarah. It is all fine. It was a big summer. No doubt he and Parky have had a few lunches. I want to make it crystal clear in relation to Rodd Staples. I issued a statement back in November indicating that he was going to leave in February. There is no doubt about the enormous contribution that Rodd Staples has made to our State as one of the greatest public sector project managers—it goes without saying. In that statement I also stated that Rodd has a unique place in Sydney's history, thanks to his strong leadership of Sydney Metro, and that I hope he will be able to play a role as we expand our Metro network. I think that is going to happen.

[A member interjected.]

Stay tuned, old mate. What I would say in relation to this is quite simple: The department is going to take—

Mr Chris Minns: Point of order: Is the Minister really suggesting after \$800,000 he is going to give Mr Staples another job? It seems a bit ridiculous.

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

Mr Chris Minns: Why would they pay out 800 grand if there is another job on the line?

The SPEAKER: The member knows that that is not a point of order. That is deliberate abuse. I call the member for Kogarah to order for the third time.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: From my statement I made it crystal clear that throughout the course of 2020-21, the department was going to head in a new direction, resolve the organisational restructure that has been going on and, of course, continue its incredible focus on building infrastructure for us all, regardless of community, right across the State. I said we would continue to focus on innovation in emissions reduction as we move into the new world and continue to deliver the best transport network in the world. I absolutely acknowledge the incredible contribution that Rodd Staples has made.

COVID-19

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (15:05): I address my question to the Minister for Health and Medical Research. Will the Minister update the House on the Government's COVID-19 response?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (15:05): I thank the member for Tweed for his question. I have worked very closely with the member for Tweed over the past few years when he made sure it was 100 per cent for the Tweed. Recently the Premier and I visited the Tweed and saw the amazing work that has gone on in the past few months at Cudgen. The new Tweed Hospital will be phenomenal. Lendlease has finished all the groundworks and it holds the main contract. I was told by some of the medical staff, particularly Rob Davies from the emergency department, where people will be able to see the ocean views, particularly those in the maternity ward, and the views out towards Mount Warning. It is a fabulous and amazing location and part of the synergy with the TAFE facility next door.

On the COVID-19 response, I say first of all that today is the twenty-third day of zero cases of community transmission locally. There are two cases in hotel quarantine. That takes us to a total case number from 25 January 2020 to 4,936 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New South Wales. The majority of those have come from overseas—that is, 2,758 overseas acquired. A total of 98 are interstate acquired and 1,642 are locally acquired. It is quite amazing that our community has responded in the way it has. Test numbers now are up to 4,715,524, so we are nearly at five million tests. I thank the community on behalf of the rest of the community but also the Government because without them putting themselves forward to be tested, there was no way our public health teams could give the advice that is critical in making the decisions that have ensured that New South Wales leads the country in its response.

Right from day one the Government has approached this very challenging time, as I said earlier in question time, with no playbook or guide. Very early on we worked out that we would take a precautionary approach, but also a proportionate and balanced approach. So we applied the precautionary principles from very early on when we were facing the children coming back from Wuhan and from China, from their Lunar New Year celebrations. New South Wales led every other State and Territory by determining that we would do what we could in those earlier phases to work with families to make sure that children did not go back to school for 14 days. Even that was a big challenge at the time because we did not want to be heavy-handed; we wanted to respond in a balanced

and proportionate way. We talked to the families through the media and the media were wonderful. I thank the media—some of them are here today—for getting the message out to the community.

Ms Gladys Berejiklian: Not every day.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: No, not every day. Most days they are pretty good.

Ms Gladys Berejiklian: Most days.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: We got the messages out and as a result, even though we were hearing the message at the time that the virus was not being transmitted from human to human, we took the precautionary approach. We asked families not to take their children back and they did not. Since that time we have had the most amazing people working within our public health team at the top. Obviously we have had Dr Kerry Chant, who the Premier mentioned earlier, we have had the secretary of health, Elizabeth Koff, and we have had the deputy secretary, Susan Pearce—three incredible health leaders—along with the other deputy secretaries and senior management working with our frontline staff. Those frontline staff of course include the nurses, the doctors, the allied health staff, the pathology staff, the cleaners, the security people and the administrative people.

Every one of those people has had the worry of COVID in their lives, and they have been much closer to the issues than most of us have been, and they have responded in a way which we could never have dreamed. They have been incredible. The entire public health system in New South Wales has been amazing. We have 140,000 people working in our public health system in New South Wales and a budget of close to \$30 billion. Whilst we have continued to respond to COVID, we have also been building— [*Extension of time*]

Whilst we have been responding to the COVID crisis on a daily basis, we have also continued our policy of building new hospitals and building new infrastructure throughout the entire State of New South Wales. In fact, of the 5,000-odd nurses and midwives that we are employing just in this current term, more than 45 per cent are going into the regions. But going back to the essential issue of COVID, it is fair to say that it has not been an easy 12 months for anybody—it does not matter which State or Territory. I talk to the State and Territory health Ministers almost daily, both Labor and Liberal ones. We have all faced varying challenges at different stages and we have all learned from one another. Sometimes we have experienced something that somebody else has not experienced, and we have worked extremely well together.

The essential issue for us in the first part of this equation was to make sure that our staff felt comfortable. Of course, personal protective equipment [PPE] was one of the big issues. I thank the Treasurer, because the Treasurer put in more money than we could have dreamed of to get massive supplies of PPE through alternative supply paths. I thank the various Ministers and senior public officials who sit in the "crisis Cabinet", because they were very difficult decisions: to prioritise those funds and to work out exactly how we get it. I also acknowledge—and she has no idea I am going to say this, but I will—that the Premier of New South Wales has never missed one of those meetings. She has chaired them all. In fact, in the early stages I was not quite sure how we would structure going forward, but it was her idea to bring over the experience from the bushfires and have effectively a State Emergency headquarters. That has been the golden opportunity for us to make sure that all of our various government teams could work together. I thank everybody—the health teams, the police, all the other security staff and everybody who has kept our State as safe as humanly possible during this once-in-100 years pandemic.

COVID-19 AND SYDNEY EVENTS

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (15:13): My question is directed to the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney. How is the New South Wales Government supporting Sydney's economic recovery with major events, including Sydney WorldPride in 2023?

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (15:14): I thank the member for Sydney for his question. He specifically referenced the importance of events to the economy, particularly the WorldPride event; I know he played a very important but incredibly passionate role in securing it for Sydney. The year 2020 was incredibly disruptive—almost destructive—for the tourism sector in New South Wales. As the Government goes about the practice of rebuilding our tourism economy and bringing confidence back, it is so critical that those future signature events be a marker in the ground for the entire tourism sector to work towards.

When WorldPride comes to Sydney in the first quarter of 2023 it will be an optimal time for the State to be aiming towards a signature event. The Government is building on the wonderful legacy of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras with the WorldPride 2023 event, which will celebrate the LGBTQI community around the world. The event will also play an incredibly important role in the Asia Pacific region. It will be the first time the event has come to the Asia Pacific and it will inject over \$100 million worth of visitor economy activity into the community. It will be quite a sizeable event and will operate across a number of different activities. There will be

a human rights and health conference held at the ICC, the WorldPride march, the First Nations hub, a gala concert, a ball, the Bondi Beach party, a range of sporting events, and opening and closing ceremonies. It has been a signature event on the Sydney calendar for many years and will be a fantastic celebration. It will also build on the fantastic work Australia has done on human rights: The country has taken a lead and will continue to take a lead. I thank the member for Sydney for his leadership in this space and for his work in bringing this wonderful event to Sydney.

The event builds on the visitor economy strategy the Government released at the end of last year, where events continue to play an absolutely critical role. At the start of this year, Sydney was leading the way, particularly when it came to reopening theatre spaces; *Frozen* has been operating in Sydney and just around the corner *Hamilton* will be coming to theatres. Sydney is the only place in the world where those global shows are actually available. It was fantastic to have someone like Thomas Schumacher, the head of Disney's global theatrical services, talk about the leading role of Sydney and the way the Government managed the COVID crisis, which allowed Disney to bring its productions here and let people across Australia access them. At the Art Gallery of New South Wales the *Streeton* exhibition has been running, which is a fantastic opportunity for people to come to the city and support a number of small businesses.

Just around the corner the Government is also pushing into regional New South Wales. Next year will be the UCI Road World Championships; it is a huge event and it is going to Wollongong. For members who have got some idea about cycling, the biggest event in the world is the Tour de France, which happens every single year. Every few years when the Road World Championships is run, it is as big as the Tour de France or bigger. It will be huge and a fantastic opportunity to support the Wollongong economy with a genuinely global event. The Government is also pushing out towards Bathurst with the World Athletic Cross Country Championships; it will be a great opportunity to get out there. Wollongong will have the cycling and the cross country will be going to Bathurst. One of the other things that the Government has been able to do is ensure that throughout the course of 2021 we can hold Vivid. The decision was made early on to not have Vivid in the first half of 2021 and to push it back to August, and now that looks like an incredibly sensible decision, particularly as the economy starts to recover from the COVID pandemic.

The Government also saw an opportunity to take full advantage of the assets New South Wales has, with the Sydney cricket test happening. Just as the State needed a bounce off the back of the Avalon COVID cluster, the Government was able to put that test match together, get crowds into the game and give Sydneysiders the confidence to start the new year. It was great to then be able to follow that up with the wonderful success of the Sydney Sixers and the Big Bash Final—also having a crowd. Whether it is sporting matches at the Sydney Cricket Ground, WorldPride in 2023, lighting up Wollongong with the world's best cyclists or the cross country runners going out to Bathurst, it is absolutely critical that through the delivery of the visitor economy strategy as well as the work being done to support events the Government continues to drive the jobs growth that the Treasurer spoke about in his previous answer. [*Extension of time*]

It is critical that the Government continues to get that unemployment rate down and that participation rate up. We know that the visitor economy has been substantially damaged by what has happened with COVID, with the restrictions to borders and the inability of businesses to move around the country. There has never been a more important time for this Government and this Parliament to back in our visitor economy sector, and the best way to do that is by supporting events.

24-HOUR ECONOMY STRATEGY

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (15:19): My question is addressed to the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney. Will the Minister update the House on the 24-hour economy and how this is creating jobs?

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (15:19): I thank the member for North Shore for her question. It is a continuation of this theme around events but also taking full advantage of every hour in the day. Sydney has no doubt been on quite a lengthy journey when it comes to fully embracing the 24-hour economy. After the election in 2019 we went through a process in this Parliament with the creation of a joint select committee comprising members of all sides of politics across both Chambers. That committee put together a fantastic report and made a number of recommendations to the Government about fully embracing the 24-hour economy. One of the actions that came off the back of that was the roll back of the lockout restrictions across the Sydney CBD. The committee also proposed that the Government should take an additional 12 months to evaluate the conditions in Kings Cross before making a further decision.

Today the Government has announced that the restrictions in Kings Cross will be removed from early March, bringing Kings Cross into line with the remainder of the Sydney CBD. This builds on the work that we completed last year with the launch of our 24-hour Economy Strategy, which is really about spreading risk across

the city but also making sure that the night economy is not just an alcohol economy. It is about giving people a diverse range of activities and opportunities to get out, enjoy themselves and make an economic contribution across 24 hours of the day. We want places like Kings Cross to be diverse, dynamic and safe. We believe the conditions we have been able to set over the past 12 months have allowed us to make this decision and to go forward with a degree of confidence.

We have also built on the 24-hour Economy Strategy by making changes to our liquor and licensing Acts, which allows us to assess the cumulative impact of new venues and new licences. If there are too many licences in a particular location or too many large licences we can make a decision to ensure that we have the balance right. That is why we have the opportunity to go forward in Kings Cross with a strong degree of confidence. We also announced today the appointment of our 24-Hour Economy Commissioner, Michael Rodrigues, at the end of the month. He is currently the chair of the Night Time Industries Association and he has been the executive director of Time Out. He comes from a legal background and is an incredibly well-respected representative of the industry. He has been able to bring together many, many stakeholders across the entire sector and is a natural choice to take on this role.

I am looking forward to working with Michael and I know that other members of this Parliament will be looking forward to working with him on not just what happens here in the Sydney CBD but right across metropolitan Sydney and out into regional New South Wales. The 24-hour economy issue is not just a Sydney issue. It is about activating communities and making sure that those communities are rich, dynamic and diverse and, importantly, that they continue to be safe. We are all looking forward to seeing Michael deliver on that 24-hour Economy Strategy and continuing to unlock the economic potential that exists in so many hours of the day.

It would be remiss of me to touch on the history of how we have got to this place without recognising particularly the Kelly family, who suffered an unbelievable tragedy but who have been able to do so many good things. I say to the Kelly family that what they have been able to do over the past few years has not been about recognition of the tragic loss of their son's life—there is nothing we can do to take that back—but they have been able to demonstrate to this city, to this State and, indeed, to the country a celebration of Thomas' life and a demonstration of what a community can do when it cares for each other. The consistent message that has come from that family I believe has fundamentally changed this city. It has allowed us to look at ourselves in a different way and it has completely changed the way in which we approach the issue of alcohol consumption.

The work that the Kelly family has done tirelessly over a number of years has led us to this point, a point where we have a safer, more dynamic city—a city that is ready to take its place on the world stage and to do so by caring for every single one of its citizens and those people from around the country and around the world who choose to visit here. We simply could not have got to this point without the amazing dedication and leadership of the Kelly family. We are a better city because of what they have been able to do.

The SPEAKER: I concur with the Minister in relation to his comments about the Kelly family, with whom I have also had some dealings.

Documents

CASINO CONTROL ACT 1992

Reports

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: In accordance with Sessional Order 266, I table the report of the inquiry under section 143 of the Casino Control Act 1992, volumes 1 and 2, dated 1 February 2021. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Reports

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: In accordance with Sessional Order 266, I table the *NSW Annual Report on Progress: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*, dated December 2020. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 142 of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016, I announce receipt of the report of the Inspector of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission for the year ended 30 June 2020. I order that the report be printed.

NSW OMBUDSMAN**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 31AA of the Ombudsman Act 1974, I announce receipt of the reports of the NSW Ombudsman entitled:

- (1) *Comments on clause 35 of the Mandatory Disease Testing Bill 2020*, dated 20 November 2020.
- (2) *Oversight of the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994, Annual Report 2019-2020*, dated 15 December 2020.
- (3) *An inherent conflict of interest: councils as developer and regulator*, dated 15 December 2020.

I order that the reports be printed.

INSPECTOR OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 16 of the Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012, I announce receipt of the reports of the Inspector of Custodial Services entitled:

- (1) *Inspection of Cooma Correctional Centre*, dated November 2020.
- (2) *Kariong and Kirkconnell Correctional Centres and the Integration Support Centre*, dated November 2020.
- (3) *Inspection of Macquarie Correctional Centre and Hunter Correctional Centre*, dated November 2020.
- (4) *Inspection of Oberon Correctional Centre*, dated November 2020.
- (5) *Inspection of Six Youth Justice Centres in NSW*, dated December 2020.

I order that the reports be printed.

OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 141 of the Children's Guardian Act 2019, I announce receipt of the report of the Office of the Children's Guardian for the year ended 30 June 2020, received out of session on 27 November 2020. I order that the report be printed.

INSPECTOR OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 78 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, I announce receipt of the report of the Inspector of the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled *Report pursuant to sections 57B(5) and 77A of the Independent Commission against Corruption Act 1988 determining a complaint by Mr Arthur Moses SC on behalf of the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian MP against the Commission*, dated 23 October 2020, received on 23 October 2020. I order that the report be printed.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 78 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, I announce receipt of the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled *Investigation into complaints of corruption in the management of water in NSW and systemic non-compliance with the Water Management Act 2000*, dated November 2020, received out of session on 27 November 2020. I order that the report be printed.

INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSION**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 39 of the Government Information (Information Commissioner) Act 2009 and section 61D of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998, I announce receipt of the report of the Information and Privacy Commission for the year ended 30 June 2020, received out of session on 30 November 2020. I order that the report be printed.

LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 142 of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016, I announce receipt of the reports of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission entitled:

- (1) *Operation Coolum*, dated November 2020, received out of session on 30 November 2020.
- (2) *Operation Tabarca*, dated December 2020, received out of session on 15 December 2020.
- (3) *Inquiry into NSW Police Force strip search practices*, dated December 2020, received out of session on 15 December 2020.

I order that the reports be printed.

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY VISITORS**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 28 of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019, I announce receipt of the report of Official Community Visitors for the year ended 30 June 2020. I order that the report be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**Reports**

The SPEAKER: I announce receipt of the report of the Department of the Legislative Assembly for the year ended 30 June 2020, received out of session on 23 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES**Reports**

The SPEAKER: I announce receipt of the report of the Department of Parliamentary Services for the year ended 30 June 2020, received out of session on 23 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

ANNUAL REPORTS (DEPARTMENTS) ACT 1985**Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 13 of the Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985, I announce receipt of the following reports for the year ended 30 June 2020:

Public Service Commission, received out of session on 25 November 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Department of Communities and Justice, received out of session on 27 November 2020 and authorised to be printed.

NSW Crown Solicitor's Office, received out of session on 27 November 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Department of Premier and Cabinet, received out of session on 11 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Resilience NSW, received out of session on 11 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Parliamentary Counsel's Office, received out of session on 11 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission, received out of session on 14 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Office of Sport, received out of session on 14 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Department of Regional NSW, received out of session on 15 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Treasury, including Crown Related Entities' reports: *Alpha Distribution Ministerial Holding Corporation, Electricity Assets Ministerial Holding Corporation, Epsilon Distribution Ministerial Holding Corporation, Electricity Transmission Ministerial Holding Corporation, Liability Management Ministerial Corporation, Ports Assets Ministerial Holding Corporation, Electricity Retained Interest Corporation Endeavour Energy Corporation - Ausgrid, Electricity Retained Interest Corporation - Endeavour Energy, Roads Retained Interest Pty Ltd and Crown Entities' Financial Statements incorporating: Restart NSW Fund, Social and Affordable Housing Fund, Electricity Retained Interest Corporation Ausgrid (ERIC-A) Fund, Electricity Retained Interest Corporation Endeavour Energy (ERIC-E) Fund, NSW Generations (Debt Retirement) Fund and NSW Generations (Community Services and Facilities) Fund*, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Department of Customer Service, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Service NSW, received out of session on 16 December 2020, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, received out of session on 1 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Judicial Commission of New South Wales, received out of session on 17 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, received out of session on 17 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Department of Transport (Volumes One and Two), received out of session on 18 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Ministry of Health (incorporating the Financial Statements of Public Health Organisations under its control) - Volumes One to Four, received out of session on 18 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Fire and Rescue NSW, received out of session on 18 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

New South Wales Crime Commission, received out of session on 18 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

NSW Police Force, received out of session on 18 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

New South Wales Rural Fire Service, received out of session on 18 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

New South Wales State Emergency Service, received out of session on 18 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

ANNUAL REPORTS (STATUTORY BODIES) ACT 1984

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 11 of the Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984, I announce receipt of the following reports for the year ended 30 June 2020:

Trustees of the ANZAC Memorial Building, received out of session on 24 November 2020 and authorised to be printed.

New South Wales Electoral Commission, received out of session on 25 November 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Professional Standards Councils, received out of session on 26 November 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust, received out of session on 27 November 2020 and authorised to be printed.

NSW Trustee and Guardian, received out of session on 27 November 2020 and authorised to be printed.

New South Wales Health Foundation, received out of session on 30 November 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Combined New South Wales Health Professional Councils (Volumes One to Three), received out of session on 30 November 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Western City and Aerotropolis Authority, received out of session on 30 November 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation, received out of session on 30 November 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Greater Sydney Commission, received out of session on 11 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Infrastructure NSW, received out of session on 11 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Mental Health Commission of New South Wales, received out of session on 14 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Venues NSW, received out of session on 14 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

NSW Institute of Sport, received out of session on 14 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Multicultural NSW, received out of session on 14 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

State Sporting Venues Authority, received out of session on 14 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

TAFE NSW, received out of session on 14 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

NSW Skills Board, received out of session on 14 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

NSW Architects Registration Board, received out of session on 14 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Rental Bond Board, received out of session on 14 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Long Service Corporation, received out of session on 14 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation, received out of session on 15 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

New South Wales Environmental Trust, received out of session on 15 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Lord Howe Island Board, received out of session on 15 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust, received out of session on 15 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Zoological Parks Board of New South Wales (trading as Taronga Conservation Society Australia), received out of session on 15 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Biodiversity Conservation Trust, received out of session on 15 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Environment Protection Authority, received out of session on 15 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Sydney Opera House Trust, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Australian Museum Trust, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Trustees of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Art Gallery of New South Wales, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

State Archives and Records Authority of New South Wales, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Heritage Council of New South Wales, incorporating the report of corporation sole "Minister Administering the Heritage Act 1977", received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Library Council of New South Wales, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council (Volumes One and Two), received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Insurance and Care NSW (Volumes One and Two) received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

SAS Trustee Corporation (containing a separate report for the SAS Trustee Corporation Pooled Fund), received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

New South Wales Treasury Corporation, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Trustees of the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Fund, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Landcom, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Sydney Water Corporation, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Port Authority of New South Wales, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Water NSW, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Hunter Water Corporation, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Essential Energy, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Forestry Corporation of New South Wales, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Board of Surveying and Spatial Information, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

State Insurance Regulatory Authority, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

New South Wales Government Telecommunications Authority, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Place Management NSW (including the report for Luna Park Reserve Trust), received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Natural Resources Commission, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Parramatta Park Trust, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Sydney Olympic Park Authority, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Wentworth Park Sporting Complex Trust, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Western Sydney Parklands Trust, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Dams Safety Committee, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Property NSW, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Waste Assets Management Corporation, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Valuer General, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Teacher Housing Authority, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Legal Aid New South Wales, received out of session on 17 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Local Land Services, received out of session on 17 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

NSW Food Authority, received out of session on 17 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Rice Marketing Board, received out of session on 17 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

New South Wales Rural Assistance Authority, received out of session on 17 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Veterinary Practitioners Board of New South Wales, received out of session on 17 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Administration of Agricultural Statutory Authorities for the year ended 30 June 2020, received out of session on 17 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

State Transit Authority of New South Wales (Volumes One and Two), received out of session on 18 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

NSW Trains (Volumes One and Two), received out of session on 18 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Office of Transport Safety Investigations, received out of session on 18 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Rail Corporation New South Wales (Volumes One and Two), received out of session on 18 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Sydney Metro, received out of session on 18 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Sydney Trains (Volumes One and Two), received out of session on 18 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Health Care Complaints Commission, received out of session on 18 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

NSW Education Standards Authority, received out of session on 18 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Destination NSW, received out of session on 22 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Jobs for NSW, received out of session on 14 January 2021 and authorised to be printed.

The CLERK: In accordance with section 11 of the Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984, I announce receipt of errata to the following reports:

Annual reports of Insurance and Care NSW for the year ended 30 June 2017, 30 June 2018 and 30 June 2019, dated 14 December 2020, received out of session on 22 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Report of the Dams Safety Committee for the year ended 30 June 2020, received out of session on 5 February 2020 and authorised to be printed.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Reports

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the following reports for the year ended 30 June 2020:

Harness Racing New South Wales, received out of session on 26 November 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Racing NSW, received out of session on 26 November 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Mental Health Review Tribunal, received out of session on 26 November 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Administrator of the National Health Funding Pool, received out of session on 30 November 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Music Festival Roundtable, received out of session on 30 November 2020 and authorised to be printed.

New South Wales Returned and Services League, received out of session on 14 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Coal Innovation NSW Fund for the year ended 30 June 2020, received out of session on 15 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

NSW Climate Change Fund, received out of session on 15 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Workers Compensation Independent Review Officer, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Agricultural Scientific Collections Trust, received out of session on 17 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Animal Research Review Panel, received out of session on 17 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

National Rail Safety Regulator for year ended 30 June 2020, received out of session on 18 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

National Health Practitioner Ombudsman and Privacy Commissioner, received out of session on 18 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, received out of session on 18 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

GREYHOUND RACING NSW**Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 28 of the Greyhound Racing Act 2017, I announce receipt of the report of Greyhound Racing NSW for the year ended 30 June 2020, received out of session on 26 November 2020 and authorised to be printed.

SERIOUS OFFENDERS REVIEW COUNCIL**Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 209 of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999, I announce receipt of the report of the Serious Offenders Review Council for the year end 30 June 2020, received out of session on 26 November 2020 and authorised to be printed.

NSW STATE PAROLE AUTHORITY**Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 192A of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999, I announce receipt of the report of the NSW State Parole Authority for 2019, received out of session on 14 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

RADIATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 33 of the Radiation Control Act 1990, I announce receipt of report of the Radiation Advisory Council for the year ended 30 June 2020, received out of session on 15 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION BOARD OF NEW SOUTH WALES**Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 122 of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977, I announce receipt of the report of the Anti-Discrimination Board of New South Wales for the year ended 30 June 2020, received out of session on 17 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

LAW AND JUSTICE FOUNDATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES**Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 19 of the Law and Justice Foundation Act 1986, I announce receipt of the report of the Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales for the year ended 30 June 2020, received out of session on 17 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

PUBLIC DEFENDERS**Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 17 of the Public Defenders Act 1995, I announce receipt of the report of the Public Defenders for the year ended 30 June 2020, received out of session on 17 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

LEGAL PROFESSION UNIFORM LAW APPLICATION ACT 2014**Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 167 of the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014, I announce receipt of the following reports for the year ended 30 June 2020:

Law Society of New South Wales, together with financial statements of the Public Purpose Fund and the Legal Practitioners Fidelity Fund, received out of session on 17 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Legal Profession Admission Board, received out of session on 17 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Legal Services Council (incorporating the report of the Commissioner for Uniform Legal Services Regulation), received out of session on 17 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

New South Wales Bar Association, received out of session on 17 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Office of the Legal Services Commissioner, received out of session on 17 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

NSW CIVIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL**Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 91 of the Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2013, I announce receipt of the report of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal for the year ended 30 June 2020, received out of session on 17 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

NSW DISABILITY INCLUSION ACT 2014**Reports**

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the report on the statutory review of the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014, dated November 2020, received out of session on 20 November 2020 and authorised to be printed.

MOTOR DEALERS AND REPAIRERS ACT 2013**Reports**

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the report on the statutory review of the Motor Dealers and Repairers Act 2013, dated November 2020, received out of session on 26 November 2020 and authorised to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES**Reports**

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the report of the Department of Family and Community Services entitled *Child Deaths 2019 Annual Report*, received out of session on 26 November 2020 and authorised to be printed.

WATER NSW ACT 2014**Reports**

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the report on the statutory review of the Water NSW Act 2014, dated November 2020, received out of session on 30 November 2020 and authorised to be printed.

CRIMES (SERIOUS CRIME PREVENTION ORDERS) ACT 2016**Reports**

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the report on the statutory review of the Crimes (Serious Crime Prevention Orders) Act 2016, dated September 2020, received out of session on 2 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

AUDITOR-GENERAL**Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the following reports:

Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Managing the health, safety and wellbeing of nurses and junior doctors in high demand hospital environments*, dated 9 December 2020, received out of session on 9 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Stronger Communities 2020*, dated 10 December 2020, received out of session on 10 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Central Agencies 2020*, dated 10 December 2020, received out of session on 10 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Planning, Industry and Environment 2020*, dated 10 December 2020, received out of session on 10 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Regional NSW 2020*, dated 10 December 2020, received out of session on 10 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Transport 2020*, dated 10 December 2020, received out of session on 10 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Health 2020*, dated 10 December 2020, received out of session on 10 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Corrigendum to the Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Health 2020*, dated 11 December 2020, received out of session on 11 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Special Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Members' Additional Entitlements 2020*, dated 15 December 2020, received out of session on 15 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Procurement Management in Local Government*, dated 17 December 2020, received out of session on 17 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *One TAFE NSW modernisation program*, dated 17 December 2020, received out of session on 17 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Special Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Service NSW's handling of personal information*, dated 18 December 2020, received out of session on 18 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

INDEPENDENT PRICING AND REGULATORY TRIBUNAL

Reports

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the following reports of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled:

NSW Energy Savings Scheme - Compliance and Operation in 2019, Annual Report to the Minister, NSW Energy Savings Scheme, dated July 2020, received out of session on 15 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Annual Compliance Report, Energy network operator compliance during 2019-20, dated October 2020, received out of session on 15 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

The CLERK: In accordance with section 234C of the National Energy Retail Law (NSW), I announce receipt of the following reports of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled:

Monitoring the Gas Retail Market 2019-2020 - Final Report, dated November 2020, received out of session on 24 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Monitoring the Electricity Retail Market 2019-2020 - Final Report, dated November 2020, received out of session on 24 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

CRIME COMMISSION ACT 2012

Reports

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the report on the statutory review of the Crime Commission Act 2012, dated December 2020, received out of session on 15 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

STATE OWNED CORPORATIONS ACT 1989

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 27 of the State Owned Corporations Act 1989, I announce receipt of Statements of Corporate Intent for the year ending 30 June 2021 of:

Port Authority of New South Wales, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Landcom, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Sydney Water, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Water NSW, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Hunter Water Corporation, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Essential Energy, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Forestry Corporation, received out of session on 16 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

MARINE ESTATE MANAGEMENT ACT 2014

Reports

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the following reports:

Report on the statutory review of the Marine Estate Management Act 2014, dated September 2020, received out of session on 17 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

Erratum to the report on the statutory review of the Marine Estate Management Act 2014, dated September 2020, received out of session on 22 January 2021 and authorised to be printed.

*Committees***LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON INVESTMENT, INDUSTRY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT****Government Response: Interim report into support for drought affected communities in NSW**

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government's response to report No. 1/57 of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development entitled *Interim report into support for drought affected communities in NSW*, received out of session on 18 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

*Documents***RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT 2010****Reports**

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the report on the statutory review of the sections 154D and 154G of the Residential Tenancies Act 2010, received out of session on 21 December 2020 and authorised to be printed.

*Committees***LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING****Government Response: Report 1/57 of the Committee on Environment and Planning**

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government's response to report No. 1/57 of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Planning entitled *Professional Engineers Registration Bill 2019*, received out of session on 13 January 2021 and authorised to be printed.

*Documents***PASSENGER TRANSPORT ACT 1990****Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 46D of the Passenger Transport Act 1990, I announce receipt of the report of the Office of Transport Safety Investigations entitled *Bus Safety Report, Bus Fires in New South Wales in 2020*, received out of session on 15 January 2021 and authorised to be printed.

SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSIONER ACT 2013**Reports**

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the report on the statutory review of the Small Business Commissioner Act 2013, dated November 2020, received out of session on 28 January 2021 and authorised to be printed.

*Committees***COMMITTEE ON THE OMBUDSMAN, THE LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION AND THE CRIME COMMISSION****Government Response: Report No. 1/57 of Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission Committee**

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government's response to report No. 1/57 of the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission entitled *2020 Review of the Annual Reports of oversighted bodies*, received out of session on 5 February 2021 and authorised to be printed.

*Documents***PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT ADMINISTRATION ACT 1991****Reports**

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the ministerial direction under section 13 (2) (b) of the Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991 on matters to be dealt with in State of the Environment reports, dated 5 February 2021, received out of session on 8 February 2021 and authorised to be printed.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

Tuggerah Lakes Secondary College The Entrance Campus

Petition noting the disappointment of year 12 students of the class of 2020 at The Entrance Campus of Tuggerah Lakes Secondary College that no school formal can be held due to COVID-19 restrictions and requesting support to the campus to ensure the students can mark the end of 12 years of schooling by holding a school formal, received from **Mr David Mehan**.

Local Government Elections

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly to review its decision to postpone local government elections and remind elected councillors to refrain from decisions or commitments about which the community has shown concern or opposition, received from **Mr Gurmesh Singh**.

Barnardos Auburn Family Preservation Service

Petition calling on the Government to reinstate funding for the Barnardos Auburn family preservation service to the end of the 2021 financial year, received from **Ms Lynda Voltz**.

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

Glen Innes Police Station

Petition requesting the Government consider increasing the number of police officer positions at Glen Innes police station and make the station operational 24 hours a day, received from **Mr Adam Marshall**.

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

Western Sydney and Central West Highway Link

Petition noting that safe and efficient road connections and improved rail transport between western Sydney and the Central West will bring major development and deliver jobs to those areas and requesting the Government to expedite the construction process of a consistent 100 kilometres per hour highway link between western Sydney and Central West New South Wales, received from **Mr Dugald Saunders**.

NSW Water Register

Petition demanding the Government immediately implement the National Water Initiative 2004 obligations by publishing in the NSW Water Register required information, retrospective to 2006, relating to holders of water entitlements and applicants for water access licences; by making the register accessible online and searchable by the public; and by protecting personal information; received from **Mrs Helen Dalton**.

Casino to Murwillumbah Proposed Rail Trail

Petition requesting the Government retain the Casino to Murwillumbah railway tracks and corridor for potential rail services in the future and proposing the placement of a rail trail beside the tracks as a dual-use corridor, received from **Ms Tamara Smith**.

Casino to Murwillumbah Proposed Rail Trail

Petition calling on the Government to fund the completion of stage two of the Casino to Murwillumbah Rail Trail and to work with stakeholders, including Lismore City Council, to ensure the continued success of this project, received from **Ms Janelle Saffin**.

Westmead Hospital Acute Palliative Care

Petition calling on the Government to reinstate dedicated acute palliative care beds at Westmead Hospital as a first step towards a standalone Acute Supportive and Palliative Care ward, received from **Dr Geoff Lee**.

Lake Illawarra Cockle Collection

Petition requesting the Government implement an immediate moratorium on the collection of cockles from Lake Illawarra, commission a cockle population study to ascertain sustainable collection levels and collection

impacts, increase fines to deter illegal activities, and not reinstate cockle collection approvals until sustainable levels are understood, received from **Ms Anna Watson**.

Hurlstone Agricultural High School

Petition noting the concern of the student body of Hurlstone Agricultural High School about the proposed sale of the school's farm land and requesting the retention of all agricultural enterprises at the school at a financially sustainable level to enable the students to gain a quality agricultural education and to continue the school's proud tradition and ensure its continued success, received from **Mr Anoulack Chanthivong**.

Coercive Control Legislation

Petition calling on all members of Parliament to support and pass the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Coercive Control) Bill 2020, to be known as Preethi's Law, which introduces an offence of coercive, controlling behaviour that is punishable under law, received from **Ms Anna Watson**.

Milton Ulladulla Bypass

Petition asking the Government to reject the current proposed Milton Ulladulla bypass and reconsider alternative options, received from **Mrs Shelley Hancock**.

Coffs Harbour Cultural and Civic Space Project

Petition calling on the Government to direct Coffs Harbour City Council to pause its Cultural and Civic Space project until after the next local government elections, received from **Mr Gurmeh Singh**.

Kosciuszko National Park Horse Management Plan

Petition bringing to the attention of the Legislative Assembly the severe environmental and cultural damage caused by feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park and calling on the Government to act urgently to reduce feral horse numbers by supporting a horse management plan, to provide funding to deal with environmental impacts and to repeal the Kosciuszko Wild Horses Heritage Act 2018, received from **Dr Joe McGirr**.

Swansea Channel

Petition requesting the Government provide a permanent dredging solution for the Swansea Channel, received from **Ms Yasmin Catley**.

Government Procurement Policy

Petition asking the Government to establish a government procurement policy framework that maximises local employment and local industry opportunities and to establish a government authority to monitor and enforce that policy; to mandate a proportion of apprenticeship, trainee and cadetship positions in major government procurement contracts; and to ensure taxpayer money is used to benefit the State's economy and society, received from **Ms Yasmin Catley**.

School Librarians and Support Staff

Petition requesting the Government acknowledge the evidence and support the appointment of qualified teacher librarians and support staff, ensure that State public schools use their allocated departmental funding to fill the specialist teacher librarian role and ensure that teacher librarians are used in the capacity for which they were employed, received from **Ms Tamara Smith**.

Murwillumbah School Closures

Petition noting the strong community opposition to the forced closure of four schools in Murwillumbah and the community's rejection of the plan for a mega school and calling on the Government to reverse its decision to force the closure of these schools and to provide appropriate funding to keep them open, received from **Ms Janelle Saffin**.

School Non-local Enrolment Policy

Petition proposing that the Government immediately update the school non-local enrolment policy to be family friendly and to ensure that siblings of students already enrolled at non-local schools are accepted without a review by an enrolment panel, received from **Mr Matt Kean**.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

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

The Hon. Paul Toole—Dubbo Proposed New Bridge Crossing—lodged 10 November 2020 (Mr David Harris)

The Hon. Mark Speakman—Jenny's Place Domestic Violence Resource Centre—lodged 18 November 2020 (Mr Tim Crakanthorp)

The Hon. Brad Hazzard—Blacktown Hospital Nursing Staff—lodged 18 November 2020 (Mr Stephen Bali)

The Hon. Brad Hazzard—Gulgong Multi Purpose Service—lodged 19 November 2020 (Mr Dugald Saunders)

The Hon. Rob Stokes—Planning and Development—lodged 21 October 2020 (Mr Michael Daley)

The Hon. Rob Stokes—Chester Hill Development Proposal—lodged 19 November 2020 (Ms Tania Mihailuk)

The Hon. Rob Stokes—Lane Cove Golf Course—lodged 10 November 2020 (Mr Anthony Roberts)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—Waverley Traffic Management—lodged 11 November 2020 (Dr Marjorie O'Neill)

The Hon. Melinda Pavey—Social Housing—lodged 21 October 2020 (Mr Alex Greenwich)

The Hon. Melinda Pavey—Social Housing—lodged 11 November 2020 (Mr Alex Greenwich)

The Hon. Melinda Pavey—Social Housing—lodged 19 November 2020 (Mr Alex Greenwich)

The CLERK: I announce that the following Ministers have lodged responses to electronic petitions signed by 500 or more persons:

The Hon. Don Harwin—Modern Slavery Act—lodged 10 November 2020 (Dr Marjorie O'Neill)

The Hon. Mark Speakman—Lismore Proposed Youth Koori Court—lodged 10 November 2020 (Ms Janelle Saffin)

The Hon. Brad Hazzard—Nurse-to-patient Ratios—lodged 17 November 2020 (Mr Philip Donato)

The Hon. Stuart Ayres—Live Music Industry—lodged 13 October 2020 (Mr Alex Greenwich)

The Hon. Kevin Anderson—Strata Scheme Pet Ownership—lodged 10 November 2020 (Ms Jenny Leong)

The Hon. Dr Geoff Lee—Public University Jobs—lodged 10 November 2020 (Mr Clayton Barr)

Business of the House

BUSINESS LAPSED

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105, general business order of the day (for bills) No. 1 [Transport Administration Amendment (International Students Travel Concessions) Bill 2020] and general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 1403, 1408, 1409 [Dubbo Daffodil Day] and 1410 to 1723 have lapsed.

Bills

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS AMENDMENT BILL 2021

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Adam Marshall, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (15:31): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Bill 2021 makes critical changes to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979, which I will refer to as POCTAA herein. There is no need to make this second reading speech overly complicated; the bill is quite simple. It will put in place the penalty regime that New South Wales needs to effectively punish those who engage in one of the lowest acts imaginable: the harming of animals, either negligently or deliberately. It significantly increases the penalties for the most common animal cruelty offences, to ensure that those who commit acts of cruelty in New South Wales face some of the harshest penalties in

Australia. It is a clear signal of the Government's and the public's opinion of that sort of behaviour. The increases will serve as a deterrent against that type of awful behaviour.

Further, it ensures that the courts have the option to ban those convicted of the most serious animal cruelty offences from having animals, effectively closing the gap between what is available under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 and the Crimes Act 1900. The absence of that equivalence has at times discouraged prosecuting authorities from pursuing Crimes Act offences. That problem and loophole ends with the introduction of this bill. I have been very clear that the Government abhors animal cruelty and will not tolerate it in any form. I have been emphatic on several occasions that should the Government need to act with regard to animal welfare penalties, it will. The bill honours that commitment and gives enforcement agencies as well as courts the ability to seek and impose penalties that more accurately fit the crimes we see perpetrated against animals, to meet community standards.

To assist those who will engage in debating the bill, both in this Chamber and in the other place, I will be very clear as to what the bill does not do, in the first instance. It does not create new offences under POCTAA; it does not target any sector or industry; it does not disrupt or replace current defences contained within POCTAA that clearly defend normal, routine agricultural practices from penalties and clearly outline the circumstances in which they can be undertaken; and it does not target pet owners unreasonably or create any invasion of their rights.

The bill simply underscores that animal cruelty is already unacceptable and illegal in New South Wales, and brings down a harsher suite of measures for those who fall foul of our laws and community expectations. Before I turn to the detail of the bill, I will outline briefly the animal welfare laws as they stand today and the vital work the Government has been doing to reform the laws, which is a process that has been ongoing for many years and which underlines its dedication to this area. One of the first major pieces of parliamentary work that I engaged in as a new member of Parliament was chairing the 2015 parliamentary inquiry into companion animal breeding practices in New South Wales. It is a great privilege and an honour to continue this work as the Minister responsible for the Act.

The welfare of all animals in New South Wales is primarily protected by the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979, or POCTAA, which sets out general animal welfare offences such as animal cruelty and failure to provide food, drink or shelter to animals. More serious animal welfare offences, including intentional and reckless cruelty, are dealt with under the Crimes Act 1900. Off the back of the 2015 joint select committee inquiry, which was completely bipartisan in nature—the report was supported by every member of that committee—several changes were made to the regulatory and legislative regime supporting animal welfare in this State. In February 2016 the Government released its response to the recommendations made by the companion animals breeding practices inquiry, which included significant changes to companion animal breeding practices in this State. Twenty-seven recommendations out of a total of 34 were fully supported or supported in part by the Government, and the intent of the remaining seven have been addressed through ongoing policy and educational work.

In 2018 the Government continued its reform process and introduced a bill making amendments to POCTAA as a direct response to key elements of the inquiry and its report. The amendments introduced requirements that enable the tracking of puppies from breeder through to owners. Those changes allow potential pet purchasers to make more informed decisions and also allow enforcement agencies to identify problem breeders and track them down. Those changes came into effect from 1 July 2019 and requires that people include an identifying number when advertising dogs and cats either for sale or to give away. This can be a microchip number, a breeder identification number or a rehoming organisation number, and it is issued to agencies such as local councils that are looking to find safe new homes for animals in pounds and shelters. Failure to include or to falsify such a number is an offence.

This change was supported in late 2018 by the launch of an improved NSW Pet Registry, which has enhanced digital pet registration throughout the State. The new registry allows enforcement agencies to trace registered puppies and kittens throughout their entire lifetime. In 2018, in addition to those legislative changes, the Government released the first ever *NSW Animal Welfare Action Plan*, which sets out a clear path to reforming the State's animal welfare laws. A lot has changed in New South Wales since POCTAA was introduced over 40 years ago, and we are working to streamline and modernise the laws to ensure that they reflect the latest science, industry practices and, importantly, community expectations with regard to the humane treatment of animals. This is no small task, and we are taking the time to get it right and to consult widely. We remain committed to consulting with the community throughout the process this calendar year.

From February to June 2020 the New South Wales Government sought feedback on the *NSW Animal Welfare Reform – Issues Paper*. The issues paper marked an important step in the reform process. It was an opportunity for the community to have its say on the key issues in the current legislative framework and, importantly, to set the direction for animal welfare policy in this State potentially for decades to come. The

Government received more than 1,100 submissions and survey responses during the consultation period from a wide range of community members and stakeholders. Community feedback showed strong support for broader animal welfare reform. There is a clear desire to simplify existing laws and bring them well and truly into the twenty-first century.

The Government has taken this feedback on board and is using it to develop a suite of proposals that will form the basis for the new laws. It will be seeking community feedback on the proposals very shortly as it continues to work towards reforming the animal welfare legislative framework. In introducing the bill, the Government is making critical and urgent changes to the laws ahead of the longer-term reform work. I have been very clear throughout the reform journey that any critical and urgent changes would be brought forward as a priority rather than waiting for the end of the reform process, and that is exactly what the Government is doing today. The amendments contained in the bill have very strong community support, which was evident in feedback received from the public consultation process. The Government can make those changes now and make them quickly. They address an urgent need and close some gaps and loopholes in the current laws.

Sadly, as pet ownership increases in New South Wales so does the incidence of issues related to their care. Pets, who were always a formative part of any family unit, are now part of modern families. With more people seeking to be animal owners, we need to ensure we are sending the right signals about what we as a Parliament, as a community and as a government expect in relation to animals' care and welfare. Many of the changes leading up to today have encouraged traceability, transparency and accountability, giving pet owners and those wanting to purchase animals more chances to understand their providence and help report bad breeders or bad apples in the sector to enforcement agencies. The bill continues that process by ensuring the suite of penalties available in New South Wales is appropriate and is the deterrent we need to prevent and punish anyone who engages in animal cruelty in New South Wales.

In addition to the changes contained in the bill before the House today, the Government partnered with RSPCA NSW last year and provided additional funding to set up a dedicated task force to crack down on puppy factories across New South Wales. The task force has been out on the ground already, working to identify and tackle breeders who fail to comply with animal welfare legislation and codes of practice. At 31 December last year, inspectors had attended 84 breeding establishments, conducted a total of 44 revisits and commenced two brand-new prosecutions. However, there is still a lot more to do to tackle the scourge of puppy factories in New South Wales. The set of measures in the bill will dramatically increase maximum financial penalties and gaol time for offenders and will enhance the range of tools available to the courts to effectively deal with animal welfare cases.

I now turn to the details of the bill. There are two key areas: first, increasing penalties for animal welfare offences; and, secondly, increasing the range of tools available to New South Wales courts to deal with animal welfare cases. I will deal with the increased penalties for animal welfare offences. As we know, penalties play an important role in the enforcement of and compliance with animal welfare legislation in New South Wales. Penalties should influence the behaviour of individuals to improve animal welfare outcomes and deter potential offenders. Penalties should also reflect our community's expectations and standards. The bill proposes to increase the statutory maximum penalties for key animal welfare offences under POCTAA. New South Wales will have some of the highest penalties for animal welfare offences in Australia.

Schedule 1 to the bill increases the maximum penalty for failing to provide an animal with food, drink or shelter from \$5,500 to \$16,500 for individuals, with corporate penalties for the same offence increasing from \$27,500 to \$82,500 per offence. Those maximum fines are three times higher than the current amounts. Schedule 1 to the bill also increases the maximum penalties for an individual committing an act of cruelty. Under the new laws contained in the bill, the maximum penalty will increase from a \$5,500 fine and/or six months' imprisonment to a \$44,000 fine and/or 12 months' imprisonment for individuals. The corporate penalty will increase from the current \$27,500 to \$220,000. That is double the current maximum imprisonment term and the maximum fines are eight times higher than the current amounts.

Schedule 1 to the bill will also increase the maximum penalties for committing an act of aggravated cruelty. The maximum penalty will increase from the current \$22,000 to \$110,000 for an individual and from \$110,000 to \$550,000 per offence for a corporation. These maximum financial penalties are five times higher than the existing penalties for aggravated cruelty. Schedule 1 to the bill repeals section 34 (2) of the POCTA Act. This provision currently limits the maximum financial penalty that can be handed down under the POCTA Act by a magistrate in the Local Court of New South Wales and is being removed to ensure that the Local Court is able to hand down the new penalties established in the bill.

Penalties should reflect wherever possible community expectations and standards. We occasionally hear terrible horror stories of animal cruelty and sometimes the punishment does not seem to fit the crime. For example, in 2017 a man was captured on closed circuit television in an elevator kicking and repeatedly punching a dog and

swinging the dog in the air by its neck using a choker chain. The dog was heard crying loudly afterwards and, despite best efforts, the dog's body was never ever found. That man was found guilty of animal cruelty and fined \$5,500. Under the new laws, if that man commits the same offence he will face a fine of up to \$44,000 and up to 12 months' imprisonment.

The bill is focused on the penalties for three offences: cruelty, aggravated cruelty and failure to provide food, drink or shelter. Data indicates that these are by far the most common animal cruelty offences, making up 95 per cent of charges laid under the POCTA Act in the decade of July 2009 to June 2019. The penalties for less common offences are being reviewed currently as part of the broader reform to the legislative framework that I covered earlier in my second reading speech. As I said earlier, the Government will be seeking the community's feedback on proposed changes to those penalties as well as part of the reform consultation process.

In addition to the above penalties that are issued by the courts, people who break certain animal welfare laws can also be issued with penalty infringement notices by a POCTAA accredited inspector from one of three enforcement agencies. Penalty infringement notices can be issued for the offences of cruelty to animals and for failure to provide food, drink or shelter. Those notices are used as an alternative to prosecution if an inspector believes that issuing a penalty notice is the most appropriate response that reflects the seriousness of the offence, or if it is more likely to achieve a better animal welfare outcome. The current penalty notice amounts are set out in regulations. Those amounts were set in 2005 and have never been increased since that time. Public feedback on those amounts has shown strong support for an increase.

Schedule 2 to the bill increases the penalty infringement notice amounts for the failure to provide food, drink or shelter offences from \$200 currently to \$500 for an individual and from \$1,000 to \$2,500 for a corporation. Schedule 2 to the bill will also increase the penalty infringement notice amounts for an act of cruelty from \$500 to \$1,000 for individuals and from \$1,500 to \$5,000 per offence for corporations. Penalty infringement notices are available for other offences under the POCTA Act and those are being examined as part of the reform of the animal welfare legislative framework that will be finalised later this year.

I now turn to the amendments, which increase the range of tools available to the courts to effectively deal with animal welfare cases. Currently the courts have the power to issue a range of orders under POCTAA. Some examples of the types of orders that courts currently make under POCTAA include an order that an animal be produced before the court, an order for payment of care and maintenance costs by the accused person and an order to disqualify or limit a convicted person from having control or influence over animals. Those orders are currently available under POCTAA but not the Crimes Act 1900. That is a loophole. In practice, that means the courts cannot use those orders when dealing with the most serious and heinous animal welfare and related offences contained in the Crimes Act. It also means that a person found guilty of animal cruelty under POCTAA can be subject to an order disqualifying them from owning an animal but a person found guilty of the more serious offence of intentionally inflicting severe pain on an animal under the Crimes Act cannot have similar restrictions imposed on their interactions with animals.

As members can see, that means someone can, in one sense, suffer a higher punishment for a lesser act of animal cruelty than for a more serious one. The bill will close that loophole by ensuring that the prosecution can seek a disqualification order upon conviction, regardless of whether the charge was brought under POCTAA or the Crimes Act. The other court orders and the use of alternative summons provisions will also be available under POCTAA and the Crimes Act for the first time. That is a critical change as court orders can be equally as effective as financial penalties at preventing cruelty and protecting the welfare of animals. The community expects that those who commit serious animal welfare offences will be prevented from repeating those disgraceful acts. This Government is delivering on that expectation by closing that loophole.

Schedule 1 to the bill defines an animal cruelty offence as any offence under POCTAA in respect of an animal, or offences under sections 79, 80, 530 and 531 of the Crimes Act. Further provisions amend POCTAA to establish that court orders under sections 29, 30, 30A, 31 and 33 of POCTAA may be applied to any animal cruelty offence, not just those prosecuted under POCTAA but also those under the Crimes Act. The bill also makes minor drafting changes to streamline the process of applying for court orders. The POCTAA enforcement agencies have told the Government that the current arrangements are confusing and inefficient. One order is required to prevent a convicted person from purchasing or acquiring animals and a separate order is required to prevent a convicted person from keeping, controlling, influencing or caring for an animal.

Schedule 1 to the bill clarifies that the court may make an order that prohibits a convicted individual from one or more of the following for a period set out in the order: purchasing or acquiring an animal, keeping or participating in keeping an animal, being party to an arrangement where the person is entitled to control or influence the keeping of an animal, or having any other involvement with the keeping or care of an animal. That can be done in one order rather than requiring a separate order for each individual restriction.

Additionally, the bill proposes to introduce a new interim disqualification order that is currently not available. That means that under POCTAA and the Crimes Act the new order will be available to the courts. The interim disqualification order will allow a court to prevent a person charged with an animal cruelty offence from having control or influence over additional animals until court proceedings are finalised. This will help to reduce the risk of further animal welfare offences occurring during the course of court proceedings, which, in the case of serious or extreme acts of animal cruelty, can be a considerable time from the point of being charged and first being put before the courts to proceedings being finalised. That will also close a loophole that has been exposed in the past that resulted in further acts of animal cruelty whilst prosecutions were on foot.

Schedule 1 to the bill establishes that the court may make an interim disqualification order to prevent a person from acquiring additional animals if the court is satisfied that the person would be likely to commit another animal cruelty offence. It will be an offence to fail to comply with that order. The interim disqualification order does not allow animals to be seized by enforcement agencies, or require a person to sell or surrender their current animals. It only prevents a person from purchasing, acquiring or having influence over new animals while the proceedings are underway. To protect the welfare of animals, POCTAA already provides for enforcement agencies to seize animals in certain circumstances and, if necessary, this could occur prior to or during proceedings. In cases where animals have not been seized, an interim disqualification order would not prevent a person's business operations from continuing during the proceedings with their remaining animals.

It gives flexibility and discretion to prosecutorial authorities and the courts to seize all existing animals, to prevent them from acquiring new animals or to allow them to keep their current animals but not allow them to acquire or care for any new ones. Where a person has been convicted of an animal cruelty offence, the court may disqualify or limit the convicted person from purchasing or having control or influence over animals for a time period that the court deems appropriate. This may also require the person to dispose of animals already in their possession. The interim disqualification order is an important balance to strike so that people who have not been found guilty of an offence are not unduly punished, but the risk of further animals being subjected to harm or having to be disposed of is minimised should the person be eventually convicted. These orders must be made available as soon as possible.

Schedule 1 to the bill also inserts savings and transitional provisions that ensure these new and improved court orders can be used in proceedings that have already commenced but have not yet been finally determined. Schedule 1 to the bill also increases the maximum penalty for noncompliance with court orders from a current maximum penalty of \$2,750 to a new penalty of \$5,500 per offence, and introduces a six-month imprisonment term for noncompliance with court orders for additional animal cruelty offences under both POCTAA and the Crimes Act. This includes noncompliance with the new interim disqualification order. Court orders are an important tool for safeguarding animal welfare and the penalties for noncompliance with a court order need to be high enough to ensure that people comply with them. The increased penalty and introduction of a six-month imprisonment term will serve as a stronger deterrent to those who may seek to be noncompliant.

This bill is a key step in bringing our State's animal welfare legislation into the twenty-first century and ridding our society of animal cruelty. The Government remains committed to delivering the new animal welfare framework, which will continue to build on changes contained in this bill. As we work through this process this year, we will continue to consult with key stakeholders and the community to ensure that the new framework reflects evolving community expectations. I thank a number of people for their ongoing work in the slow but important process of reforming the animal welfare legislation. At the Department of Primary Industries I thank Director General Scott Hansen and his team, including Tara Black, Simon Vincent, Clem Harris, Kim Filmer, Suz Robinson and Peter Day. From our government agencies, we value the consistent input of Mark Slater, the CEO of Animal Welfare League NSW, and Steve Coleman, CEO of RSPCA NSW.

I particularly thank the RSPCA for its ongoing work in cracking down on illegal puppy factory activities. I also thank NSW police and in particular the Rural Crime Prevention Team, headed up by Cameron Whiteside, that supports the work of the other two enforcement agencies across the State. I also thank the many thousands of individuals who have been engaging with the Animal Welfare Action Plan over the past 18 months. Numerous stakeholders have also appeared before parliamentary inquiries focused on animal welfare. Their input to the overall legislative process has been invaluable and, I hope, illuminative for all members of this House and the other place. It can be a stressful experience to appear before a parliamentary inquiry and have your ownership and livelihood put under a microscope. I hope that all members keep that in mind when debating various aspects of this bill and the animal welfare sector more broadly.

I thank the NSW Farmers Association for its continued advocacy for the agricultural sector. It emphatically supports the improvement of animal welfare laws and penalties, as it knows—as does every member of this place and Government—that farmers are passionate animal welfare advocates. The deep connection between farmers and their animals was something that the Fresh Milk and Dairy Advocate touched upon last week. While he is

speaking here about dairy animals, this sentiment is applicable to every farmer I have ever had the pleasure of meeting or representing. I would like to quote him in full:

Obviously animal welfare is always an issue to a person who loves cows, handles cows and depends on livestock. I am a migrant. I was born overseas. Both of my grandparents had small dairy farms of about eight and 11 cows. They lived for their livestock. I did a little survey as part of this process as to what makes dairy farmers be dairy farmers ...

He concluded, "They love cows." Farmers are some of the best custodians of land and animals in the State, and I welcome their input as we work towards modern and fit-for-purpose legislation. I acknowledge and also thank the Attorney General and his office, particularly his deputy chief of staff, Mary Klein, who has engaged closely with my office in developing the robust and appropriate penalty regime before this House today. I would also like to acknowledge the ongoing work and support of Minister Hancock and her office. Finally, I would like to thank my office for their work with regard to this bill, particularly Alex Hall, and the many hours they invest into working with and listening to stakeholders as we reform this policy area to get the balance right. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Budget

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2020-2021

Debate resumed from 19 November 2020.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (16:01): The 2020-21 New South Wales budget is remarkable for its ambition and the support it provides to our State during the pandemic. It is based on a foundation constructed from years of fiscal responsibility, debt reduction and savings, while rebuilding and renewing the critical infrastructure of our State. As residents of New South Wales, we are truly fortunate to have entered these uncertain times with a high performing economy and a prepared Treasury. I will commence by thanking the Premier and the Treasurer for this. I welcome the New South Wales budget for 2020-21 because the Government acknowledges the challenges 2021 will bring and will continue to invest heavily in programs and infrastructure to give the State economy the boost it needs at this critical time.

The budget is a showcase of grants and opportunities for businesses to help them rebuild from the hit taken over the first year of COVID. Highlights from the budget include half a billion dollars to the community in the form of vouchers to the value of \$100 per adult to contribute to the cost of eating out and going out in New South Wales. As we know, the best way to stimulate our economy is by getting customers through the door of businesses. A payroll tax adjustment will help business owners keep more money in their pockets, with a rise in the tax threshold to \$1.2 million and two-year reduction in the rate from 5.45 per cent to 4.85 per cent.

This budget also commits \$472 million to provide small and medium businesses which do not pay payroll tax with a \$1,500 digital voucher for the cost of State Government fees and charges. Families will benefit from an extension of the preschool program providing up to 15 hours of free care per child each week, which will allow many parents to continue working and to divert family income into other essentials. This will be made available to approximately 700 State-funded community preschools and 38 mobile preschool services that provide care for over 44,000 three- to five-year-olds in the critical years before school.

In my electorate of Albury, the budget provides \$5 million in new funding to the Albury court house for renovations and upgrades; essential capacity upgrades to enhance service delivery, including additional custodial courtrooms, judges' chambers amenities, jury assembly space; and refurbishment of the registry. An amount of \$9.52 million comes as the final instalment of the Albury hospital emergency department rebuild; \$3.389 million will go towards social housing improvement, new supply and upgrades; and \$386,000 has been allocated to deliver new and upgraded quality social and affordable housing for Aboriginal communities. The Government will take action to recognise interstate licences and qualifications so that workers from any State can ply their trade in New South Wales. Women across the State will have access to grants of up to \$5,000 through the new \$10 million Return to Work Program.

The final \$2.8 million of our funding of a \$9.2 million commitment was allocated for the Corowa Saleyards development. I was pleased to be present for the announcement of funding for this important regional facility and can report on the enthusiastic response of the local primary industries sector, council and media. The funding is being used to expand the Corowa Saleyards Precinct, improving facilities and animal welfare. It will become a place to teach young people practical skills. The plans include a new roof to be constructed over the existing facility to protect stock, staff and visitors from extreme weather conditions, while a new water catchment system, upgraded lighting system and solar power will help to reduce costs.

The project includes the construction of a new multipurpose learning centre in a partnership with TAFE NSW, which will provide young people with the opportunity to learn practical skills that will help them to

find a job in the agriculture sector. Around 600,000 head of sheep pass through the Corowa Saleyards annually, generating average sales of more than \$81 million. The upgrades will allow even more stock and sellers to make use of the facility, boosting sales and jobs. Importantly, that is a boost for the Federation Council area and for the township of Corowa. All in all, the New South Wales funding and the efforts of the Federation Council, which I thank for its initiative, will help local businesses to create new jobs, boost trade and attract investment to Corowa.

The impact of the budget continues to roll out across the Albury electorate, with job support a critical factor at the centre of a number of programs. The Deputy Premier, and Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, was in Albury on 20 January to officially announce that the first of four regional job precincts to help drive recovery in New South Wales would be at the NEXUS Industrial Precinct at Ettamogah. This program is about directing investment to our regions, creating new jobs and helping New South Wales to thrive again. The Deputy Premier noted:

The formation of a Regional Job Precinct in Albury will see the NSW Government work with councils to reform existing planning processes and speed up development while maintaining existing environmental considerations so businesses can invest, create new jobs and boost the local economy.

Albury's enviable location along the major transport corridor between Sydney and Melbourne means there are incredible opportunities in freight and logistics, agribusiness and manufacturing industries in the Ettamogah precinct. The key objective behind the Government's regional job precinct programs is to cut red tape for investors, and this will begin with the NEXUS Industrial Precinct in Albury. The Deputy Premier pointed out to media that planning delays are a big concern for those who want to create jobs and plan for development. He said:

The New South Wales Government ... does all that heavy lifting up front, does all the planning, gets all the environmental approvals. Our focus in the initial stages is to work with council about the planning process and cutting red-tape. That's the approach that we need to give confidence of businesses.

For my part, I would add that this is very much talking about what levers the Government can utilise. The NEXUS Ettamogah site is still very much in its infancy. It is a great strategic location. I say to anyone interested in investment in regional areas to look no further than Albury-Wodonga. Let us not forget that this Government has allocated the \$4.2 billion the State received from Snowy Hydro to regional and rural New South Wales. Projects like the special activation precincts arise from our vision, with a road map underpinned by the dollars to make it happen.

A few days later—just last week—I was back at Ettamogah for the turning of the sod on a \$45 million plastics recycling facility that will see more than one billion plastic bottles recycled each year. Construction now underway on the Circular Plastics Australia PET recycling plant will create more than 300 local jobs. I note that the environment Minister, who is in the Chamber, appreciates the importance of recycling but also the opportunities for local job creation. The facility is being delivered in a joint venture between Asahi Beverages, Pact Group and Cleanaway, and is scheduled to open by October. The New South Wales Government contributed \$5 million towards the project through the Waste Less, Recycle More initiative, with the support of the Department of Regional NSW and the Federal Government's Recycling Modernisation Fund. I look at the circular economy philosophy and see the outline come into full detail in a project such as this. When you put your PET drink bottle through a Return and Earn reverse vending machine you are sending it on a journey to Albury, which will soon be recycling more plastic bottles than any other location in Australia.

Government initiatives for recycling and renewal underpin massive private investment in Albury as we push to put flesh on the bones of what it means to have a circular economy in a regional part of the State. Albury is at the forefront of exploring this vital vision for New South Wales. On Monday 25 January I was pleased to announce \$9 million in funding from the NSW Environmental Trust River Connections scheme for a consortium led by Murray Local Land Services to deliver their Refreshing River Management project. This funding, matched by more than \$12 million in additional partner contributions either as cash or in kind, makes for a \$20 million investment in the health of our river systems. Work will be carried out to improve fencing, watering points, livestock management, revegetation of river banks, pest exclusion and much more. Again, there is the mix of policy and a healthier river environment for Albury and beyond, with support for jobs and work.

The Government is continually looking for ways to help different sectors and industries deal with COVID's restrictions and costs. One of my earliest projects was to put \$2 million of New South Wales funding to work developing projects focused on female-friendly change rooms and facilities at sports and other venues right around the Albury electorate. Nine projects were selected, including Melrose Park and Sarvaas Park in Albury, Urana Sportsground, Holbrook Sporting Complex, Walbundrie recreation ground, Jindera Recreation Reserve, Brocklesby Recreation Reserve, and the Jerilderie gym and Tumbarumba Showgrounds.

Projects at Walbundrie and Tumbarumba are now complete, with Jerilderie and Jindera due for completion soon. We can now add to that sports initiative the financial support for Albury City Council to host a Big Bash match at the newly redeveloped Lavington Sports Ground. Other Albury projects to receive grants in round three

of the NSW ICC T20 World Cup 2020 Cricket Legacy Fund include \$30,000 to Holbrook Cricket Club towards the redevelopment of Holbrook Sports Complex and \$18,000 to Cricket Albury Wodonga for the New for Old in Southern Riverina 2020 program.

Roadworks remain a critical maintenance issue for my electorate. On 1 February I was pleased to advise my community that the New South Wales Government would be investing \$2 million to rebuild a 2.2 kilometre section of the Riverina Highway in Howlong. This work will replace a section of road with a new, stronger surface, reducing ongoing maintenance costs and preventing further deterioration. It will also provide up to 35 jobs for local contractors and suppliers. I will continue to advocate for funding for local and regional roads, such as Jingellic Road and the Kywong-Howlong Road, to provide safer travel throughout the region.

As we have seen from this Government's previous budgets, substantial sums have been placed into the programs that this electorate benefits from. I have been working with organisations to gain the support of the Stronger Country Communities grants, Community Building Partnership grants and other government programs to advance the needs of the councils, clubs and organisations in the Albury electorate. I thank the Government and I applaud my community for all the hard work that they put into the grant applications, most particularly during these hard times brought on us by the pandemic. It has been an outstanding effort to keep our sports teams, councils, businesses and clubs in action for the good of our regional economy and most importantly for the wellbeing and activity that these organisations contribute to us all.

Health remains the number one issue in my electorate. Eighteen months ago, with the member for Benambra, I called a health roundtable bringing together governments and health professionals to look at our shared healthcare system on the border and the challenges that it has been facing for some time. The clear message was to research and develop a clinical services plan, which would then inform master planning for further infrastructure. I understand that clinical services plan is now reaching completion and will soon be available. Now Albury Wodonga Health will turn to preparing the clinical master plan. The narrative deriving from the roundtable is encouraging as it brings to life the questions and issues raised by border health professionals, MPs and community organisations. What people said must be done is in fact being done and delivered.

I am encouraged by the \$30 million funding boost by the New South Wales Government to upgrade Albury hospital's emergency department—which is now fully funded by this budget—and a New South Wales Government commitment of \$45 million for Albury hospital's expansion to allow future work on the intensive care unit, additional surgical theatres and more beds. We must still confront the fundamental challenge that Albury's major regional hospital is effectively part of Victoria. The underlying issue is to see and understand just what being a one-hospital region means for the border. Albury Wodonga Health has a huge footprint and is the primary surgical, emergency and medical hospital for hundreds of thousands of people. We need to give consideration to the whole when making plans and sending out programs. I am grateful that both our Premier and our health Minister have travelled to Albury to see firsthand the opportunities and challenges that face our cross-border health entity. I know that they understand that the challenge is for the two States and the Federal Government to have systems in place that see Albury on everyone's map.

Over the last year or so I have been pleased to welcome the Premier, Deputy Premier and several Ministers to Albury. My thanks and appreciation go to each of them and to the staff who accompanied them for those long days of meetings and dialogue. Late last year I welcomed to Albury the Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence for discussions about support for programs helping people to deal with domestic family violence issues. Some funding has now become available for men's programs. We also visited Betty's Place, the refuge for women and their children fleeing domestic violence. This facility no longer necessarily meets the needs of vulnerable women and children in my electorate. It is time to plan its replacement or further refurbishment with more self-contained units, so that traumatised women and children can begin a recovery in some measure of peace and privacy. I have followed on from this by welcoming the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, who also stopped in at Betty's Place and with whom we held meetings about projects and initiatives for social housing.

Victoria's rapid closure of the border with New South Wales just before new year was crushing to New South Wales businesses in my electorate and along the Murray River. In Victoria in August \$45 million in funding was announced by the Government for two tiers of grants for border businesses that suffered 30 per cent or 75 per cent turnover declines. Applications closed in October and funding was granted to 2,134 businesses. It has not gone unnoticed on the border that more funding designated for small businesses by the Southern Border Small Business Support Grant remains unspent. The sudden border closure initiated by Victoria smashed through businesses along the New South Wales side of the Murray. We must give consideration to fulfilling the role of the support package by applying the remaining funds to these struggling businesses and the communities they represent.

In closing, I join in congratulating the Premier on her strong leadership through the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is the message I hear repeatedly as I travel across the Albury electorate. People respect the hard decisions and have joined as whole communities in responding to this leadership for the benefit of their families, friends and neighbours. The challenge has brought out the best in us: kindness, mutual support, resilience, grit. The border closures have really hurt my community—no doubt about that. Visits by the Premier, Deputy Premier, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and the Minister for Finance and Small Business have been significant in acknowledging that the border communities have at times carried a great weight, a disproportionate responsibility, in the fight against COVID and have experienced periods of harsher personal restrictions than might be found in most of Melbourne or Sydney.

But the Premier's support for world's best contact tracing, DNA evidence and powerful QR code systems and business requirements gives us hope—based not on pulling down the shutters, doggedly closing our eyes and locking people up across vast parts of the State but on reliance on science that is backed by proper resourcing and budgeting. As the COVID battle continues, and indeed transforms, it is that budgeting excellence that builds business confidence and supports the people of New South Wales in response to the twists, turns and mutations we must confront. I am proud to represent the people who live in the Albury electorate and repeat my commitment to serving them and their local communities. I look forward with enthusiasm to putting our plans in place right across the Albury electorate.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:21): Fundamental to the actions of the State Government is the upgrading and expansion of facilities that every member of our community uses, such as roads, schools and hospitals. This budget estimates and related papers debate gives me the opportunity to thank my community in The Entrance electorate on the Central Coast because without them this budget would have looked a lot different. Without the people of my electorate, I would not have been able to garner the support needed to lobby the Government to do things it otherwise would not be inclined to do for the Central Coast.

Under this Government, what should be the upgrading of facilities and provision of resources for all citizens, regardless of where they live, becomes something of a lucky dip. Sometimes funding allocations are a case of pork-barrelling depending on who is in favour, who is closest to the Premier and has her ear, so to speak, and who is closest to the funds. That approach leaves out the people on the Central Coast, which is why I appreciate this opportunity to thank the people of the Central Coast for rallying in support of my actions to redress the imbalance of funds distribution. My objective is to ensure that the Central Coast receives a fair share of the State budget.

There is no better example of the need for funds to be distributed equally than the provision of essential safety upgrades to railway stations, which includes safe transport access and the provision of lifts. When I was elected in 2015 one of the first things pointed out to me by my constituents was that Tuggerah railway station had no lifts. People kept saying to me so clearly there was a need for that type of facility. Although Tuggerah station is not in my electorate but just outside it, by and large it is used by the majority of people from The Entrance electorate. Many of them are older people and commuters who travel to and from Sydney every day for work. The lack of lifts at the station and the configuration of the ramps and stairs make the journey, from parking the car to catching a train, a long and tiring one. The community has rallied and over the past four years numerous petitions have been presented and numerous notices of motion have been given in this place and my constituents and I have written numerous letters to the transport Minister. The response over those four years has been that lifts would not be installed at Tuggerah station because it did not meet the criteria of the Government's Transport Access Program.

My community has kept up the pressure and has supported me all the way, so that in the lead-up to the 2019 election a bipartisan commitment was given to install lifts at Tuggerah station. I was pleased to see in the budget the first allocation of funding towards the planning and delivery of lifts at Tuggerah station. Over the next couple of years every station in my electorate will have lifts installed. At every station, except Tuggerah where planning is still underway, work has already commenced and improved access facilities are expected over the next 12 to 18 months. This did not happen because of the impersonal operations of a system that was blind to the colour of the electorate. Petitions were presented by communities at Ourimbah and Lisarow. The Orchards retirement village made strong demands for better access at Lisarow station. I thank my community for their efforts. When The Entrance community sticks together, we make up for the otherwise capricious decision-making of this Government when it comes to the Central Coast.

Work on the Pacific Highway in my electorate has slowed down under this Government. The upgrade of the Pacific Highway stages 1 and 2 was completed by the former Labor Government in 2010 and we have waited until 2016 for this Government to start work. The delay has placed a burden on the community, which has continued to grow, because the existing Pacific Highway contains few locations where my community can cross safely. The road upgrade will improve pedestrian safety as well as the capacity of the road, which will enhance

travel around the Central Coast. The upgrade of the Pacific Highway stages 3A and 3B is currently under construction. The budget has provided more money to continue that work, which I understand will not be completed until 2023. That funding is most welcomed but the delay could—I hope it does not—have fatal consequences for the growing community, particularly the schoolchildren who have to cross the Pacific Highway without sufficient and safe pedestrian crossings. I will continue to watch those works as they unfold and will continue to take cues from my community as to improvements that can be made.

Most recently, the Pacific Highway upgrade led me to ask questions about parking facilities around Lisarow railway station. The upgrade of the Pacific Highway took away some informal parking on the Old Pacific Highway that was used by most of the community as a parking location if they wanted to catch the train. We have a growing community and a growing commuter population, but they are going to lose half of their current commuter car parking with the highway upgrade. That was pointed out to me by members of my community, so I persisted with my inquiries with Transport for NSW and the transport Minister. As a result, I was pleased to be informed a couple of weeks ago that Transport has finally relented and agreed to add 60 car parking spaces at Lisarow railway station that were not part of the original design sent out to the community a couple of years ago. Again, I thank my community for giving me the cues I need to keep on top of this Government to make sure that when facilities and infrastructure are delivered, they represent the best possible result for my community.

Mr Anthony Roberts: You're welcome.

Mr DAVID MEHAN: Absolutely. I thank the members of my community from Long Jetty and Killarney Vale for pointing out the fact that there are still not enough safe pedestrian crossings in those communities despite this Government allocating money to upgrades over the past couple of years. That led me to launch another petition in Long Jetty and Killarney Vale to improve the number and quality of pedestrian crossings. Even though the Government did not allocate a huge amount of money in the budget, we managed to convince enough local transport people to do the right thing and provide two extra pedestrian crossings at Long Jetty as well as some enhancements to pedestrian crossings at Killarney Vale, which have been welcomed by my community.

This budget allows the Government to continue with the disappointing and failed process of privatising the public housing system in this State. Privatisation has seen the Central Coast lose 222 dwellings over the past 10 years since this Government has been in office. As a result, over the past couple of weeks more families than I would care to welcome have complained at the counter of my office that they are being confronted with eviction notices and rent increases, resulting in impossible searches for affordable accommodation in the area. We have less public housing now and the proportion as a percentage of total housing on the Central Coast has simply collapsed. That means that there is less affordable housing overall for my constituents and less competition with the private sector to provide affordable and decent accommodation. That has resulted in the private sector having no interest in caring for all members of the community because they know they will find tenants willing to pay excessive rents that satisfy their own private needs over the needs of the whole community.

This budget includes money for some extra Aboriginal housing but it provides no money for extra public housing on the Central Coast. That is tremendously disappointing and my constituents are asking me to revisit the matter to improve affordability for them and, importantly, their children. This budget included funding for hospital upgrades and, of course, I welcome that. I particularly welcome the public upgrade of Wyong Hospital instead of the private sector upgrade that was offered by members opposite before the last election. The Central Coast community welcomes Wyong Hospital remaining a public hospital. However, the question I need to ask is: Why, time and again, when we run a mobile office or are out in the community, am I approached by staff from upgraded hospitals saying, "We have this great big hospital now, but we have not got the huge increase in beds or staffing levels necessary to fill the hospital to deal adequately with the needs of our growing community"? I guess that is the weakness of the Government. It is keen to build things, and it is building. However, once it builds, it is not servicing to the level necessary to meet the needs of the community. That is an area that continues to create stress in my community and on the Central Coast, and it is an area that the budget could do better on.

The same goes for schools. The Government talks about building extra schools, but it has built no new school infrastructure in my electorate since I became the member in 2015 and the maintenance budget still seems to be thin on the Central Coast. Niagara Park Public School has had a tarpaulin over its roof for almost the past 12 months. It is an unacceptable situation for a school that has a devoted community around it and a much-loved principal, but has facilities that do not show the community that the Parliament is putting forward its best face in public education. That is surprising because the Government seems to be able to find money to support a private junior school attached to Central Coast Grammar School. It has money for a private junior school that is not open to the public, but Niagara Park Public School in my electorate is waiting for a new roof.

The special needs school at The Entrance North has been undergoing upgrades for the past 12 months. It has recycled demountables that are being turned into classrooms. That is okay if that is all this Parliament can do,

but clearly it is not all it can do because there is enough money in the budget to support private education on the Central Coast. The Government cannot seem to find the money to support existing public schools, which is its primary task in this State—schools that are open to all children regardless of their circumstances.

It is a mixed budget, but in that sense it is a very typical Liberal-Nationals Coalition budget; it is capricious in its outlook. It allows the Treasurer and members of the Government to crow about things being built in their electorates, but it contains a whole bunch of money hidden away in funds with loose allocation criteria for the purpose of pork-barrelling—the term used by the Government for the way it allocates money across the State. That is a system of government in New South Wales according to the Deputy Premier and the Premier. I am surprised how New South Wales could continue with that system of government for much longer; it will not get the Government very far. I think it has got the Government this far only because of the good work done throughout the pandemic, which has brought the community together. Absent that, and when we get on top of that, a system of government built on pork-barrelling will not be rewarded by the electorate for much longer and I look forward to that day.

I thank my community for the support it has shown me. It is a strength of the State's democracy—even with the partial favouritism and pork-barrelling system of government—that there is still room for local members, supported by their local community, working to get a bit of fairness back into the budget and get a fair share for their constituents. That is something the State could provide to all of us if the system of government was a social democracy rather than a capricious, pork-barrelling "hit-ocracy".

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (16:38): I contribute to the debate on the Budget Estimates and Related Papers 2020-2021 and formally congratulate the Treasurer on handing down arguably the most difficult budget seen in our lifetime. The Coalition Government in its various incarnations has worked extremely hard since 2011 to return the State of New South Wales from a position of deficit left to us by the former Labor Government to the economic powerhouse of the country. Through pretty amazing fiscal management we have been able to compile an amazing record of infrastructure development whilst also putting money aside for a rainy day or, in this case sadly, a lack of rainy days. Prolonged drought was the first disaster to hit this State and it was quickly followed by bushfires and then the COVID-19 pandemic that we are all still manoeuvring our way through.

While the focus has been largely on the pandemic for the past 12 months and we have had some welcome rain in regional parts of the State, it is important to remember that for our rural communities, including those around the Dubbo electorate, the challenges of the drought are still very real and it something that The Nationals are still focusing on addressing for our constituents. Despite these challenges, though—drought, COVID-19, bushfires—the Government has not been afraid to spend money and stimulate the economy. I believe the budget handed down by the Treasurer last November was both generous and responsible.

I took delight in welcoming the Treasurer and the Deputy Premier to the Dubbo electorate in the week preceding the budget and we were able to make some fantastic announcements at that time about the investment in our region which we see in the platform for the future. I will run through a few of those announcements, but one of the main ones that attracted a lot of attention related to funding for a much-needed drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre. This had been a pretty hot topic for me prior to entering this Parliament and, despite some suggestions to the contrary, it was one that I made a priority in the wake of being elected to represent my community in this place. In fact, in my inaugural speech in this Chamber I referenced the fact that whilst Rome was not built in a day, they were laying bricks and pavers every day. Despite me not talking about a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre every day, there was plenty of work going on in the background and that continues to happen.

In the wake of recommendations from the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug "Ice" being made public it became even more apparent that a facility was needed as part of our response to the direct and indirect issues caused by substance abuse. I had many discussions with not only the Treasurer but also the health Minister and the Deputy Premier and it was great to secure \$7.5 million as a commitment from the State Government as part of a wider drug and alcohol response package for the construction of a facility and for the implementation of programs in the Dubbo area. One of the criticisms from some sectors has been around the time it took for the Government to commit to that funding, particularly after the Federal Government had pledged \$3 million around a building infrastructure project.

To clear this up—and this is something I have maintained all along—while it is important that we do what is necessary and develop a facility, it is more important that the funding and support are in place to ensure that the programs and the building—the bricks and mortar—do not turn into a white elephant and are, in fact, successful. Thankfully, the conversations with the Treasurer and the health Minister in relation to this were met with an eagerness to be part of the solution. It was a proud and exciting day in Dubbo when I joined with the Treasurer and the Deputy Premier to announce that funding was forthcoming in the budget.

Aside from being the future of a lifesaving drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre, I think that it is pretty well agreed that Dubbo is also home to the world's best zoo: Dubbo's Taronga Western Plains Zoo. If you do not believe me as to how good the zoo is, you could ask not just Coalition MPs but also the throngs of Opposition MPs who have come through the zoo ever since the June long weekend. The zoo has been very, very popular and for very good reason—in fact, here is one of the Opposition MPs now.

Mr David Harris: I've visited there often.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS: It is a great place and the investment in the zoo continues to grow. After we announced rehabilitation funding with the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer we headed off to the zoo, where we were joined by the Minister for Energy and Environment, to unveil funding for a pair of really important animal welfare projects. As part of a larger investment in Taronga as a whole, \$14 million has now been allocated to the development of a bigger and better wildlife hospital at Taronga Western Plains Zoo. Already the Dubbo wildlife hospital is the main facility of its kind west of the Great Dividing Range. It treats close to 1,400 cases each year and is also a storage for coral, which is interesting. There is a set of circumstances there that means that the hospital is the right place to have that very important coral stored.

The new facility not only will enable the veterinary staff at the zoo to continue the work they do caring for critically ill and injured wildlife but also will expand the zoo's world-leading conservation programs. In fact, it will become a world leader in training future vets, and will play an important role in the tourism part of the zoo as the ongoing vet work becomes a viewable attraction as part of the loop around the zoo. It is an exciting opportunity that will add to the attractiveness of the zoo in a different way. Tenders for that work are due to be announced in the coming months. People are excited about the opportunity to see some of the behind-the-scenes action—for example, a lion having a tooth operation or a platypus having a splinter removed.

The platypus is the other exciting part of this project. Thanks to the Deputy Premier, we announced \$8.8 million for the construction of a platypus sanctuary. Ongoing study and education around these uniquely Australian monotremes and their rehabilitation are part of that as well. During the drought and the bushfire crisis a significant strain was placed on the platypus population, which was certainly recognised. The new facility will allow for the safe housing of up to 65 platypuses at any one time. As I mentioned, it will also allow for further study of the way platypus live, interact and breed—all of which is still a bit of a mystery. During the drought it was realised that, unfortunately, the platypus is under a lot of pressure in the wild. That is how the project came to life. I thank the many people in the department, including Murray Wood, who helped bring this vision to reality.

As I mentioned, as well as being essential animal welfare facilities, the developments will add to the tourism and educational offerings at the zoo. I am sure that both attractions will form an important part of what people come to expect at the zoo. Both will be extremely popular and, hopefully, in coming months we will see tenders approved and building work not too far away. In the lead-up to the 2019 election I vividly remember standing on the grounds of Dubbo Hospital with the Deputy Premier and pledging up to \$30 million for at least 350 new car park spaces at the hospital. Once again, this was a much-needed project not only for the Dubbo community but also for residents of the wider western region who use the hospital for their medical needs. Anyone who has driven past the hospital precinct over the past year would know what a hive of activity it has been during the redevelopment of the facility and the construction of the Western Cancer Centre, which is now nearing completion.

While both of these projects were going full steam ahead, Health Infrastructure has been working away quietly in the background examining the best location for future parking areas. Unfortunately, this project has been used as a political football by some who questioned whether it would ever be delivered, despite my constant reassurances that it was happening. It may not have been happening in the public eye but it is certainly happening. In November last year I was delighted to join the health Minister at Dubbo Hospital to unveil plans for the new multistorey car park on the western side of the hospital campus along with the new car park on the south-eastern side. It is really exciting that together they will deliver around 380 extra car parking spaces. A few days after that \$10.5 million was committed in the current budget for stage one of the development to get underway. I look forward to further funding to see that project through to completion. Again, that one is expected to start in the next few months.

It is one thing to make major announcements about infrastructure. We have heard others speak disparagingly about that, but the other thing to recognise is that as part of the budget we have also made a number of financial commitments that are making major differences to people's lives on a day-to-day basis. Infrastructure has been extremely important—the ongoing building is creating and sustaining jobs—but day-to-day life experience is also important. One thing that is making a difference is the \$120 million free preschool program. It was great to have the education Minister, Sarah Mitchell, in Dubbo recently. She was able to hear firsthand from one of the local centres about how the program has benefited not only the centre itself but also all the families and how it will continue to help through 2021.

Last year during the height of the pandemic a lot of parents, quite understandably, had to make a choice to keep their children at home. That created a quandary: Parents had to choose between paying for unutilised preschool services or withdrawing their children and putting the future of those services in doubt. That was a situation in which families whose incomes had been impacted by the pandemic might be forced to choose whether they were going to go ahead with preschool or use that money for other essential costs; a real conundrum was developing. Free preschool was then implemented. Funding was given to centres on the condition that they remained open and retained staff, and that move has certainly paid massive dividends. In the budget it was announced that \$120 million would be provided to the scheme this year. That will help more than 44,000 three- to five-year-olds who are attending a community preschool. Essentially, that funding is about providing up to 15 hours of free care per child each week. It allows parents or carers to continue working and it supports them to divert family income into other essentials.

I mentioned that the education Minister visited Dubbo. During that visit we headed to the Dubbo and District Preschool. The Minister and I heard directly from staff and parents, and the feedback was universally positive. In fact, every single family at that centre now receives free preschool for the entire time they are there, which is quite remarkable. The centre's business manager, Kristen McWhirter, has said:

The funding has aided in minimising the effect the loss of fees has had on our operations, ensuring the retention of staff and continuation of providing a high-quality service for all stakeholders ...

Our families have been pleased to hear of this funding because they want to do the best for their children, and this funding allows them to access early education without having to compromise other essentials for the family.

That is a fantastic thought from the business manager at Dubbo and District Preschool. What an amazing project it has been and what an amazing outcome it has achieved. It has ensured that families can keep up to \$2,000 in their pocket for the year. It has ensured that children have had access to vital preschool education. It has ensured that the fantastic workers in the sector have had security surrounding their employment. The centres have been able to remain open. I do not think anyone should have too much bad news to say about that. Certainly for regional areas where in some cases people travel quite long distances to get there, it has been an absolute winner to know that care and education is there.

Another commitment from The Nationals which has provided real benefits for regional communities is the regional seniors travel card. In fact, it has been so successful that some of the Opposition MPs from city areas are trying to claim that they are now part of the program and part of regions as well. That shows just how good the program is. For example, last year in my region there were 4,961 applications for the card in the Dubbo local government area and 764 in Narromine. In the Mid-Western Regional Council 2,693 people took up the offer of the \$250 prepaid card for use on petrol, taxis and other forms of public transport. That is 8,418 seniors from my electorate alone who, in total, got access to just over \$2.1 million to help alleviate the cost of transport.

The best part is that it is all happening again this year, thanks to the Liberal-Nationals Government. For people in metropolitan areas, public transport and the ease of accessing it is something that is taken for granted, but in regional areas it is vitally important. Already more than 3,300 people in my electorate have applied for this year's card, and applications have only been open for three weeks. There is a fantastic excitement around reapplying. I would encourage people to make sure they are letting their family and friends know that applications are open right now. It is good government in action. It is enacting budgetary policies that are helping put money back in the pockets of people at an unprecedented time in our history.

I return to the Treasurer's trip to Dubbo in November. He came along for a walk with me and the Deputy Premier. We visited some of the local businesses in town, which was a good opportunity for the Treasurer in particular to hear firsthand from some of our innovative and resilient business owners just how the New South Wales Government's COVID-19 support grants have helped their businesses. One of those businesses was Lazy Sunday Lifestyle, which is a boutique clothing and gift store run by Kate Griffiths. Members might remember the blue and white checked tie the Treasurer wore when he handed down his Budget Speech. He was very proudly wearing that from Kate's store—and she was pretty chuffed as well, I can tell you.

Kate is a young woman who has taken a giant step to branch out into small business ownership. She said the grants had "helped us get back on our feet and spend a bit of money on marketing when we reopened". Again, this shows good government at work—helping people when they need it most. That kind of reactionary assistance is only possible when the books are balanced in such a way that funds can be managed responsibly. That kind of good government is not just about million-dollar announcements or sexy projects, as some people might call them. In the meantime, plenty of other things are happening that may fly under the radar but, as far as communities are concerned, make a massive difference.

Last week I visited a lime farm near Narromine to make a \$50,000 announcement as part of the Youth Opportunities program, which is coordinated by the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services.

That funding went towards a program called Soil2Soul, which is coordinated by Joh Leader and her team from LeaderLife and Apollo House. The program is life changing for its participants. Joh works with vulnerable and at-risk youth in a range of different ways. Working on a lime farm gives those youth employment, skills and training. Most importantly, it gives them something to be proud of, something to look forward to and more meaning in life through their job and future opportunities. Over the past couple of years I have been very happy to be part of a government that has contributed a total of \$180,000 to that specific program, along with other funding, so that it can continue to expand and head in the right direction to become a self-sufficient business.

The latest \$50,000 went towards turning the limes into a value-added product: lime cordial. I was delighted to try some of the lime cordial and I think they have the recipe 100 per cent right—it is delightful. The group of young people under supervision will hopefully be selling that in the next month or two at local markets. Many more opportunities are coming both for the limes and also for the value-added products that can come from the lime farm. The youth who work on that property are not only learning what it takes to grow, maintain and harvest the farm, but also they are looking at their futures in a much more positive way. Joh was pretty happy to receive the latest \$50,000. She said, "What has already been created through the program is wonderful and is having a really positive impact for the young people we engage with. The funding through the New South Wales Government will allow us to take our social impact to the next level. It is so necessary to ensure long-term sustainability of programs for kids and we are incredibly grateful that they see the value in supporting this approach." Thanks, Joh.

The Orana Support Service [OSS] is another fantastic organisation that recently received funding, this time through the Community Building Partnership grant, to pay for a new food van. I have spoken in this place about the incredible work of Tina Reynolds and her team in helping vulnerable people who might otherwise fall through the cracks. I have also spoken about the Meals on the Main program, which OSS ran in late 2019 and early 2020. Volunteers line up on Macquarie Street, the main street in Dubbo, one night a week to provide meals for people who have no other way to eat something hearty for dinner. It is a fantastic opportunity; I have been there a couple of times. It was amazing but it was also sad that the number of people who were turning up regularly grew so large that the program had to be moved to the local park to accommodate people comfortably so they could access the fantastic food that is on offer.

The pandemic and the health orders that were quite rightly in place have meant that the program has been stopped temporarily, but a recent \$50,000 contribution from the State Government to Orana Support Services has allowed for the ordering of a brand-new food van. That will not only allow members of the organisation to continue to provide meals to those who have been accessing them, but also allow the service to be expanded to places like Narromine and Wellington and reach more members of the community who might be struggling. The entire team from the Orana Support Service and others who work with OSS in the provision of that service are extremely excited about that. [*Extension of time*]

I thank the House. We regularly hear from people about that type of opportunity with the Orana Support Service, but we also hear from other organisations like BaptistCare, which runs a program through Hope Street. Recently the Government provided about \$16,000 in funding for a barbecue trailer. BaptistCare will work hand in hand with the Orana Support Service to provide food to people in some of our outlying communities in the Dubbo region who may be struggling and who may continue to struggle.

In December I visited Wellington PCYC, where we announced a great grant. Wellington is one of those towns that has fantastic opportunities, but it does have some issues around youth. Part of the visit to Wellington was for the PCYC boxing shed. It is pretty hot in summer and pretty cold in winter, so the Government has provided \$7,000 for air conditioning to be installed in the boxing shed. That will be reverse cycle, so it can be utilised during the heat of summer and the cold of winter. This project ensures the club can continue to provide a safe and comfortable environment for the youth of the town who use the facility. As I mentioned, Wellington has plenty of opportunities. We are really focusing on the town's youth at the moment because of the problems that have arisen in some cases.

Debate interrupted.

Public Interest Debate

COVID-19

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

That this House acknowledges the work of NSW Health and all our frontline workers in protecting lives and jobs over the summer as we continue to manage the COVID-19 pandemic.

Today's public interest debate reflects on the period of the past 14 months and the one-in-100-years pandemic. While the topic is "Protecting lives and protecting jobs", I would rather start with protecting lives as the major

topic. On 25 January, when the COVID crisis started here in New South Wales, clearly—as I have indicated in a couple of other addresses today—no-one really knew what we were dealing with. It has been a massive learning curve as we have moved through the various stages that the entire world has moved through in managing what is an extremely dangerous virus and all of its variants of concern that have developed in various parts of the world.

Instinctively, we in the New South Wales Government knew we would need to ensure that we addressed the substantive health issues in order to be able to also protect the broader aspects of our community: the mental health issues and, of course, the economic issues. In dealing first with the health issues, we acknowledged and understood that the knowledge available through the scientific, medical and research communities was limited. We have only faced one pandemic in the past 100 years. To address those issues the New South Wales public health team, led by Dr Kerry Chant, immediately commenced work to try to establish what information was available from China—at that stage, it was principally the province of Hubei and the city of Wuhan. The information that was coming at that time was challenging. It was difficult. Some jurisdictions reflected on that in a particularly negative way. I will simply say that the information coming to us may have been influenced by a number of measures, but I think that the People's Republic of China was probably suffering—as we have all suffered—from the challenges of understanding the source of the virus and how it was moving through the community. That left the rest of the world and, indeed, Australia in a similar position.

To effectively defend Australia against the virus has been like a war, and I use those terms advisedly. Early on, we moved to take a number of major steps. Probably one of the earliest pivotal moments was when the National Cabinet, which by that stage had been established, determined that we would move to hotel quarantine for international arrivals. In other words we found that in the first few weeks when we were asking people to isolate at home in self-isolation/quarantine, it was not necessarily as strict as it needed to be. Some overseas returnees—bearing in mind they were at that time principally Australians—were not adhering as closely as they should have. The National Cabinet determined it would have hotel quarantine and New South Wales, as the gateway to Australia, had to take far more people than any other State or Territory. Approximately 140,000 people have come through our hotel quarantine system. That has been pivotal to our health response, which was dependant on containing the virus within the hotel system. For those who are not aware, we have 15 to 18 hotels here which are supervised and managed by the police.

We also have health hotels. That was quite a unique model devised by our public health team. I acknowledge the work of Sydney Local Health District Chief Executive Dr Teresa Anderson, who had proposed prior to COVID that we have health hotels where people could transition from a hospital environment into an environment that was not quite home where they could have telehealth and nurse supervision. That concept was translated into the health hotels that we established. People who come into New South Wales are tested at the airport for any symptoms. If there is any indication that they may have COVID they go straight to the health hotel. Most people come straight into our police hotels and are tested on day two, and again on day 12—it was previously on day 10. If they have any positive symptoms they go straight to the health hotel where they are managed extremely well by our medical and nursing staff. I acknowledge our medical and nursing staff who have made such a difference.

The concept that we in the New South Wales Government had was that if we could manage people in that environment, then we were also managing jobs and the economy by not shutting down our State's borders. That was the position we adhered to until Victoria, sadly, got into a very difficult position of over 140 to 160 cases of COVID a day, and then for a period we closed our border to Victoria. Otherwise during the whole of this pandemic our State has remained open. The purpose of that is to drive the economy and ensure that the mental health of our community is as resilient as it can be in this one-in-100-year pandemic. I thank all the health staff, the police, the security staff, the pathology staff—all of the staff who have managed to ensure that our quarantine system is safe. About 6,500 people a week in total, and 3,500 on any one day, run our hotel quarantine system. The New South Wales Government has had a proportionate and sensible response and will continue to do that to protect jobs and lives.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (17:07): Opposition members support this public interest debate motion. We believe it is an opportunity to recognise workers across the health system, in the emergency services and throughout the public service who have done an outstanding job to cope with what has been without a doubt the worst year in modern history. I remember all too well just after Australia Day last year the Minister ringing me and the Leader of the Opposition to talk about this virus. About a week or two beforehand I was in Japan with my family. People where we were staying were talking about some problems in China. Never in my wildest dreams would I have thought that after the original phone call from the Minister and the subsequent chat with the Chief Medical Officer we would witness what happened last year. We are here today and our communities are largely safe today because of the incredible work of frontline health workers right across the system as well as our workers in the emergency services. But our health workers in particular have done an enormous job.

In fact, a couple of months ago, in the lead up to Australia Day when people were talking about nominees for Australian of the Year, I said to my wife that although this year's Australian of the Year was an outstanding individual perhaps it would have been nice to award a health worker. They have gone above and beyond in their efforts to protect lives and, as the Minister correctly said, livelihoods. That is obviously not as important as lives but, particularly as we start to emerge from the health side of the pandemic, it is of critical importance that we focus on making sure we get the balance right in opening up our economy. One can only imagine the thoughts of frontline health workers in those early days, starting their shifts in the morning, afternoon or evening, leaving home not knowing what they would face. It was an invisible enemy and one that we did not really know. As the Minister correctly said in question time today, there was no playbook for that.

That has been the challenge from the very beginning. I hope health workers get the recognition they deserve. We on this side of the House have made it clear that we were disappointed by the Treasurer's and Premier's decision not to award those workers with the pay rise that I think they deserve and that the community would definitely see that they deserve. We think that was a mistake. Those people, particularly some of our health workers, are some of the lowest paid individuals in our communities. Their roles, whether as cleaners, orderlies or workers in hospital kitchens, were just as critical because they kept the hospitals and health services functioning. We believe that in this day and age the Government could have afforded that increase in expenditure and given those people the pay rise they deserved. The Minister was right to nominate a range of different groups; sometimes we only see doctors and nurses but we must remember that behind them are the health workers, the allied health workers, the public health teams and the team that the Minister referred to that looks after our quarantine arrangements.

Those people play a critical role in protecting all of us. I want to shout-out to the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, which is an excellent team led by Denis King. I have had a lot to do with him and I know that the Minister speaks with him frequently. Margot Mains has been an excellent chief executive, and Nicole Sheppard, who runs our largest hospital at Wollongong, and the teams in pathology and across the board have done an outstanding job. We have had a number of little spikes. For a community like ours to respond to the health service's calls to get tested shows just how much faith we have in our local health service. I acknowledge all of them. Today is an opportunity, particularly as we start a new year, to reflect on perhaps one of our worst years in history—certainly in modern history—and to recognise the frontline workers across the board who did so much to protect lives and livelihoods.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:12): I speak in support of the motion brought to the House by my colleague and neighbour to the north, the Minister for Health and Medical Research and member for Wakehurst, which acknowledges and thanks the frontline staff and workers for protecting both lives and jobs as we continue to manage the COVID-19 pandemic. I offer my comments with unique insight into the effort and contribution they all made over the 15 days and then 22 days of restrictions and lockdown that the northern beaches faced over Christmas. I recall quite vividly on 16 December some raised eyebrows with the news of two cases being identified in Avalon. A couple of days later on 18 December it was clear the impact that that cluster would have and ultimately did have on jobs and the people of the northern beaches for that period.

Many may think, "How can you complain? The northern beaches isn't a bad place to be restricted to and locked down in." Some might say we have a drawbridge anyway, being the insular peninsula. I think perhaps what made it so challenging was our proximity to the city and the rest of New South Wales where people were enjoying the festive season and Christmas with family and friends. I am sure many people in this place enjoyed Christmas, the time spent with their extended families and the ability to visit the elderly, their grandparents and others. We did not have that opportunity in the northern beaches during that festive time.

Further, the economic lifeblood of the northern beaches and Manly in particular is seasonal. There is no flat line of visitors to Manly. It peaks in summer and that is when our businesses do their best trade. They put away the money they earn in the three weeks leading up to Christmas and beyond to get them through the leaner winter months. Again, it was very clear to business operators and people throughout the northern beaches that that was not going to be the case and the impact that it was going to have. Therefore, it was all the more important that we rallied together as a community. Our frontline health workers and staff did a magnificent job. There were many moving parts to the response. NSW Health set up testing clinics with military precision. I visited a number of them to see firsthand what was going on. I want to acknowledge the terrific work of the chief executive officer of the Northern Sydney Local Health District, Deb Wilcox, who was working through the night with the Minister and the team to determine what resources needed to go where.

Mr Brad Hazzard: And the Northern Beaches Council.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: Yes, I note the interjection from the Minister. The Northern Beaches Council did a fantastic job in deploying resources up and down the northern beaches to ensure that the testing clinics and their staff were open and operating. I also acknowledge Histopath, which was a private provider of a testing clinic at

the old Manly Hospital site. What was originally meant to be a five-day-a-week operation was extended to seven days a week and it shut at 10.00 p.m. at night. I saw the line of cars up and down the street with people waiting to get their tests done, and their results were turned around very quickly. A number of people went above and beyond. We turned the page on what happened over those couple of weeks and we are now focused on protecting jobs—the Chamber of Commerce, Minister Tudehope, the Treasurer, the Small Business Commissioner. I had the opportunity to hear from and speak with 100 local businesses to help me understand what support they needed on the ground to get them through what would have been a good trading period.

I am incredibly proud of the work that NSW Health and the Government as a whole did in delivering a support package that will get those businesses through this tough time. It was created from the ground up. The Small Business Commissioner pounded the pavement with me and met with local business owners. We were in kitchens, bike repair shops, hotels and met tourist operators: the result of our work is there to be seen. If it were not for the outstanding effort of NSW Health and all of our frontline workers, we would have been suffering a far more dire set of circumstances, but yesterday we had a good weekend in Manly and on the northern beaches. I thank all the health workers for delivering that outcome.

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (17:18): I thank the Minister for moving this motion in supporting the frontline workers. Indeed, I will start by thanking the Minister for Health and Medical Research. A Minister who is accessible to everyone across the Chamber is probably a very important tool to have in any crisis and that was important in clearing up a number of problems that would normally get stuck in a bureaucratic hole at some stage. By praising the health Minister I have probably now destroyed any future preselection that he has running. I will go back to thanking our frontline workers.

Mr Brad Hazzard: I do not think that will be a major issue.

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ: It is not a major issue? Okay. As the shadow Minister for police I thank our police force for their hard work during COVID. It has been particularly difficult for the police force. They have had border patrols and quarantine duties. The police that have remained behind in the stations and the area and regional commands have had to take on the extra workload. Many of those police officers spent a lot of time away from their families. In the highway patrol alone there were probably about 1,400 police officers down on the border, which meant they were not on the streets monitoring cars and vehicles and that the police officers who were left had to do that work. That was very important. I thank the police for all their hard work. It has been a significant logistical exercise.

Of course, health has been the most crucial part of our front line. That is no more so than with all the staff at the Auburn Hospital in my electorate. We have a very diverse community, and I will come to the problems that come with that diversity in a moment. However, our health staff do a tremendous job, from the cleaners and the guys in the car park right up to the top. It is my great hope that those health workers in particular who are standing in the COVID testing centres, often on their feet for 10 hours a day in the searing heat or the freezing cold, are the first in line for a vaccine when it comes out because their role has been absolutely crucial in dealing with this.

An unusual group I thank for being on the front line is the young students who were part of Berala Public School's school holiday program. Of course, they had to move that program so that we could get a clinic into Berala. Some may talk about the northern beaches being insular but Berala is a very insular part of my electorate. Anyone who knows the geography of my area would know there are no main roads that go through Berala. If you are in Berala you are on the train line; it goes either to Lidcombe or Bankstown and that is about it. That created problems at the start, which the Minister was able to rectify, where all the testing facilities were drive-in or on other train lines and far away. People were actually travelling to Bankstown, which is counterintuitive to where people might think they would be going.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Thanks to you for raising it.

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ: That is okay. People were telling me that at some of these clinics 60 per cent of people were turning up without Medicare cards. The reality in my electorate is that people do not have Medicare cards. They are not visa holders. They are refugees. They do not necessarily have ID. They are the elderly parents that are stuck with people. They are overseas students. There is going to be a huge problem with the vaccine rollout. I know that we have not been given the details but I am greatly concerned about how this is to be delivered into a community where we saw so many problems just getting people tested. Every day people were saying, "The testing numbers are low." We know why the testing numbers were low: There was a problem with people being charged because they did not have Medicare cards. That is an issue I am sure the Minister will take up with the Federal Government.

How are we booking them in and how are we getting them out? A significant population out there in western Sydney will not be able to get this vaccine. That will have a flow-on effect because at the end of the day

in New South Wales the long-term jobs rest upon when we open up our borders. One in 10 jobs in New South Wales is in the events and tourism market. Sydney Olympic Park in Silverwater is the eighth biggest economy in New South Wales; it is bigger than the Parramatta CBD. It is problematic to have huge question marks sitting over that huge population with a program expected to be rolled out at the end of February, when no-one has a clear indication of just who is delivering it and how. However, I am sure that both Health and the Minister are working on that. I thank everyone for all their hard work over Christmas.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:23): I support the motion moved by the health Minister, and member for Wakehurst. I also compliment him on his support of these frontline workers from day one. It does not seem that long ago—just before Australia Day last year, on 24 January—that New South Wales registered our first four cases of COVID-19. All members know what happened from that point onwards. However, the Minister is keeping the wider community fully advised but also offering, I believe, significant support behind the scenes to those frontline workers in dealing with a pandemic for the first time in 100 years. I also compliment other workers such as the police. Late last year it was National Pathology Week. I know that the pathology people in my electorate have worked overtime to turn around results—sometimes within 15 minutes. I also note the cleaners and the food services. I had the pleasure of meeting Adam Hall from the Health Services Union and my local rep, Peter Kelly. On one occasion we even went down to our local hospital to thank the food service workers and the cleaners.

Members have spoken about doctors, nurses, clinicians and paramedics but they need those other people to make hospitals run. At times they are the forgotten heroes, in a way, so once again a great deal of thanks to them. It is also important to note the wellbeing. Late last year I remember going to emergency meetings with our high schools, because half of our staff come from across the border, about what we would do with HSC English if an outbreak happened and how we would manage that. It was great to see the education Minister, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, come together with principals from both the private and public sector to work out how they could share examiners and year 12 teachers.

Fortunately, in the Tweed, we are very lucky in many regards and have not had a case. I think the last case in Byron Bay was in April last year. We have admittedly become rather a hotspot for visitors from both the south and the north. We have seen them going through a great deal of drama; at the end of the day I think we went through 17 different border passes. We had a reprieve last year for two weeks and then the border was shut down. What did that mean? Nearly half the people in the Tweed work in Queensland and many Queenslanders work in the Tweed. It meant trade could not happen, building supplies could not be delivered and so on. The Minister was great to give me advice in dealing with that. Unfortunately, at times Queensland tended to operate on its own volition and direction. We would often be told at midnight that it would change at 6.00 a.m. tomorrow. That is how quickly it went down.

I feel a bit angry at the fact that New South Wales has had over 140,000 returned travellers and 27 per cent or 28 per cent are Queenslanders and a big percentage is from Western Australia, Victoria and so on. I think that the other States should pick up some of the load. We seem to be doing all of the heavy lifting. The other States are quick to criticise us but are not putting their hand to the plough. I love Queenslanders dearly but if they want to come back here then maybe the Queensland Government should do a little bit more. It gets even worse now. We all heard the famous statement from my good friend Annastacia Palaszczuk that Queensland hospitals are for Queenslanders. I have news for her: Last year we serviced around 7,000 Queenslanders in a New South Wales hospital. We build hospitals for the whole of Australia, not just for a particular State.

The matter goes on further with the announcement of vaccination centres. The closest one to my electorate is in Coffs Harbour, which happens to be three hours away, one way—a six-hour return trip. Being all Australians, I thought that surely some of my people—particularly the front-liners—could get their vaccinations in Queensland hospitals. Unfortunately that is not the case. My good friend Annastacia has come out recently and said that she will only be vaccinating Queenslanders and—cop this!—no-one that lives in New South Wales other than doctors, clinicians and members of the Health Services Union that actually work in Queensland hospitals. They can get it but no-one else can. It just goes on and on. Once again I applaud the Minister for moving the motion.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (17:28): I welcome this public interest debate and I thank the Minister for bringing it to the Chamber during what has been and continues to be a very difficult time for all of us socially, personally and economically. Nevertheless, there are more challenges to come with vaccination and public messaging. Of course we do not need any conspiracists or QAnon supporters in this Chamber talking about not taking the vaccination or spruiking some drugs that do not work. I certainly support the intent, but we should also point out some facts. Our community has been very grateful for decisions that have been taken by all levels of government from all political parties in taking the advice of the Chief Medical Officer and our expert health staff. In other places around the world we have seen examples of expert advice not being adhered to with deadly and drastic consequences: millions infected, many hundreds of thousands of people dead,

hospitals overwhelmed, economies stalling, hospitals being overrun, and nurses and frontline workers being run off their feet. Fortunately we have not had to experience that in our local communities.

Firstly I thank the people of our local communities, wherever they are, for going above and beyond during this pandemic. I know that my local community of south-west Sydney made great sacrifices during that south-west Sydney cluster period. They adhered to public health advice, looked out for one another and showed incredible resilience. During one of the most difficult and challenging times in our recent history our thanks should go fairly and squarely to people in our communities. Despite being stuck in long queues, as frustrating as they were, being stuck in traffic jams and stuck in their cars with their kids crying in the back, they still did the right thing and were tested. Secondly, the point of this public interest debate also is our frontline workers who protected jobs and protected lives. Our frontline workers made huge sacrifices and deserve our thanks but I would also say that our words should be matched by wages because words and actions matter. They should also match.

If we are serious about protecting lives and protecting jobs, then this should continue through to granting a fair and modest 2.5 per cent for public sector workers, who include the very frontline workers we are praising today in this public interest debate. But instead—unfortunately, I think—at the height of the pandemic and in the middle of the worst economic recession and culture shock that we have experienced in our lifetimes, the Government decided that frontline workers do not deserve a wage increase. The Government was happy to use their photographs in political publications, to acknowledge their efforts in press releases, to stand beside them at press conferences, but it was not so happy to recognise and reward them for their efforts in keeping us safe and supporting our economy. Instead frontline workers were offered a big fat zero in their legislated and negotiated wage increase. At three strokes to midnight they were met with a deliberate action to pass a regulation to cut their pay.

I heard from a dozen local public health workers, particularly nurses, about the wage cuts to the tune of \$3 billion as stated in the Premier's press release on 27 May 2020. That \$3 billion was deliberately taken away when it could have further stimulated our economy, kept more people in jobs and increased the pace of the State's economic recovery. Docking the pay of frontline workers when they have made huge sacrifices does not seem very fair to me, and that is a sentiment shared by many in my local community as I speak. If we are serious about protecting jobs and protecting lives, we must also recognise the efforts of those who have been on the front line to make our lives better and our country a better place in which to live.

In the context of protecting jobs, just last week I became concerned about a report that dozens of jobs would be slashed from the Department of Premier and Cabinet whose public sector workers support the arts, heritage, Indigenous communities and cultural projects. Their heads are actually on the chopping block. They take care of the industries and communities that have suffered the worst during the pandemic and those communities are likely to take the longest time to fully recover. I would have thought that good governments should be leading the charge to revitalise and support those industries as well as create jobs, not actually show people the exit door. There is always time to correct bad decisions. Certainly, words that are thanking and recognising the efforts of our frontline workers should be matched by their wages.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (17:33): In reply: I thank the members for Keira, Manly, Auburn, Tweed and Macquarie Fields for their comments, particularly those acknowledging the work of our frontline staff. I also state for the record that support for those frontline workers has come from a whole range of areas. I particularly acknowledge the assistance of the Health Services Union and Gerard Hayes. As one of the members said during this discussion, the Health Services Union ensured a few months ago that we all had the opportunity to share with cleaners National Cleaners Day. That was particularly relevant during this very challenging time for cleaners. A number of them said to me at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital that they also were fearful and scared, as we all have been by the COVID virus, but they were staring that down every day. I thank them particularly and all of the workers, not just the media people we would identify as health workers but also the support staff who did all that was necessary to keep our Health system operational. I also thank the HSU for something that has not been acknowledged, that is, it put in \$500,000 from its members towards research into COVID-19. I thank the union for that.

I acknowledge that we all understand the importance of frontline workers and that the Government of New South Wales has tried to be, as far as possible, bipartisan with our colleagues in this State but also absolutely in all other States and Territories. It has committed enormous amounts of money to making sure that our frontline staff get the opportunities they need to address the COVID-19 crisis. In fact, nearly \$3 billion in additional funds have been allocated. I thank the Government, the Treasury and Treasurer for that money, which has included \$700 million to boost the intensive care unit capacity and purchase additional services and medical equipment. It has included the procurement of 89 new ambulances, 35 of which are dedicated paramedic intensive care ambulances.

The amount of \$1.4 billion has been provided just for the purchase of personal protective equipment to contain the spread of COVID-19 on the frontline. We all recollect when our frontline staff were worried—I think we were all worried—because we did not have a clear line of sight on what was available through the national stockpile. We were not sure what we would get out of that if we ran short, so New South Wales went all out to make sure that it could protect its staff by getting the chains of supply and by putting a massive amount of money into it. I thank everyone who has come together to acknowledge today the very important work of our frontline health staff and all of our support staff. We still have a lot of work to do.

I also thank the member for Auburn for her comments regarding the people of Berala and the issues there. Today she has again raised an interesting issue, that is, in the very multicultural community in New South Wales, particularly in western and south-western Sydney, there are particular challenges. I certainly want to make sure that our Federal Government understands that as it rolls out the vaccine. The member for Auburn and I both know that we have had some challenging times just trying to make sure people from overseas who did not have access to a Medicare card were not being charged when we wanted to provide a free service to everybody. The Federal Government should take note of the commentary of the member for Auburn today as it rolls out the vaccine, with State Government support in every State and Territory. Similar issues would apply in parts of Victoria. We need to ensure that the Federal Government understands the challenges of reaching out to the various subset multicultural communities who may not have Medicare cards.

The health Ministers around the country have all been fantastic working together. I say to the Queensland Government that it does not help to make comments that are not really productive of an Australian approach to this matter. The reality is that more than half of the people who work in the Gold Coast hospital are from New South Wales. One would expect the Queensland Premier will have to make provision for them to be appropriately vaccinated in the same way that this State will be doing work with our Victorian colleagues across the border as well. This is a one-in-100-year pandemic that requires a whole-of-Australia approach.

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

Motion agreed to.

Private Members' Statements

INDIGENOUS ARTEFACTS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (17:38): Last year marked 250 years since the arrival of the HMS *Endeavour* in Botany Bay; 250 years since the first encounter on the east coast between the British and the first Australians. Perhaps the most familiar rendering of that moment are the various nineteenth century representations of two Aboriginal warriors on the shore challenging the approaching crew in the bay. They are portrayed as holding various weapons. Historical accounts suggest the two men retreated after the landing party fired muskets above their heads. A further shot wounded one of the men, the Gweagal warrior Cooman, in the leg. Cooman allegedly dropped a shield as he retreated, in a direction away from his house. Sir Joseph Banks, the naturalist aboard the *Endeavour*, recorded the following description of the event:

... a man who attempted to oppose our Landing came down to the Beach with a shield of an oblong shape about 3 feet long and 1½ broad made of the bark of a tree; this he left behind when he ran away and we found upon taking it up that it plainly had been pierced through with a single pointed lance near the centre.

An artefact generally fitting Banks' description remains in the British Museum's collection today. While to date it appears that the provenance of the acquisition cannot be conclusively demonstrated, it is considered by some to be the very same Gweagal shield described by Banks. Other rare Indigenous artefacts were collected during Cook's expedition to the east coast, and it remains possible that the shield was taken from Cooman's dwelling shortly after the landing. Researchers at the British Museum, however, dispute the claims that the shield in their collection is the same as the one that was owned by Cooman. But whatever its origins, the shield has strong historical and cultural significance to Aboriginal people as an example of traditional weaponry and workmanship. More than that, it is a powerful symbol of resistance and of survival; one that retains a contemporary, deeply felt connection to a living culture.

In addition, four spears taken by Cook's crew after that early encounter are housed at Cambridge University's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, on permanent loan from Trinity College. There is a strong push to have all these artefacts repatriated to Australia. I recently met Rodney Kelly, a Dharawal and Yuin man and a descendant of Cooman, on country at Kurnell. For a number of years Mr Kelly has determinedly and courageously led the charge for the shield and spears to be returned to Australia. He has made several trips to the British Museum and to the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology to increase public awareness of the objects' significance and to lobby for their return. That Mr Kelly's trips were assisted through crowdfunding initiatives is indicative of the strong community support that exists for the repatriation effort.

Uncle Laurie Bimson, a Guringai man and a descendant of Bungaree, the first person to be recorded in print as an Australian, also joined us at that meeting. He does fine work providing cultural education to children through immersive activities. I share Mr Kelly's and Mr Bimson's opinion that repatriating these historical objects would be a culturally significant gesture and convey a potent message of reconciliation. Repatriation would provide young Aboriginal people with more opportunities to connect with their culture, allow for the traditional owners of these objects to have co-authority and a say in their care, and enliven Australian schoolchildren's understanding of their country's ancient heritage.

The shield has been in the possession of the British Museum for more than 200 years—longer than the Rosetta Stone or the Parthenon Marbles. For much of that time it was not exhibited; in fact, it was discovered among a collection of unregistered objects in 1978. The shield may not have the ostensible grandeur of some of the museum's other acquisitions, but its importance to our nation's first people cannot be overstated. Australia is home to the world's oldest continuing culture, and it is a culture that deserves to be honoured, celebrated and understood by every Australian. I therefore call on the British Museum and Trinity College, Cambridge to heed our calls and support the repatriation of these artefacts.

WALLSEND ELECTORATE SCHOOL BOUNDARIES

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (17:43): Walking is an active, healthy, practical and efficient way to get to school, according to the Department of Education. Its website states:

Benefits of safely walking to and from school helps:

- reduce traffic
- reduce our carbon footprint
- promote physical activity
- provide an opportunity for supervising adults to talk with their child about road safety.

Will the NSW Department of Education send that information to its Newcastle office? Some parents in Newcastle have heeded the department's words, and the students who live in the New Lambton and New Lambton Heights area have enjoyed the freedom of being able to walk safely to and from school through quiet, leafy suburban streets. New Lambton Public School is one of the oldest schools in my electorate and has educated local kids for around 150 years.

Like so many western suburbs that are located in cities, the suburbs in my electorate are growing, the community is getting larger and there are more children, but the Government has failed to provide adequate school infrastructure to the area. Recently the Department of Education failed to crack down on out-of-area enrolments, which meant that New Lambton Public School exceeded its capacity; it is a popular school in an area close to the city. The school enrolment cap last year was set at 555 and the enrolment was 680; a large proportion of those students were out-of-area enrolments. I met with the school and the P&C to look at ways to reduce enrolments and at what additional infrastructure was needed.

After writing to the Minister, the department reviewed the intake boundaries—an idea that had my full support. Lookout Road and Croudace Street made a perfect boundary line and allowed students to safely travel to either New Lambton, Lambton or Wallsend South public schools. The department also decided to reduce student numbers at New Lambton in the future to meet the capacity of the school. But Sydney-based bureaucrats excluded six streets on the eastern side of Lookout Road, and students who could have walked to school were instead faced with a 3.2 kilometre trip to school across a number of busy major roads and with no direct school bus. The education Minister must explain why she allowed such an impractical and poor decision to be made. More than 1,000 homes on the western side of Lookout Road were changed to the Wallsend South catchment area. I did not receive a single call, email or complaint from those 1,000 homes about being rezoned. Why? It is because it made sense to the parents; they lived close to the school and they could walk.

Late last year a survey of 138 homes in the excluded streets was conducted to see how many students would not be allowed to go to the school. The result was just one: Erin and Will Kenneally's daughter Maggie, who was to be enrolled at New Lambton Public School this year. They moved to the area to go to the school and Erin is a long-time supporter of public education and works as a teacher. They made the difficult decision to put their daughter into a non-government school. Erin told me that the decision to send Maggie to the local Catholic school was a difficult one. She said, "Distance and the fact that we wanted Maggie to go to school with her neighbours and her friends made the big difference." The whole premise of the boundary change was to reduce enrolments at New Lambton Public School but, at the end of the day, the exclusion of six streets has resulted in the reduction of just one student—remember, 55 students were out of zone at the school. It is a silly decision made by the Department of Education and it is not in the best interests of the local parents.

ARMIDALE SECONDARY COLLEGE

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (17:48): Friday 29 January 2021 will be a day forever inked in the history books of the Northern Tablelands region. It was on that day in Armidale that the community witnessed the dawning of a new era in rural and regional public education with the official opening of the revolutionary \$121 million, 1,500-student Armidale Secondary College. The opening marked the realisation of a long-held dream in the Armidale community of better educational outcomes for the region's children. To have Premier Gladys Berejiklian, Deputy Premier John Barilaro and Minister for Education Sarah Mitchell at the new school on the day to open it together speaks volumes of the importance of the occasion and the significance of this school in the context of rural and regional New South Wales and public education across the State.

As a student of history—as I know you are, Mr Assistant Speaker—I could not find anywhere in the records when the State's full leadership team was in our region on the same day at the same time; it just has not happened. There is absolutely no doubt that Armidale Secondary College is the premier school in New South Wales—not just in public education but across all sectors—bar none. The opening was a celebration of three years of hard work and planning by Armidale's educational leaders, student body and community.

At the outset I congratulate Armidale Secondary College principal Caroline Lasker; her co-principal Stafford Cameron, who was formerly the principal of Duval High School and Armidale High School respectively; and the project liaison officer and deputy principal Kristene Croft for their foresight and commitment to delivering this project and fighting to ensure the very, very best was never denied Armidale and region students. While it is great to have these exceptional new facilities, they mean little without dedicated, hardworking teaching and non-teaching staff. I hope in time specialised teachers from outside the region will look at Armidale Secondary College and be encouraged to relocate and work alongside those who have already committed their lives to developing the learning opportunities for country kids.

While the school has become a symbol of pride for the city of Armidale, it is very much owned by the students. It is on the shoulders of the 2021 leaders—captains Emilie Gates and Jordan King, vice-captains Evelyn Ward and Bashan Bassan, sports captains Tanaka Marume and Lochie McLeod, and arts captains Arrawyn Gow and Dylan Knox—to take the student body forward in the future. Four years ago, when this project was first touted, there was a huge amount of community consultation undertaken to ensure that it was delivered right. To hear students compare the open-plan classrooms, specialised science, industrial arts and hospitality spaces, and new performing arts and sports facilities to a university campus shows that the Government has listened and delivered on the wants and needs of the community. With courses specially designed to reflect the industries of growth and potential in our region, the \$3 million new agriculture centre on the school site will create employment pathways into the agricultural sector, unlike anything our region has seen before.

To achieve this development has not been without significant sacrifice. I recognise the staff and students of the former Armidale and Duval high schools, who have come together in a successful merger to make this institution and this educational facility possible. Both schools had very distinct cultures and histories and, while their campuses no longer exist, in time the best parts of both will come together to form the new, exciting identity, traditions and history of Armidale Secondary College. In many ways the re-purposed 99-year-old Armidale High School central building stands as a salute to the past, but with its new musical rehearsal space, specialised glass partitions and visual arts wet areas it is also a symbol of new beginnings and a head nod to the old.

But this is by no means the end of the road. We still have to call for tenders and build the new multipurpose centre: an indoor two-court basketball facility multicourt where the school will also hold its major school assemblies and other important community events. It should be around a \$16 million investment on its own. More important than Armidale Secondary College being the largest single investment in education outside of Sydney in this State's history is the commitment it delivers to providing first-class education to students in our area, no matter their background. I hope the students appreciate what they have and enjoy their school. Again, congratulations to everyone involved.

MURWILLUMBAH SCHOOL CLOSURES

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (17:53): I listened very carefully to my colleague the member for Northern Tablelands speak glowingly about what is taking place in Armidale. I wish in my contribution that I could say the same about the plans in Murwillumbah. The member for Northern Tablelands spoke about three years of consultation that had taken place. At this stage it has been 104 days since the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning arrived in Murwillumbah. She was there for two minutes and made an announcement that four schools would close in Murwillumbah and a mega-school would be created. I have written to the Minister, as have the P&Cs, the students, the community and the teachers organisations, and, as yet, there has been no response.

The other day the Minister arrived in Lismore with the Deputy Premier. She visited Lismore High School. She was asked through the media would she talk to the P&Cs and she said of course she would. That was the first response we have had. I have asked them for the educational rationale for closing four schools and creating a mega school in Murwillumbah. So far nobody has been able to provide an educational rationale other than, "This is great, this is wonderful, and it will be good for you and good for the community to do that." People in the community have asked for that consultation.

The community and the four P&Cs have been very patient and responsible. They have asked for that consultation. We were told that somebody would talk to us. Somebody from the education department spoke to me, but they were from infrastructure. He talked to parents and others in the community also. Infrastructure is about building and construction so he was not the right person to be talking about educational rationales. When I asked him to explain the educational rationale—how this would be better for the students—he looked at me and said, "Well, you know, the arts." I looked at him, and it was like a scene out of *Yes Minister*. We exchanged looks over it and then moved on because it was clear that he was unable to provide the rationale. Apart from the fact that I represent the community in the best way I can, I am a trained teacher. I know a few things about education, and I was pushing to find out more about the educational rationale. We are still waiting for that.

As the local member, I am quite a reasonable person to get on with. Two minutes before the Minister made the announcement she rang me to let me know but if she had talked to me, as the local member, before she came to town and made the announcement, I would have turned up and said, "Okay, if you think this is so great and wonderful, let's talk with the community, let's do that together." I would not have blown up her announcement or her show; I would have said, "That is the right thing to do." It is so wrong for her to arrive in town, make the announcement, disappear and then not talk to the local community. The days of governing that way are gone, but I am not sure that the Minister recognises that. The Deputy Premier was with her. Clearly he did not recognise it because he is always arriving and telling us what he is going to do to us, not what he is going to do for us.

It is the wrong way to treat people. It was disrespectful to local members, but that is by the by. It is worse because it is about the local people, the people I represent. It is not the right way to treat them. The invitation is still there to conduct those meetings in a civilised way, to have a full discussion about the rationale. Everybody suspects that it is about cost saving and that the Government wants to sell off prime real estate to put money back into the coffers. No-one is persuaded that it is about educational outcomes.

MISS GABRIELLE GUO

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (17:58):

I congratulate one of Baulkham Hills' most talented young artists, Gabrielle Guo from Carlingford in my electorate. Miss Guo won the 2020 Young Archie competition in the five to eight years age category for her portrait of her little sister, Vivienne. For the benefit of members, I place on the table of the House a copy of Miss Guo's winning entry, entitled *My Little Sister Vivienne*. The portrait represents joyous memories of Miss Guo's sister from a family outing to a cherry farm. In Miss Guo's description of the portrait, she said:

My little sister Vivienne is very cute and she loves cherries. This portrait is about a time when our family went cherry picking and Vivienne still wanted more cherries after she had eaten a lot. Her mouth was also coloured by cherries. We all had a great time!

Who cannot relate to that particular story? The portrait shows creativity and artistic vision well beyond Miss Guo's years. Her portrait captures the essence of the Young Archie competition, celebrating the creativity, imagination and depth of emotion of budding young artists across Australia. Each year the Young Archie competition invites children and teenagers aged five to 18 to submit a portrait of someone who is special to them and plays a significant role in their life. The Young Archie competition is a part of the family program for the Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prizes 2020 exhibition. As part of the competition, the portraits of the 10 finalists in each age category are displayed at the Art Gallery of New South Wales for visitors to the annual Archibald Prize to enjoy. It is an incredible achievement for Miss Guo and I offer my sincerest congratulations for her efforts.

It may also interest members of the House to know that Miss Guo made her debut as an author and illustrator in 2019. Her book, entitled *The Adventures of Smoke*, is a thought-provoking and charming story that cleverly explores a range of complex emotions while gently promoting a growth mindset amongst its readers. The story is a testament to Miss Guo's penchant for creativity and expression through storytelling and the arts. The talent is an inspiration, as is the candour with which she communicates and uses her voice to empower her peers. I am incredibly humbled and proud to represent an electorate that is home to such enthusiastic and talented young people. I offer Miss Guo my sincerest congratulations on her outstanding work with both her Young Archie entry and her book, *The Adventures of Smoke*.

TRIBUTE TO THE ABDALLAH AND SAKR FAMILIES

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (18:01): With the words "I had to let go of the hate, otherwise I will have weeds growing inside my house", Danny Abdallah gave an insight into the type of person he is. As the father of three of the four children tragically killed in Oatlands, his strength is quite incredible. That strength is shared by the parents of all four children: Antony, Angelina, Sienna and Veronique. The tragedy has only one blessing for me: It has allowed me to get to know the amazing family that is Danny, Leila, Bridget, Craig and Bob, as well as their extended family. It was just over a year ago that our nation was shocked: Against the backdrop of a sweltering night, four innocent children on their way to buy ice cream were mowed down outside the Oatlands golf course.

I will not paint an image of the horrific scene that greeted the family and first responders; suffice to say that every possible image you could conjure up was present. How do you ever recover from losing your children? How do you come to terms with that? How do you continue to live for the children you are blessed to still have? How do you find it in your heart to forgive? I often ask myself this: When every fibre of your being screams for hate and revenge, how do you find it in your heart to be compassionate? I hope that myself and everyone in the Chamber are never tested in the way those families have been or have to find the answer to that ourselves. How do you do it?

Our nation and, indeed, people across the world have been inspired by an incredible display of grace, elegance and compassion. It forces us to question why we as individuals seemingly hold gripes that are small in comparison with what those families are dealing with. In a year darkened by fires, flood and COVID, the strength of the families affected by that awful accident has been one of the few things that has kept us inspired through 2020. Faced with tragedy beyond imagination, the Abdallah and Sakr families have mourned publicly, suffered their grief in private and served as role models for people looking for a way to be better. A year has passed and whilst it may seem that time travels fast, for those families every waking moment is a challenge and every night's sleep is punctuated. A year for some has been a lifetime of torture for others.

As I sat with my wife through the services of the past weekend of teary and juxtaposed almost uplifting commemorations, I reflected on what the families have done to harness this tragedy and do good. I remember many months ago Danny spoke of a dream the families had to develop a day of kindness and forgiveness. It is so special to see that day come to fruition. i4Give Day was launched one day short of the anniversary. I was honoured and privileged to be there, not as a politician but as a friend. The date 1 February is to become a national day of forgiveness, which encourages everyone to "find someone you can forgive or ask for forgiveness". When you take a moment to reflect on this, the magnitude of the effort to drive such a day is born from deep-seated faith and a genuine sincerity to forgive and to create a kinder world.

As Leila said during the service, "Forgiveness does not mean you don't want justice; it just means you can't keep the bitterness in your heart." As we know, the courts will follow the appropriate course in time. This tragedy has had a profound effect on all of us. It has brought into question the very things we believe in. It has forced us to reassess where we stand and it has certainly reminded us to count every blessing we have because, as we saw, in a moment everything can change and the world can be turned upside down. No-one will ever know the depth of grief those families deal with, and through their public face we cannot comprehend their private pain. Veronique's mother, Bridget, brought us to tears when she spoke of the hardship of living a life without her daughter's cheekiness and zest for life.

Each of the four beautiful angels—Antony, Angelina, Sienna and Veronique—had passion in their eyes and a special charm about them. Whilst nothing will bring them back, the legacy of their passing is incredibly powerful and will keep their spirit alive. This tragedy caused a scar in our nation's heart, and seeing the public reaction to these incredible families shows that society is good and that we have not lost our hearts or our humanity. In the world of fast-moving everything, it is incredibly important to take a moment to slow down and appreciate what we have and to be grateful for good health and family. I have a love-heart-shaped picture of those four beautiful angels in my office to serve as a reminder of what is truly important and worth cherishing.

Nothing that I say or that anyone else says will ever ease the pain for Danny, Leila, Bridget, Craig and Bob. You do not ever forget or get over such loss; you only get better at learning to live with it and perhaps learning to fake it as you hide your tears. The nation stands with those families and thanks them for bringing out the best in each of us. They will never walk this lonely journey alone. About eight months ago I spoke of a proposed memorial at the site of the tragedy. The local council and the family are working with the golf club. I have seen the drawings and, again, I express my hope that the Oatlands Golf Club will agree to the elegant and tasteful design that has been put forward. This tragedy is bigger than all of us; it transcends politics, community and clubs. The families never asked for such a horror to occur, and every day they live with an emptiness in their lives.

A lasting memorial would go a long way towards healing and would serve as a reminder of the importance of forgiveness. I hope that in the near future I can stand in this Parliament and praise the club for taking this important step, for making a difference and for playing a leadership role. As students return to school and as life moves on, there will always be a pause on 1 February. As the schoolmates of those angels celebrate milestones, there will always be a rock in the stomach of those parents. As much as that will hurt, their incredible strength and determination to use this tragedy for good is an example to the rest of the world. In the strongest of fires, the toughest steel is forged. Toughness is not the size of your muscles or the size of your bank account, your job or the car you drive; toughness is waking up every morning and putting one foot in front of the other when the world seems desolate. When I look for toughness, I look towards these friends of mine who, instead of seeking revenge, have launched a day of forgiveness, set up programs for grief counselling and built a lasting legacy. Danny, Leila, Bridget, Craig and Bob, thank you for teaching us to be better. May your angels always watch over you and, indeed, all of us.

CAMDEN ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY EVENTS

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (18:08): On 26 January we celebrate all the things we love about Australia. It is a day to reflect on our lifestyle, democracy and history. Camden is blessed to have people from all walks of life. Their unique experiences make a real difference to our community. Australia Day is the perfect day to acknowledge those individuals, and I am delighted to speak about a number of them today. Oran Park resident and refugee advocate Rosemary Kariuki was named the Australian Local Hero at the 2021 Australian of the Year awards in Canberra as part of the Governor-General's Australia Day honours. What a tremendous privilege it is to have Rosemary—one of eight State Local Heroes—living in the electorate of Camden. Rosemary was awarded the honour in recognition of the work she does on a daily basis as the multicultural community liaison officer for the Parramatta police, helping refugee women overcome domestic violence or assisting those who are struggling with language barriers and financial distress. I offer my sincerest congratulations to Rosemary on this outstanding acknowledgement and award.

In Camden we celebrated the Australia Day citizenship ceremony. The event was hosted by Camden Council, with local Olympian Sarah Ryan, OAM, as master of ceremonies. I commend mayor Theresa Fedeli and Camden Council for organising the ceremony. I thank Camden's Australia Day ambassador, George Tonna, who represented Australia at the 2000 Paralympic Games and who delivered a very inspirational speech to our new citizens. Camden welcomed and celebrated 20 new citizens from 11 different nations at the citizenship ceremony. I welcome each one of them and thank them for choosing to call Camden and Australia home. I wish them all the best as they settle into life as the newest members of our Australian family. I also thank Camden Council for organising online Australia Day activities, including colouring-in sheets to download; a message from Camden's Australia Day ambassador, George Tonna; a look at the Macarthur Lions Club street parade over the years; a cork hat making workshop; an Australiana music performance by Ric Bailey; and an announcement of Camden's Australia Day award winners.

Many in the Camden community were recognised for their contributions to making our community a great place to live. We are blessed to have so many community-minded and dedicated individuals living amongst us in Camden. I acknowledge all those who received an award this year. Camden's Citizen of the Year award was presented to Silvana Lofaro, who has fostered more than 25 children from south-west Sydney over the past five years while also being president of the Harrington Park local playgroup Pixies and Munchkins. Silvana always goes above and beyond, sharing friendship and love with those she comes in contact with. Silvana is to be commended for this outstanding honour. Camden's Young Citizen of the Year award was presented to seven-year-old Madison Sillett. Madison has never let her numerous chronic health issues, including idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura, hold her back from starting her own baking business, Flaky Bakey Neenish Tarts. Madison and her mother regularly donate their goodies to those in need and as random acts of kindness to strangers. Madison's initiative is encouraging to see.

The Community Group of the Year award was presented to the Shining Stars Foundation. The foundation operates 12 services across south-west Sydney, including in Narellan and Oran Park, on a volunteer basis. Over 95,000 meals and thousands of street emergency food hampers and homeless bags have been distributed to the Macarthur, Camden and Wollondilly communities. I thank and congratulate each of the volunteers who assist the Shining Stars Foundation. The Arts and Cultural Award was presented to Heather Bieman. For over 50 years, Heather has committed herself to the support and tuition of others as they seek to develop and express their love of music. She has done so as a school teacher, a choir leader, an accompanist, a tutor, a mentor and as director of Amazing Grace Academy of Performing Excellence, a community-based not-for-profit organisation providing musical tuition across a range of disciplines. In addition, Heather has coordinated a combined school choir for the annual Camden community carols event, raising funds for CareFlight and other charities. I thank Heather for her faithful service to the Camden community. Once again I congratulate all award winners and thank them for their contributions to the Camden community.

LAND TAX

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (18:13): Every so often in political life, we get the odd economic snake oil salesman spruiking their political ideas as the public policy panacea for all our ills. The snake oil salesman promises "jobs boost by the hundreds and thousands, skyrocketing economic growth by the billions and savings in the many thousands for people doing it tough". But with careful analysis and an evidence-based argument, the snake oil salesman's pitch does not deliver magical economic unicorns; it can actually be harmful. The Treasurer's proposed snake oil property tax panacea will replace a one-off tax with one that never ends. Somehow getting rid of stamp duty will solve all our property market ills. The Treasurer might be a Gordon Gekko, high-flying corporate lawyer, but I question his slick economics marketing of replacing a one-off progressive tax with a never-ending regressive land tax. The Treasurer, and Premier aspirant, has been recently making big media statements about his reform vision.

Let me remind the House of the Treasurer's recent reform accomplishments. He could not even deliver the Fire and Emergency Services Levy—a proposal only a fraction in difficulty and complexity—when it had been handed to him on a platter and he has proposed to increase the GST on food and the cost of living. The Treasurer is an A-grade policy spruiker but a D-grade policy deliverer. Property prices do not go up or down because stamp duty exists or is taken away and replaced with a never-ending annual land tax. To suggest they do is at best deception and at worst just plain absurd. Any good economist knows—and I am but a mere humble working-class economist from Macquarie Fields—that property prices are reflective of demand and supply factors, namely, the ease in accessing credit, the price of credit, people's current and future expectations of their employment and income and property stock supply and the timing of that supply and population growth.

A 2020 study by the Australian National University and University of Canberra modelling the impact of the Australian Capital Territory's stamp duty reform to a land tax system produced the following findings: House prices increased by 9 per cent; units increased by 4 per cent; housing sales decreased by 6 to 7 per cent; unit sales decreased by 23 per cent to 24 per cent; and potential new home owners used the illusory stamp duty savings to bid up property prices. Using the above facts, let us run through a scenario: A young aspiring couple wants to buy a home in Leppington which has an expected value of \$800,000 and unimproved land value of \$500,000. The couple will pay an estimated \$31,000 in stamp duty. Under the new snake oil, never-ending annual land tax market conditions, the expected property increases by 9 per cent, or about \$72,000, meaning the winning bid for the property is now \$872,000. The snake oil, never-ending annual land tax is equal to \$500 plus 0.3 per cent of \$500,000 or about \$2,000 per year, increasing every year the couple lives in that house.

CoreLogic property data shows that the length of home ownership continues to rise, with home owners in some suburbs holding onto their property for more than 20 years. In some parts of south-west Sydney on former greenfield estates like Leppington, properties are held for greater than or equal to 15 years. So expected land tax is \$2,000 times 15 years, which equals \$30,000. That does not include any annual compounding interest on land value or rate increases. This is the end result: Under the Treasurer's magical, snake oil, never-ending land tax, the home owner pays \$72,000 more to purchase their property, plus a \$30,000 tax bill on their home. The Treasurer has potentially cost them up to \$102,000 under this scheme. No matter your linguistic abilities, that is a lot of money in anyone's language. The never-ending annual land tax would be more than \$30,000 if the property is kept for more than 15 years. When the home owner does move, they are just as likely to pay a new snake oil, never-ending annual land tax on their next home for the rest of their life.

No doubt there will be interjections that this is an optional scheme. Let me also say that the fact that it is an optional scheme makes it an adverse selection one—that is, those who can least afford it or are in a tighter financial situation will opt for the land tax because they have been sold a stamp duty savings pup. Those who can most afford it will pay the stamp duty and not have to worry about a tax bill arriving in their letterbox every year. The Treasurer's snake oil annual land tax is in effect a double taxation system in higher property prices and an increasing never-ending land tax. Double the property tax and higher property prices? No, thank you. Time does not permit me to say more about this snake oil, never-ending land tax, but I will make further factual-based arguments to reinforce the old aphorism of "anything that is too good to be true usually is".

REFRESHING RIVER MANAGEMENT PROJECT

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (18:19): "The activist is not the person who says the river is dirty. The activist is the person who cleans up the river." So said former US presidential candidate and businessman Ross Perot. He may have lost that particular race but his quote reminds us what we need to do and who we need to thank for getting important stuff done. On Monday 25 January the NSW Environmental Trust awarded a \$9 million River Connections grant to a consortium led by Murray Local Land Services [LLS] to deliver its Refreshing River Management project. I was pleased to make this announcement in Albury beside the beautiful Murray River at Noreuil Park. With me were representatives of Murray Local Land Services and Holbrook Landcare, among others.

Before I get to the details of this substantial grant to improve the health of our rivers it is important to recognise that more than \$12 million of partner funding and in-kind donations have also been dedicated to this project, taking the total investment in our rivers to more than \$20 million. This simple sum reminds us of the power of government working with partners and the fiscal muscle that can be applied to the difficult environmental tasks that confront our State. This Government does not back away from a challenge. Involving other stakeholders is key to this approach and to getting to work faster on one of the great environmental tasks of our time.

The Refreshing River Management project seeks to deliver a much-needed boost for inland river health around the South West Slopes, Riverina Highlands and Lower Billabong Creek. The River Connections program will help support more than 1,600 farmers and communities managing land in river ecosystems in the Murray and Riverina areas. Hundreds of kilometres of rivers, river ecosystems and riparian zones will benefit from works to improve flowing water, native fish breeding and fish habitats. We are funding everything from improved fencing and installation of watering points to livestock management, revegetation of river banks, channel rehabilitation, barrier removal and pest exclusion. This funding will enable more action to help keep nutrient run-off out of the rivers so that, as a State, we are supporting ecological adaptation in our changing climate. Supporting this will be social marketing campaigns to help encourage more river-friendly farming practices by industry and growers, while also informing broader communities.

We all understand the meaning behind the expression "rivers are the lifeblood" of inland New South Wales. As a person born to the land, I have lived my whole life with the connection between survival on the land and the quality and availability of water. River health is unarguably a reality where we can use the management expression "flow-on effects". The health of the river systems directly impacts on the health of the land and, thereby, on the health and wellbeing of the people and animals who live there. I thank the environment Minister for his efforts to develop and promote this concept and its 10-year plan for improving river health. The Minister has said that this project will apply innovative land management practices and environmental activities to our river ecosystems, with the long-term aim of rolling out the learnings to comparable regions right across New South Wales. He notes:

... every creek, every bit of run-off ... eventually flows into the Murray River, affecting the health of the Murray and our wider food bowl.

There is much to be done. It will take a lot of people, as well as the funding, to get the work done. This is where we turn to all who have a stake in our inland river systems. We must engage our human and organisational resources and work together on these tasks. Murray Local Land Services leads a 15-partner consortium for this project, including government, industry, research, community organisations and Aboriginal work crews. Diverse project partners such as Meat and Livestock Australia, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, Indigenous land councils and the Biodiversity Conservation Trust have got on board with this. The project covers the Murray and Riverina Local Land Services areas, Tumut Murrumbidgee River system and Billabong Creek, Yanco Creek and Edward River system of the Murray River.

I really appreciate working with Murray LLS. They are dedicated people doing a great job for the environment by providing information and support for primary producers. In concluding, I thank all who are partnering on the Refreshing River Management project—in particular, Trish Bowen, Manager Land Services at Murray Local Land Services; Derek Schoen, chair of the Murray LLS local board; and Kylie Durant, acting CEO of Holbrook Landcare Network, and its board. I look forward to seeing this plan come to fruition for the benefit of our river systems.

ZETLAND SYDNEY METRO WEST STATION

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (18:24): It was with great disappointment that I read that the New South Wales Government has cut the Sydney Metro West station at Zetland. However, this incompetent and short-sighted decision does not surprise me. As I have done on countless occasions over the past eight years, I sound the alarm about yet more decision-making by the New South Wales Liberal Government when it comes to the Green Square area. The cancellation of the Zetland metro station is one in a long line of poor transport decisions. The Baird Liberal Government wasted an opportunity to meet the needs of Green Square when it chose to build a metro station not in the dense Waterloo eastern precinct, as I suggested, but instead on Botany Road at Waterloo's western fringe—a location just a few minutes' walk from Green Square and Redfern stations.

Similarly, rather than choosing to route the South East Light Rail through Green Square, those opposite chose Moore Park and Anzac Parade. This will narrow that road from six lanes to four and cause years of disruption and the destruction of Centennial Park's historic figs. They have cut bus route after bus route servicing Green Square including the 301, 302, 303, 309, 310, 392, 393 and 396, just to name a few. The New South Wales Liberal Government has not committed to any new light rail or trackless tram infrastructure to Green Square despite repeated urgings by the City of Sydney and Infrastructure Australia, which has rated the project as

a high-priority initiative for the past six years. The City of Sydney long ago reserved land for that project. Work can and should begin urgently, because the transport challenges posed by Green Square will not simply go away.

Zetland is the suburb at the heart of the Green Square precinct, which is the largest urban renewal project in Australia and the entire Southern Hemisphere. Already home to 30,000 people, it is only halfway finished but is already straining under the burden of population growth. By the end of the decade, Green Square will be home to 60,000 people and 22,000 workers in less than three square kilometres—denser than any suburb in Manhattan or Hong Kong. It is serviced by one heavy rail station at its western fringe. Before the pandemic, patronage on that line had grown so rapidly that passengers literally could not fit in the station, let alone on the trains. It could not meet the transport needs of even half of Green Square's future population, so it cannot possibly provide for the 30,000 additional residents who are coming in the next 10 years. Twelve months ago, the roads were gridlocked and buses were full. Eventually the pandemic will pass and the transport challenges facing Green Square will return with a vengeance.

Rather than seizing the opportunity of slowing population growth to catch up with infrastructure the Liberals are bowing to the bean counters at the New South Wales Treasury, who have cut the funding to provide a station at Zetland. That is despite the fact that tunnel-boring machines will require portals at either end of the line, most likely at Zetland, making it an ideal location for a metro rail station and terminus. Around the world, cities are building metro rail in their dense inner-city areas to provide the mass rapid transit systems demanded by urban renewal. The Government's own *South East Sydney Transport Strategy* that was released last year recognised the importance of Zetland as the gateway to Sydney's eastern suburbs and stressed the importance of a metro rail to support New South Wales' future economic growth. The plan did not survive 12 months.

The Government stands condemned for the fact that it has no plan to address the transport needs of 80,000 Green Square residents and workers who will need to move about the city every day. Without the appropriate infrastructure to support the huge growth in residential densities, the Green Square project risks catastrophic failure. The failure of the largest urban renewal project ever conducted in Australia may well be the legacy of this New South Wales Government. I urge reconsideration of a metro station at Zetland for the Metro West.

DAVIDSON ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (18:28): I commend and congratulate the outstanding recipients of the 2021 Australia Day awards, particularly those from my electorate of Davidson. The Ku-ring-gai Council awards were held this year at the great hall of Knox Grammar School, which enabled good social distancing. I was pleased to witness a range of deserving individuals and groups receive awards, which was followed by a citizenship ceremony as traditionally occurs on Australia Day. A small part of my electorate covers the Willoughby council area and they similarly held an Australia Day event. Although the timing of the ceremony precluded my attendance I likewise congratulate those honoured in that setting. However, today I want to focus on awardees from the Northern Beaches Council area.

The recent lockdowns on the northern peninsula have reinforced the importance of community and the award recipients have demonstrated, through action, their commitment to helping its people and environment. Community award recipients from the Northern Beaches Council area include Georgie Campbell of Belrose, who has volunteered for Sydney Wildlife Rescue for more than 20 years, rescuing, adopting and fostering animals. Georgie also assists the Rural Fire Service—an organisation that I know Mr Temporary Speaker and member for Coffs Harbour holds dear to his heart—with how to safely move horses in the event of bushfire. Penny Cervetto of Frenchs Forest has volunteered for Lifeline for over four years. She has continually demonstrated leadership skills and her service has significantly contributed to the success of book fair fundraising events for Lifeline Northern Beaches.

Christine Chandler of Belrose is the driving force behind the delivery of cooking programs for Forest Men's Kitchen. With the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, Christine continued online cooking sessions, as well as preparing and delivering meals to several members and international students. Laura and Jordan O'Reilly, siblings from Frenchs Forest, provided disability and support services across the northern beaches and Australia. In 2011 they founded Fighting Chance, which enables people with disabilities to have the opportunity of reaching their social goals by providing workplace training and award wage jobs. In 2015 they also co-founded an online platform connecting Australians with disabilities with support workers who fit their needs.

Brett Robinson of Belrose has volunteered for the NSW Rural Fire Service for nine years. Brett was named president of the northern beaches only operational and support brigade for having had a significant impact on its administrative and logistical coordination. He also trains volunteers, runs fundraisers and responds to fire and rescue emergency calls within the northern beaches. Brett's brother, Luke Robinson of Terrey Hills, is another award-winning volunteer and captain of the same brigade team. Maria Dolores "Doris" Sammut of Belrose has

been a mentor for children at Kid's Hope for the past three years. She is a cooking teacher for Forest Men's Kitchen, an English teacher at the Northgate Church, a volunteer for Easylink, as well as volunteering elsewhere. Recently in my electorate I was honoured to attend the award ceremony for those recipients and others at the Glen Street Theatre. I am grateful for the service given by all the people I have mentioned to my local community and to the broader community.

2020 GRAIN HARVEST

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:33): With Parliament resuming this week, our work in this House is back underway. But for our primary producers across the State, there has been no downtime and no official break from their vital work supplying food and fibre. The 2020 harvest was the largest in many years and a welcome relief for farmers who had endured drought for the better part of a decade. In every farming community across the Cootamundra electorate grain receiver sites were a hive of activity and headers could be seen out in the paddocks until the early hours. This harvest included trials not seen in recent years, with a global pandemic impacting a normally abundant workforce. Closed international borders made it challenging for those who rely on an itinerant workforce.

The challenge in sourcing workers has affected many industries, from a struggle to find skilled shearers to a lack of pickers in the horticulture sector, and I know many primary producers have lost good crops as a result. Parts of the horticulture sector which depend on manual labour voiced their concerns ahead of the harvest beginning, and I worked closely with cherry producers around Young to ensure those issues were known by the agriculture Minister. To help farm workers and contractors move across State borders and capitalise on the promising season, New South Wales became the first jurisdiction in Australia to write the Agricultural Workers Code into public health orders, allowing free movement for agricultural workers across State borders.

Help Harvest NSW was launched in August 2020 to overcome labour shortages and to help get unemployed Australians into critical work. I thank everyone who took part in last year's harvest, from the retirees who decided to try something new to the primary producers who turned a challenge in to an opportunity and created "pick your own" programs in orchards around the State, the foreign workers who are far from home and the stalwarts of the agriculture industry who were finally able to enjoy a bumper harvest. Late last year the Deputy Premier joined me to see just how impressive this harvest was. Together we visited the BFB Pty Ltd grain receival site outside of Temora, where mountains of grain and filling silos were clearly on display. The Deputy Premier was able to see the joy on the faces of those people testing the quality of grain and the truck drivers bringing in haul after haul of wheat, canola, oats and barley.

The New South Wales Government has continued to support ongoing investment in agriculture. In my electorate the Cowra Agricultural Research and Advisory Station, situated in the heart of surrounding prime agricultural land, undertakes meat and agronomy research. Working with industry to improve the sustainability and profitability of the agriculture sector, its work is nationally and internationally recognised. Building on New South Wales Government investment in this facility is current work which has commenced on a new glasshouse facility for grain and pasture research. This is a \$4.3 million investment into growing agriculture in the electorate and I am excited to see what studies it supports and its contribution to the position of New South Wales as Australia's leader in agriculture, fisheries and biosecurity research.

It was an honour to attend the opening of the Ian Armstrong Building in Orange last year, the new home of the Department of Primary Industries. The building is dedicated to one of our finest agriculture Ministers and houses the new office for departmental staff, supporting the location of these services out of the city and in regional New South Wales, closer to the communities they serve. I am proud of our farmers across the Cootamundra electorate, who tackle each new challenge head on. We now look forward to the 2021 sowing. Over the weekend in parts of the Riverina you could have been forgiven for thinking you were in Far North Queensland, such was the much-needed deluge coming down across parts of the region. Illabo farmer David Carter told me this was the wettest start to the year since the 1980s. This means many of our primary producers are starting the 2021 season with optimism, a sentiment I wholeheartedly share.

VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (18:38): Most of us have been in the horrible position of watching someone we love die long before their time, an experience that can be exacerbated when illness makes their passing protracted and painful. I have lost friends and family to cancer, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis and complications arising from HIV. Although the physical states of these people differed at the end, the pain, loss of function and mental anguish that were caused are not something I would wish on my worst enemy. It is likely that a bill to legalise voluntary assisted dying will soon be introduced to the New South Wales Parliament.

Led by the member for Sydney, this important proposal would be based on the Western Australian model, which provides access to voluntary assisted dying [VAD] to people who have been given six months to live, or 12 months for people with neurodegenerative conditions. There would be appropriate safeguards in place, including the approval of two doctors. Five months before a previous version of a voluntary assisted dying bill was defeated in New South Wales in 2017, Victoria's VAD laws came into effect, while legislation passed in Western Australia in 2019. Voluntary assisted dying laws passed their second reading in Tasmania late last year, with the final steps to be taken this year. The Queensland Premier has also flagged her intention to introduce voluntary assisted dying legislation.

Much like the long overdue abortion law reform in 2019, when this legislation is brought forward I expect there to be a robust debate both in public and in the New South Wales Parliament because it is understandably an emotive issue. In 2017 The Conversation fact-checked a statement made by author Nikki Gemmill, who stated on the ABC's *Q&A* program that 80 per cent of the Australian population support euthanasia laws. It shared and verified the results of 10 polls conducted between 2007 and 2016 by organisations including Newspan, The Australia Institute, ABC Vote Compass, Essential Media Communications and Ipsos MORI. The number of people who indicated that they were in support across these polls ranged from 66 per cent to 85 per cent. This range shows that there is widespread public support for the legalisation of voluntary assisted dying.

A fortnight ago I stood at a Newcastle shopping centre with volunteers from Dying with Dignity NSW collecting petition signatures in support of the legalisation of voluntary assisted dying. We received signatures thick and fast, and not just from passers-by. People went out of their way to find us to add their name. This attitude reflects what I heard from the people of Newcastle in 2017 and still hear today. But despite this, last year the Premier told the media that she would prefer that the issue was not debated given everything else the Government was facing at the time. She also addressed it during the abortion law reform debate, saying that as voluntary assisted dying did not pass the upper House in 2017, the debate has been had. Considering that members of the lower House did not have a chance to vote on the legislation last time, and that since then the make-up of both Houses of Parliament has changed, this attitude from the Premier is overwhelmingly disappointing. While she may not support voluntary assisted dying, a debate about the issue should not be contingent on her preference.

For many years I have been on the record in support of the legalisation of voluntary assisted dying. It is not for someone who is well to determine how someone who is terminally ill should live their final days, how much pain they should be in during this time or how they should feel mentally about their prognosis. I cannot speak for my departed friends and family and say whether or not they would have chosen voluntary assisted dying if it were offered to them because they never had the choice. That is the crux of this issue: the choice to hang on or let go, and the choice of how to spend the end of your life. Death may be inevitable, but suffering until your final breath should not be.

GLADESVILLE BRIDGE MARINA

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (18:43): I speak on an important issue affecting my electorate. In 2019 a development application was lodged seeking to extend the Gladesville Bridge Marina, located at Victoria Place in Drummoyne. My office was inundated with correspondence from residents conveying their absolute opposition to any proposal that would increase the capacity of the marina. These objections have raised valid concerns, including the unacceptable visual impact of the extension, insufficient parking around the marina and the increased disruption associated with elevated visitor numbers to the marina. Other genuine concerns include the loss of recreational space and amenity at Howley Park East, detrimental impacts on adjoining properties, the loss of views without adherence to the view-sharing principles and the potential for associated property value reduction for neighbouring properties.

The planning assessment of the development application for the expansion of the Gladesville Bridge Marina is being overseen by the City of Canada Bay Council. I implore the council to take the concerns of countless residents into serious consideration when preparing its recommendation. The ultimate determination will be made by the Sydney Eastern City Planning Panel. Too often in the planning system, concessions are made during the negotiation process. In this case, I share the concerns of my constituents in that no considerations or concessions should be made. The bulk, size and scale of the proposed marina is totally inappropriate for the location.

To put the proposal's mammoth extension into context, the expansion of the marina will grow from the 50 current floating berths to 111, with overall space for 126 vessels. I share the concerns of the member for Lane Cove, Minister Roberts, who has publicly acknowledged that the revised plans do nothing and do not differ greatly from those submitted originally with the development application in 2019. Therefore, the original objections submitted by residents are still valid and must be addressed. The Gladesville Marina has had a complex and infamous history as the original approval was twisted in controversy. There was an uproar, and rightly so.

A marina in a densely populated residential peninsula with virtually one road in and out should never have been approved.

The Parramatta River belongs to all of us. The marina expansion will alienate the use of the Parramatta River. It has the potential to complicate ferry routes and speeds, and the location is too narrow to accommodate all other water users. The proposed expansion would also have an effect on the heritage-listed Gladesville Bridge. Overall, in order for people to have faith in the planning system, their concerns must be heard, not dismissed. I hope that as the marina goes through the planning process, the genuine concerns raised by residents, including but not limited to those raised in this speech, are acknowledged. I stand with my community in opposing the development.

TRIBUTE TO ELIZABETH ANNE SHEPHERD

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (18:46): I inform the House of the passing of Elizabeth Anne Shepherd of Scone, who passed away on 26 January—Australia Day—2021 aged 89. Many in our Upper Hunter community mourned the passing of Elizabeth Shepherd, fondly known as Betty. Betty, a highly respected citizen of Scone, was an icon within the thoroughbred racing industry. In 1953 Betty became the world's first registered female horse trainer. Betty's story would not be complete without a reference to her gelding Trevors. The partnership of Betty and Trevors led to many wins—the McKell Cup at Rosehill on 26 June 1966 and the Chelmsford Stakes at Randwick on 10 September 1966. They also had success with three trebles in a row at Sydney in 1965 and 1966. Betty became the first female trainer to have a horse—that being Trevors—in the Caulfield Cup and also the Melbourne Cup.

Betty's training career started when she met her husband Archie, a horse breeder and local grocer. Betty and Archie trained horses together at their small stable in Phillip Street, Scone. Betty took over the stable and went on to work her way to the top of Australian racing. Betty and Archie's marriage lasted for more than 60 years, but sadly Archie has passed away. Betty, an accomplished trainer, also rode horses at barrier trials in her early days. She was never an official jockey but there is a remarkable photo of Betty riding a horse called Quick Knock in the early 1950s. The photo is indicative of the riding attire of the day—no skullcap and no boots. Betty was also the first female to show horses at the Inglis Easter sales. Back in the day, men would always walk the horses into the ring. However, a male handler did not turn up and the horse was being called into the ring, so Betty stepped up and led the horse out. Apparently there were a few hushed tones at the time, as one would imagine, but Betty knew how to handle the horse and nothing was going to hold her back.

I would like to share some wonderful comments on a social media post from people who admired Betty, when they learnt of her death. "Wonderful horse woman", said one; "A legendary lady", another. "Iconic lady giving her heart to beautiful thoroughbreds and racing" was another. "This is what we are talking about. The true characters of the racing game" was another. "Betty was an icon in Scone. Husband Archie a great businessman with his fruit and veg shop in Kelly Street. Thoughts to daughter Georgie. RIP Betty" was another one. Finally, words from Betty's eulogy at her funeral, which I was fortunate enough to attend—if one were to put it that way—I refer to a message received from Ray Alexander, the ex-AJC General Secretary:

Shepherd hospitality was as legendary as it was lavish! I will never forget my rum and milk breakfast at Arch and Betty's on Scone Cup Day with Bert Lillye and Ron Bickley. It is appropriate that Betty departed this vale of tears on Australia Day. There was no more dinkum Aussie sheila.

Betty is survived by her loving daughter Georgie. Vale Elizabeth "Betty" Shepherd.

EAST HILLS ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY EVENTS AND AWARDS

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (18:50): Australia Day looked a little different to this time last year; however, I was very happy to start this year's Australia Day at the Bryan Brown Theatre attending a citizenship and volunteer award ceremony. It was nice to be back to citizenship ceremonies being held in person and see the smiling faces of our newest citizens as they received their certificates and beautiful floral arrangements arranged by the amazing Maria Voudouris from Maria's Fresh Flowers in Padstow. Australia Day ambassador John Stanley of 2GB radio fame welcomed the new citizens in our area and local volunteers who were being recognised on the day for all the great work that they do in our community. Dale Donadel from Picnic Point in my electorate of East Hills was named Citizen of the Year for the outstanding work she has done for decades with the Chester Hill Neighbourhood Centre.

Dale has initiated meaningful programs with varying age groups over her years of service, from teaching computer skills to seniors to engaging youth in after-school care. She has also undertaken skilled workshops such as woodwork and gardening, to name a few. Dale is a vital part of our community and her tireless work with the diverse and disadvantaged members of our community made her a deserving recipient of the Citizen of the Year award. Lachlan Hyde was named Young Citizen of the Year, and he is indeed an outstanding representative of the young people in our area. Lachlan is an integral part of the team of the Australian Air League and volunteers

endless hours of his time for various squadrons, including the Padstow squadron which meets on Tuesday nights in my electorate.

Lachlan has dedicated himself to not only the Air League but also volunteers with NSW Health as an accredited mental health first aider. Lachlan approached me last year in a local initiative to have Prospect Creek renamed Lennox River. Lachlan had extensively researched the project and approached several other MPs local to where the waterway traverses. He is extremely well versed in the history of the region, displaying a true passion for our local area. Lachlan is an outstanding role model for young people and I congratulate him on becoming the 2021 Young Citizen of the Year.

Salim Diab was named Volunteer of the Year for his tireless work throughout the pandemic in his role as the president of the St Charbel's Youth Association. He ensured that youth were able to "keep in touch" via online services by overseeing the installation of cameras throughout the church. He is a gentle soul and a well-respected role model for the St Charbel community. To complete the Australia Day ceremonies, Talent Advancement Program singers Courtney Emmas and Helena Cazouris were on hand and on song and performed an outstanding rendition of *I am Australian*. They also proudly sang the national anthem.

No typically stinking hot Australia Day would be complete without a game of cricket, barefoot or otherwise, and I headed to the beautiful Bankstown Memorial Oval to watch the Bankstown Bulldogs play in the Kingsgrove Sports Twenty20 Cup grand final against the University of New South Wales. It was great to see men who have played cricket all their lives in our electorate play at such a high level. Bankstown lost the toss and the University of New South Wales chose to let Bankstown bat first. That was a bit of a mistake. The Bulldogs amassed the highest total in a New South Wales cup decider, scoring 184 runs before bowling their opponents out for 114 in the sweltering conditions. The 70-run win finished off an undefeated campaign for the Bankstown Bulldogs.

The Bulldogs received \$12,000 in Kingsgrove Sports prize money and Harry Solomon was there to hand over the cheque to the winning team captain, born-and-bred true local Daniel Solway, who also was named player of the match with his score of 56. I make special mention of the bowlers and some spectacular fielding by the Bankstown players, which ensured the University of New South Wales team did not reach its total. Ben Taylor took three wickets, local Panania lad Ben Le Bas, the star spin bowler, took two wickets and Brad Simpson matched his efforts by taking two wickets. I congratulate local schoolteacher and ex-grade player Michael Polson and ex-grade player James Bourne on bringing their club its first ever T20 grand final win. After more heart-stopping moments and excitement than one State member for East Hills could handle, I waved goodbye to the winning team with my Aussie flag and toddled off home for a well-deserved glass of Australian wine to enjoy with my home-barbecued snag from Richard's Quality Meats at Revesby. Aussie, Aussie, Aussie!

Government members: Oi, oi, oi!

BULLI HOSPITAL

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (18:55): I speak about Bulli Hospital, a new health facility in my electorate. After a long campaign to save the hospital, we now have a new facility in the electorate of Keira, located in the suburb of Bulli. However, a chronic doctor shortage is leaving the urgent primary care centre without a doctor for days on end and causing patients to be sent to other facilities. We have a shining, new building but no doctors to treat patients. Locals from my electorate are reporting that they are being turned away because no doctor is available at the hospital. On 19 January this year I was contacted by Nicole who said:

Again Bulli Primary Care is closed until tonight. No doctors till at least 4.30pm. Not good enough.

I agree with Nicole. On 22 January I was contacted by Lauren who said:

I took my 12 year old son to Bulli Hospital. He injured himself at the beach and that being the closest emergency facility, I took him there. This was around 11:30am ... I was informed that there would be no Doctor available until after 6pm—

that is seven hours—

so the nurse can triage him but if I want him to see a doctor I will need to come back then. However, I was then informed that X-Ray closes at 5pm, so my trip back would've been pointless.

Another patient called my office and said they had been told to attend Corrimal Medical Centre, a privately run facility. The patient was informed by hospital staff that no doctor would be available at the Bulli facility the following day. I outlined my concerns about this to the local health district. They know full well that I am extremely concerned that more than \$54 million has been spent on a brand-new, state-of-the-art facility but we do not have a doctor to service the community. That is not good enough for my community. It would not be good enough for any community for a designated New South Wales hospital not to be available to patients.

The Government clearly promised this facility—an urgent care centre to treat those minor aches, ailments, pains and illnesses that we, our families and our children often have, including myself. That has not been delivered. People in my local community are angry, and they have a right to be. They are disappointed that the facility has not delivered on the promise to deliver reliable care to the community simply because it is not adequately staffed. The community is losing confidence quickly in the facility. That poses a real risk to people who may stop using it in the future. One of the key aspects of the facility was to take pressure off the main hospital in Wollongong, which is already under enormous pressure through demands on its emergency department and elective surgery waiting lists.

This now needs to be a priority. All members would understand that a brand-new hospital without a doctor is a complete waste of money. The community fought hard for this facility. It was one of the first petitions—certainly the first petition from the Illawarra—to be debated in this Chamber way back in my first term as a member of Parliament. Along with thousands of other community members, we fought hard to make sure the new facility became a reality. We should not have to fight just to have a doctor service the local community. The Government needs to get its priorities right and honour its commitment. The people in the electorate of Keira and the broader Illawarra region deserve to have a hospital with a doctor so that they can be treated for those things, as was committed to and as was promised.

LAKE MACQUARIE ELECTORATE PUBLIC HOUSING

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (19:00): In a positive start to the year, last month at Cardiff I was joined by the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, the Hon. Gareth Ward, to officially open a new 94-unit social and affordable housing development. The development was the result of a partnership between the State Government and the St Vincent de Paul Society. Provision of social and affordable housing is a challenge for any government. I acknowledge that the current Government has taken some significant steps towards developing new and additional housing stock, but we still have many problems. We still have a chronic shortage, long waiting lists and significant maintenance backlogs. The number of people who contact my electorate office regarding issues with social housing is far greater than those who call about any other single issue. I imagine many other members of the House could say the same.

In Lake Macquarie we have large areas of public housing, including at Toronto West, Bolton Point, Marmong Point and other areas, yet demand is far from met. The expected waiting time for a two-bedroom property in Lake Macquarie is more than 10 years. The waiting time for a studio or one-bedroom property is between five and 10 years. It is a similar wait time for three- or four-bedroom properties. Those wait times are up there with the longest and worst in the State. Another 544 applicants had joined the local queue in the 12 months to June last year. The great Australian dream is being pushed further away from many young people and families in Lake Macquarie. The growth, demand and price pressures mean more people are pushed out of the market or further away into cheaper areas. More people are relying on subsidised or social housing to put an affordable roof over their heads. We are nowhere near meeting that demand any time soon.

The maintenance of existing housing stock is also a significant problem. I am aware of a local man who, because of holes in the roof, had to hold an umbrella over himself while he sat on the toilet every time it rained. In another case, the kitchen floor of a property was so badly eaten by termites that the elderly female occupant fell through it. Repairs involved a tradesman simply nailing a timber block over the hole, on top of the old floor. The same elderly lady then had to contend with a trip point every time she entered the kitchen. I could list dozens of cases where people have waited sometimes more than six months for what I would call basic repairs. That is the reality of social housing in Lake Macquarie and likely throughout the State, and that is without mentioning mould and mildew.

As I acknowledged earlier, it is a very difficult and complex issue for governments to solve and it cannot be remedied entirely just by throwing millions more dollars at it, although that would certainly help. I was a member of the previous Parliament, which supported the Government to establish the Social and Affordable Housing Fund in 2016. I applaud Minister Brad Hazzard for his work in getting that fund operational. It was that fund which helped build the 94 new apartments at Cardiff. It is indeed wonderful to see that decision creating great outcomes. I note that the fund has so far delivered more than 500 dwellings across the State in partnership with St Vincent De Paul alone, including some at Thornton, near Maitland, and at Dubbo, Albury and Sydney.

On the opening day at Cardiff I met a single mother, Chloe, who has a young daughter and was about to give birth to a son. She is typical of the many people who have experienced some sort of hardship and have had difficulty in finding somewhere to live. She told me that having safe and stable housing was life-changing and meant the world to her. It provided hope and optimism and was a vital step towards a better and more productive life. I applaud the Social and Affordable Housing Fund and what it is achieving, but there are 100,000 people like Chloe who are on a waiting list and need help.

Indeed, St Vincent de Paul estimates that New South Wales needs to build 5,000 new dwellings each year for the next decade if future demand and current shortages are to be met. Minister Ward is passionate about the issue and he has worked hard to address homelessness with a heightened imperative since COVID-19 appeared. He has been backed in by the Premier and the Treasurer to do that, but even with that effort there is much more to do to deliver a safe home and the dignity that that affords to many people, including families, in New South Wales.

YASS VALLEY WATER QUALITY

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (19:04): Today I will talk about the ongoing water quality issue in Yass Valley. Unfortunately, water quality and discolouration is not a new issue for the residents of Yass, but the council and I are committed to rectifying the problem. The New South Wales Government is working proactively with the council to progress the upgrade to the water treatment plant and to achieve outcomes, rather than platitudes. My office has been contacted by people who have sought updates on our commitment to assist with the continuing issue of the discolouration of water in parts of Yass. I want to ensure the timely delivery of the project, which is why I initiated a briefing with Yass Valley councillors and WaterNSW in December last year.

Various solutions were proposed and discussed at the briefing and we resolved to progress the implementation of stage one of the upgrade, which involves addressing some of the quality issues through a raw pump station, installing bubble plume aeration in the Yass Dam and beginning urgent works at the plant. Discussions about subsequent stages are yet to be finalised, but it was resolved that a report be brought back to council with the inclusion of financial modelling on the impact to local rate charges. It is clear from the council's meeting briefs from December that discussions between the council and the department are continuing in parallel with the implementation of stage one of the project to resolve the design framework for any new or upgraded water treatment plant, including a peer review of the technical options. It was also resolved that reports on the progress of the project will become a standing bimonthly meeting item for council.

By way of background, in 2019 the Government committed monies under the Safe and Secure Water Program. Under the program guidelines, the maximum amount available is \$10 million. It was a no-brainer to me to fight hard for that commitment, knowing full well how badly that money is needed for the local community. Over the past few years various commitments have been made by both sides of politics, but the underlying fact is that the Government is sticking to its word and will uphold its commitment. Recently the media, including *The Canberra Times* and *A Current Affair*, has refocused its attention on the matter. My office has been contacted and countless social media posts and photos have been shared demonstrating the extent of the problem. I have seen them all and I am working hard with the council to ensure the best outcome for the community.

The local Federal member displayed political posturing by pointing the finger at the New South Wales Government, which has actually committed \$10 million to the project. I have no doubt the council will lobby that Federal member for funds to ease the burden on our ratepayers. To claim publicly that the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is holding up progress on the matter is blatantly false. The people of Yass deserve better than a political blame game. I am committed to the timely and cost-effective progression of the project. We must ensure that local ratepayers are not burdened with excessive water rates as a result. That is a difficult discussion for any council to have with their community. I hope the council finds a solution as soon as possible to get the next stage of the project underway. The council is working hard to achieve that. I thank all of those who have contacted me with their concerns and feedback. I look forward to hearing further about the outcomes from Yass Valley Council.

HOMELESSNESS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (19:08): New South Wales is facing a homelessness crisis on a scale that we have not seen before. It is a crisis that has been decades in the making and that organisations such as the NSW Council of Social Service [NCOSS], Domestic Violence NSW, Mission Australia and Homelessness NSW have long warned of. The crisis is driven by housing unaffordability, and the Government has created no meaningful policies to deal with it. Housing unaffordability has now extended to regional areas of this State—regions such as the Hunter Valley, where the cost of renting a two-bedroom apartment is up 13.9 per cent on last year and the cost of renting a three-bedroom home has gone up by 8.9 per cent compared to last year.

At the same time that rents are increasing, rental vacancy rates in the Hunter region have plunged to about 0.8 per cent—compare that to five years ago, when the rental vacancy rate sat at about 3 per cent. To top it all off, at the very same time this Government is in the business of getting out of desperately needed public housing. That is correct: This Government is selling off its public housing stock at a time when we have never needed it more. Housing unaffordability is the driver behind homelessness and it is taking us into uncharted territory when it

comes to homelessness. The face of homelessness is changing. Women aged over 45 are now the fastest-growing group of people in Australia who are at risk of homelessness. This alarming statistic is being borne out in cities, regions and towns across this State.

I want to share with this place the experiences of three women facing homelessness whom my office has recently assisted. Two were in their mid-70s and the third was 79 years old. All three were long-term renters. One had been in the same house for 28 years. All three had been issued with no-fault eviction notices. All three have nowhere to go, and all three are now facing homelessness. Mr Temporary Speaker, can you imagine being 79 years old with a son in his 50s who has a disability, and being told you would need to move out of the home you have rented for 28 years? Can you imagine, at 79 years old, being forced to jump on to realestate.com to find your next rental property? Can you imagine, at 79 years old, lining up with dozens of others to inspect rental properties—rental properties you know you have no chance of getting? Can you imagine filling out application forms in the hope that you might be the lucky one? Can you imagine the realisation that at 79 years old, you may be dead before your name comes up on the public housing waiting list? It is unimaginable that it has come to this. It is beyond unimaginable that our elderly are facing homelessness.

According to the NSW Council of Social Service, housing stress in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie is expected to increase by almost 40 per cent. Newcastle and Lake Macquarie, along with Sydney city, are expected to lead the State when it comes to homelessness, with an expected 40.5 per cent increase in the number of people with nowhere to live. It is forecast that an additional 562 people in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie will be homeless by June 2021. It is also expected Newcastle and Lake Macquarie will experience one of the sharpest rises across the State in the number of police reports of domestic abuse. One of the biggest barriers for people fleeing domestic violence is a lack of affordable housing. Nova for Women and Children is a specialist homelessness service based in Newcastle which services the people of the Charlestown electorate.

Nova is currently facing unprecedented demand for its services. Currently a woman who is fleeing domestic violence, or a woman who is facing homelessness, will wait for 10 days before she can attend an intake meeting. Then there is two-week wait before she will be assigned a caseworker. The service has never before had a waiting list. It has never seen demand for its assistance like it is witnessing now—and why? Because the Government has failed to address the drivers of homelessness. The problem of homelessness—and its precursor, housing unaffordability—may seem insurmountable, but there is a way out of it and that is through government. This Government has wilfully participated in the contraction of public housing when we need it most. The Government has the capacity to build the structure and utilise the levers to stop homelessness. The Government has the capacity to facilitate housing security. The Government has the capacity to deal with homelessness; if only it would.

MIRANDA ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (19:13): I acknowledge the recipients of the 2021 Australia Day honours across the Miranda electorate. Australia Day provides an opportunity to reaffirm the values that unite all Australians. Whilst the year of 2020 provided endless challenges to our nation, from drought to devastating fires and the COVID-19 pandemic, it also highlighted the strength, resilience and compassion of our people, who banded together in the face of adversity. As we reflect on the extraordinary year that was, we also celebrate those individuals who have demonstrated their commitment to our cornerstone values and communities. While we all have differing backgrounds and opinions, Australia Day is a day to celebrate the stories, achievements and contributions of every Australian who makes this nation great.

The Miranda electorate is proud to be the home of individuals who encapsulate the fundamental Australian values. I am honoured to celebrate them today. I acknowledge Glenn Wheeler of Sylvania, who was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to the broadcast media and greater community. Glenn is a former Australia Day Ambassador and a cherished member of the Sutherland Shire. The honourable award is in official recognition of Glenn's life work as a television and radio personality, alongside his enormous generosity to charity. Through his charitable work, Glenn has served as an ambassador for Variety Australia and supported the Cerebral Palsy Foundation, Parkinson's NSW, Rotary and Lions clubs and the Starlight Children's Foundation.

His overwhelming generosity continues to touch those around him as he serves as a volunteer master of numerous ceremonies and donates his time to various community fundraisers and families in need. In January 2015 Glenn was critically injured after being struck by a van while riding his motor scooter in Woolooware. Despite sustaining permanent injuries, Glenn continues to be a positive and inspiring member of our community, describing himself as "the luckiest man around" to have had the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others, particularly those less fortunate. In a testimony to his generous spirit, Glenn dedicated his Order of Australia to his children and wife, Michelle, whom he dubbed "the real hero". Glenn is a highly deserving recipient of the Medal of the Order of Australia and I commend him for his selfless generosity to our community and ongoing positivity. He is an invaluable asset to the Shire community.

I also commend Kenneth Broughton of Sutherland, who was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to lawn bowls. Kenneth has been involved in the sport since 1970, beginning his career with the Sutherland Waratah Bowling Club, where he was president for 12 years. Kenneth later transitioned to the Engadine Bowling Club in 1992, where he is recognised as a life member. During his time at Engadine, Kenneth held a number of notable roles within the club. Between 1995 and 2017 Kenneth was the club delegate reporting to the Port Hacking District Bowling Association and Bowls NSW. Kenneth has also served as bowls secretary since 1994, side manager of the Grade 1 Pennants side since 2015 and selector for the club from 2000 to 2004. As a testimony to the community's appreciation for Kenneth, the annual Taren Point/Engadine Grade 1 Pennants competition trophy is named in his honour. I thank Kenneth for his work in our community, and wish him well in his future endeavours.

Australia Day is a commemoration of diversity as we celebrate each and every Australian who calls our nation home. Through the sharing of unique stories and experiences, our communities grow richer, and this too is evident within the Miranda electorate. I acknowledge Sylvia Farrugia of Miranda who, at 96, continues to contribute to the richness of our community through her extraordinary story. On Australia Day this year Sylvia celebrated her seventieth anniversary of arriving in our wonderful country. Landing on Australian soil on 26 January 1951, Sylvia had travelled by boat from Malta with her children, following in the footsteps of her husband, who arrived in 1950. Embracing Australian culture, Sylvia works hard and wears her Australian T-shirt every year with pride. Sylvia is an admirable example of the valued diversity and rich tapestry that comprises our unique Australian identity. It is a privilege to serve a community which is home to hardworking Australians who uphold our nation's values. I congratulate all the recipients of the Australia Day Honours and wish them well in their future endeavours.

WESTERN SYDNEY WASTE INCINERATOR PROPOSALS

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:18): With some sadness and absolute frustration, I bring to the House's attention that for the past seven years, the residents of Blacktown, Penrith and Fairfield City Council areas have been fighting the proposed energy-from-waste incineration plants but have only received platitudes back from the Liberal-Nationals Government. Unfortunately, we are now fighting two proposals in close proximity to each other. The Next Generation proposal for an incinerator was rejected by the Independent Planning Commission NSW and is now being appealed in the Land and Environment Court. The Independent Planning Commission stated that "human health risks cannot be appropriately managed" and that it was:

... not satisfied that the project's emissions would not impact on water quality, particularly given the proximity to residential properties.

The seven-year fight led by Blacktown City Council has resulted in the size and scale of the Next Generation proposal changing from one of the largest facilities in the world at a 1.4 million-tonne capacity—not bad for a novice operator specialising in skip bins—to somewhere between a 375,000- to 500,000-tonne capacity, all depending on which court case or DA lodgement you might look at. We now also have a proposal for a 500,000-tonne capacity facility from Cleanaway. The Hon. Chris Bowen, the Federal member for McMahon, referred to these incinerators in his recent speech in Federal Parliament, stating the ruling elite believed:

... that western Sydney is a dumping ground for the rest of Sydney. Whether it is radioactive waste in Kemps Creek or these two incinerators, it always comes down to dumping problems in western Sydney, which is home for so many people.

To the Federal member for McMahon's dumping list of incinerators and radioactive waste I add a 24/7 airport with no curfews and no fuel lines, thereby increasing truck movements; and reducing environmental conditions, which will add to the urban extreme heat effect across western Sydney. I am frustrated that over the years I have spoken to various New South Wales environment and planning Ministers asking—if not begging—on behalf of the community to rewrite the governance, approval process and environmental standards for assessing these proposed incinerators. We now have five incineration proposals in New South Wales. The current standards are outdated and do not reflect modern expectations. I have presented a private member's bill in this House, only to have it talked out of time by this Government. The Liberal member for Mulgoa has also spoken out against these proposals and has had meetings with Ministers—but they still refuse to do anything.

This Liberal-Nationals Government hides behind the current laws, saying they are good enough and that the matter will resolve itself. The local community has so far been successful in beating the proposals despite the poor laws and corporate greed—but at what cost? Councils, community groups and government departments have spent millions of dollars plus time and effort to oppose them. For the big corporations investing billions of dollars into these projects it is an insignificant amount to keep on fighting in the courts, appealing all the way, then losing and readjusting the proposal and resubmitting a new development application for it to start all over again. Why? Because this is a windfall cash proposition when approved and then it will be impossible to bring in appropriate safeguards. The Federal member for McMahon also said in his speech:

... the companies proposing these two incinerators are under no illusions that no PR, no spin and no nice advertising campaign will convince us that our community should have to put up with these ridiculous, offensive and outrageous proposals for Western Sydney to be the dumping ground for these two incinerators.

While I will stand with the residents, Chris Bowen and local councils to fight these toxic proposals, I am worried that the overwhelming pressure will wear down the community. I am sure the Mayor of Blacktown City Council, Councillor Tony Bleasdale, would rather be spending the millions of dollars on footpaths, sporting fields or playgrounds rather than consultants and lawyers to clean up the State Government's mess and inadequate planning proposals. This State Government can implement a short-term moratorium to sort out pollution and environmental standards and then update the planning process. I am afraid that this Government will again let down the people of western Sydney.

WATER SAFETY

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (19:23): This summer there has been a concerning increase in incidents and fatalities in and around beaches in my electorate of Heathcote. I draw the attention of the House to the need to double down on messaging about water safety. My electorate has some of the most picturesque and undoubtedly some of the deadliest beaches and swimming holes in the State of New South Wales. Wattamolla in the Royal National Park saw an avoidable drowning just weeks ago and Garie Beach saw the rescue of an entire family group—fully dressed—from a rip just a week ago. They are becoming very regular events. Over the Christmas break, king tides were experienced due to the east coast low hovering over New South Wales, with massive waves and surf pounding the coastline. Yet, people venture out into the surf—sometimes fully clothed—only to be rescued by our fantastic surf lifesaving volunteers, who risk their lives to save others.

Another deadly place in my electorate, which has now become the hip place to grab a selfie, is the Figure Eight Pools in the Royal National Park. The rock shelf is idyllic when the surf is calm but is a place to die when the surf is up. Figure Eight Pools is remote and there is no mobile phone reception. But people risk the treacherous conditions for the prospect of getting that perfect selfie—only to be swept off their feet, dragged across the barnacles and sometimes ending up in the ocean, where they are pummelled by the surf while being dragged under by the rip. Several people over the past couple of years did not return home, only to be found washed up on rocks weeks later by surf lifesavers. Those volunteers are then faced with the gruesome task of retrieving the body.

I speak about these issues today as a reminder for all members who have rivers, waterholes and beaches in their electorates to consider reaching out to their constituencies and reminding them how fragile we all are when faced with risky water activities. The subject of why is an interesting one. The vision of a bronzed Aussie who has spent a lifetime in and around the surf and water is the norm in some of our communities, but not all. Many of our constituents have never entered the surf in their mother countries before the fateful day when they decide to visit a surf beach. Many have never swum in a river. Surf lifesavers have recognised that gap in public education, but they need our help as members of Parliament.

Members should consider including surf lifesaving information in their next newsletters or placing information on their webpages. We must get the message out to swim between the flags and to not enter the water where it is calm at the beach, because you are likely entering a rip. Surf lifesaving has also rolled out technology to assist, with beacons placed at the beach that send a message in whatever language the phone is set to, warning of surf conditions and reinforcing the message to swim between the flags. But of course, that requires mobile phone coverage. Spare a thought for those surf lifesaving volunteers who give up their spare time to keep us and the public safe. They are the people who have to deal with the aftermath of a drowning. This summer has been a horrific one for unsuspecting people leaving their homes for a day at the beach and never returning home, because they did not understand that the surf can be deadly. Please swim between the flags.

WARNERVALE DISTRICT SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (19:27): As we start the new school year I pay tribute to all of the teachers and principals in my electorate, who do a fantastic job. I also particularly want to mention all of the parents who volunteer as part of P&C associations and parents and friends associations. I take this opportunity to once again raise an issue that I have raised for the past four years, which is the secondary education provision in the Warnervale district. I acknowledge that a few years ago we were excited when we heard on the radio that we were getting a new school in Warnervale. We thought that we had had a massive victory. We had a victory of sorts; we are actually getting a new primary school, which is under construction and will be known as Porters Creek Public School. That will mean that now four schools cover the Warnervale-Wadalba area.

But Wadalba Community School is still the only secondary provision other than Gorokan, which is a little bit further away, and Wyong High School. My electorate has two private schools, the MacKillop Catholic College and the Lakes Anglican Grammar School. They are both very good schools but we need greater provision in the

public school arena, given the massive increase in population that is taking place in that area. I regularly receive correspondence from both P&Cs and parents in that area asking when there will be some news. I know that the Department of Education is discussing some options. I ask the department to make those options public and include school communities in its deliberations.

On the table are three possibilities. One is a brand-new high school. That is always difficult because to offer good subjects there has to be a certain number of students. While that should absolutely be on the table, it is not necessarily the only option that the Government could adopt in addressing this issue. The second option is to use land available at the Wadalba Community School to create a college for years 11 and 12. That could be part of the Wadalba Community School but separate for senior education. On the Central Coast we also have the Brisbane Water Secondary College and the Tuggerah Lakes Secondary College. To provide another senior college for students in year 11 and 12 would create space in the other part of the school for students in years 7 to 10 but also would create some really good opportunities for students who are in years 11 and 12. That is definitely an option that should be on the table. I know that the Wadalba community is keen to have that. The Central Coast P&C would support that option. From the consultations I have undertaken, I envisage that option working really well.

The third option, which I have some reservations about, is that the department may alter boundaries so that students from the rapidly growing Warnervale area would have the choice of going to the Gorokan High School or to the Wyong High School. Both schools have some capacity for additional students but it would involve extra travel and also would split families, and there are a whole range of similar issues. At the end of the day I am asking the Government and the Department of Education to start consultation on the issue. I am not pushing a particular option other than to say that we cannot have a large number of students when we need another brand-new primary school. People may not realise that the new school is the third primary school to be built in that area since 2010. The Wadalba Community School opened in the year 2000. There is a great deal of population increase taking place in that area but the provision of secondary schools has not increased at a commensurate rate. The consequence is that that is pushing people out of the public school system, which is a real shame because the high schools in that area are of very high quality.

Years ago I was able to get a selective stream at the Gorokan High School, which is equal to one of the selective schools. That has been quite successful. It has run through and results have improved right across the Gorokan High School. That has allowed students at the northern part of the Central Coast to access that selective stream whereas previously they had to go to Gosford. The community is flexible but they want someone to talk to them about it. They want the Government and the Department of Education to sit down with them and let them know what the plans might be. At the moment they are hearing nothing, which is causing them concern. That is simply not good enough.

Community Recognition Statements

DR ERIC MOYLE

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (19:33): I congratulate our Albury Citizen of the Year for 2021, Dr Eric Moyle. Dr Moyle generally likes to keep out of the spotlight, but on Australia Day he was recognised for his significant efforts in serving our community and for having worked tirelessly for the last 20 years in intensive care medicine. During these times of COVID, Dr Moyle is also credited for his efforts, in collaboration with the University of New South Wales Rural Clinical School, with developing a ventilator in the early days of the pandemic. While Dr Moyle enjoys the support of the whole team at the Albury hospital, it is timely to celebrate his personal milestone of two decades doing such important work for our healthcare system on the border. I add my thanks and appreciation to Dr Eric Moyle for his long and distinguished career and extend my best wishes for his work.

KEVIN PEARCE, OAM

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (19:34): Kevin Pearce has been posthumously awarded the Order of Australia medal in the Australia Day Honours List. Kevin Pearce passed in May 2019 and has now been recognised for his service to the community of Wyong. Mr Pearce received a rarely given Rotary Club award, the Paul Harris Award for community service and was named Wyong Citizen of the Year in 2001. He was Chairman of the Wyong Rugby League Club Group from 2014 to 2019, a board member in the 1980s through to 2019, vice chair and member of Wyong Race Club, chair of Wyong Roos' Foundation, member of Men of League Charity, and member of the Salvation Army Advisory Board Wyong. In his legal career Pearce became President of Central Coast Regional Law Society in 1991. He established the Traffic Offenders Program Local Court Wyong in 1986, established the Community Aid Panel Local Court Wyong in 1987 and was a director at Aubrey Brown Lawyers from 1980 to 2019. Kevin will be sadly missed.

UNCLE IVAN WELLINGTON

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (19:35): I congratulate Uncle Ivan on being named the 2021 Campbelltown Citizen of the Year at the Australia Day awards recently. Uncle Ivan, a local Aboriginal elder, regularly performs traditional Indigenous rituals at events within the Macarthur region including welcome to country speeches and smoking ceremonies. One of his passions is his dedication to educating the community, particularly young people, about local Aboriginal culture. Uncle Ivan was instrumental in the creation of a Yarning Circle at Campbelltown. These have been used by Aboriginal people for thousands of years as places to talk, learn and celebrate culture. Congratulations to Uncle Ivan on being awarded the 2021 Campbelltown Citizen of the Year. He is truly deserving of this award.

JIHAD YASSINE

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (19:36): It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge Jihad Yassine, a student at Punchbowl Boys High School, for publishing his first book of poetry. A passionate slam poet and aspiring author, Jihad has harnessed the true power of words and the beauty of expression through poetry to reach out to young people. As former principal of Punchbowl Boys High School, I think it is fantastic to see such young talent in my local area committed to making an impact on the world. Jihad Yassine's story featured in a piece in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on year 12 leaders. He said:

People read books to find inspiration of any sort, whether a poetry or business book. That is my goal—to help people.

This captures the essence of who we are as a society—one that is united in compassion, hope and courage. Jihad is currently undertaking his HSC this year and will continue to work on another book during this time. I congratulate Jihad on his unwavering commitment to sharing his poetic stories and wish him all the best in the HSC examinations.

TRIBUTE TO MR RAYMOND MEPHAM

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (19:37): I offer my condolences to the family of Northern Tablelands aquaculture pioneer Mr Raymond Mepham, who very sadly passed away on Monday 8 February following a long battle with illness. Ray was the epitome of "Nature's Gentleman", and through the 40-year operation of his family-run native fish hatchery at Little Valley, Elsmore, he made an exceptional contribution to the conservation of Murray cod in the Murray-Darling River System. He was the first person to artificially breed Murray cod after research by the late John Lake at the Inland Fisheries Research Station in the 1960s, and was stocking the species well before large-scale programs commenced at New South Wales Government hatcheries in 1978.

In 2020 Ray's 50-year affiliation with NSW DPI Fisheries saw him awarded an Outstanding Service Award. It was an absolute honour for me to present that award on behalf of the New South Wales Government. Ray's passing will be felt greatly by fish stocking groups right along the New South Wales and Queensland border, where his hard work has led to the region becoming one of the best fishing areas in the system. I commend Ray for his dedication to aquaculture and the community. Rest in peace, Ray.

SARAH BROWN

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (19:38): I commend Sarah Brown, a volunteer and parent at Revesby South Public School. Sarah is currently the secretary of the P&C and has been an extraordinary asset to the school during her seven-year association with it. As a full-time working mum, Sarah has been the official grant writer for the school for the past four years. During this period she has written numerous grant applications and has been successful in securing more than \$140,000 worth of grants for the school due to her effective grant-writing skills. Under the My Community Project grants program, the school was able to secure a grant to remove an old playing field—which was a hard, tired surface—and transform it into soft, new turf with an inbuilt irrigation system to maintain it. Under the Local Schools Community Fund, Sarah was able to secure funding for a hearing system to be installed in the school hall to assist hearing-impaired students during assemblies and other school activities that are held there. I commend Sarah for her hard work and dedication in being instrumental in gaining funding for these resources at Revesby South Public School.

MATT LUMBY

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (19:39): Volunteer surf lifesavers are a special and committed group within our community who give up their time each summer—as the member for Wyong would know—to help keep everyone safe on our beaches. A surf lifesaver who is away from their own beach but still runs into the water to help someone while people on the beach warn of a shark in the water is a unique individual. Towradgi Surf Club captain Matt Lumby is that person. Earlier this year while visiting Lake Macquarie Matt was involved in the impromptu rescue of a man who had been bitten by a shark. He said after the event, "To me, it was just a normal

rescue. I didn't think about a shark at all; it was just—get to the man and help him." Matt has been involved in surf lifesaving for a long time, but this was his first incident involving a shark. Paramedics credit Matt's quick actions along with the assistance of the wife of the man he rescued with helping to save the man's life. With surf lifesavers of Matt's calibre on our beaches in Wollongong, we can all feel a lot safer in the water, particularly at Towradgi beach when Matt is on patrol.

HENNESSY CATHOLIC COLLEGE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE STUDENTS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (19:40): I recognise the outstanding achievements of the 2020 year 12 students from Hennessy Catholic College for their incredible HSC results. Sixteen students received the highest Band 6, which is the equivalent of a mark of 90 or above. Of the cohort, 29.1 per cent achieved either Band 5 or 6 across a range of subjects. Bridie Minehan was awarded dux of the school with an ATAR of 96.3. This remarkable achievement is a reflection not only on her teachers but also Hennessy Catholic College more broadly. Ten other students received first place in their subjects across the whole of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn. Those rankings and achievements reflect the dedication and commitment of those students to their chosen subjects, and shows that even during a year of hardship and uncertainty those students pushed through. I congratulate all year 12 students from Hennessy Catholic College on their 2020 HSC results.

MARGARET MCNAUGHTON

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (19:41): I pay tribute to a wonderful local icon, Margaret McNaughton, who for decades has shared her love of music with Newcastle, bringing joy to hospitals, aged-care facilities and service clubs all across the city. Following her inaugural performance of *Aba Daba Honeymoon* on the Newcastle City Hall stage when she was just 12 years old, the time has come for Margaret to pack up her piano accordion after 70 years of performing. For 40 years Margaret performed three or four times each week. She also gave a 30-year commitment to Merewether Uniting Church's support group meetings, as well as playing the role of piano accompanist at Merewether Heights Public School and the Mater Hospital palliative care hospice. While Margaret's music will be missed, her contribution is treasured.

GOULBURN DISTRICT HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (19:42): I recognise the efforts and achievements of the Goulburn District Hockey Association, which recently secured a \$3.8 million grant through the Restart NSW infrastructure program. In addition to that funding, a \$3 million land purchase by Goulburn Mulwaree Council and a \$200,000 contribution from their own funds will ensure that the sport has a future in Goulburn. The region has a proud and rich history of professional and social hockey participation, and this investment will allow players to develop and participation to grow. The funding will bring the current facility up to State and national hockey championship standard. I look forward to seeing the construction of a national level water-based field, the installation of new field lighting, men's and women's player change rooms, and improved player and public amenities. The achievement of the Goulburn District Hockey Association is to be congratulated, and I wish Goulburn hockey all the best for the future.

DERVIS TEOMAN

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:43): Mr Dervis Teoman became Blacktown City Council's Environmental Citizen of the Year at the recent Australia Day Award Ceremony. Dervis is a keen environmental warrior who leads by example, and is a wonderful inspiration to his extended family and local community. His home has a worm farm, bee-friendly fruit trees and a thriving veggie garden. He sustains all this by using food scraps that nourish worm soil, as well as water from his large tanks. Dervis ensures that rubbish is appropriately separated into the correct bins, and unwanted clothes and furniture are donated to appropriate charities. He has also made his home solar-friendly. Dervis is a grandfather, a community activist and a Woodcroft resident who leads by example. He understands that it is everyone's responsibility to care for and enhance the environment. Dervis is always ready and eager to teach anyone about recycling and is 100 per cent committed to saving our planet. I congratulate Dervis Teoman on his award and I thank him for making a positive difference to our community.

JENNY FARRELL AND GARRY BEST

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:44): The Central Coast is lucky to have so many volunteer firefighters working hard to protect our community. I acknowledge two people in particular: Jenny Farrell, Senior Deputy Captain at Matcham-Holgate Rural Fire Brigade; and Garry Best, Deputy Captain from Empire Bay Fire Brigade, whose combined service now totals more than 65 years. I had the opportunity to recently present both Jenny and Garry with a Community Service Medal, thanking them for their outstanding work during the last bushfire season. Jenny is an experienced firefighter and incident management specialist with more than 45 years of service in the field. Jenny's expertise and commitment during the 2019-20 bushfire season was

outstanding. She contributed to operations locally and across the State. Garry is an experienced firefighter with 19 years experience. During the 2019-20 fire season Garry assisted with a number of out-of-area firefighting deployments across New South Wales. I thank all the men and women who work hard day in and day out to protect our community. Have a safe and happy 2021.

GLENN DORMAND AND TONY WHITTAKER

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (19:45): Charlestown local songwriter, musician, producer, television presenter, broadcaster, podcaster and director, Glenn Dormand is perhaps better known by the alias "Chit Chat Von Loopin Stab" as part of the sadly split alternative rock band Machine Gun Fellatio and co-writer of The Whitlams' hit *No Aphrodisiac*. Glenn has teamed up with local Tony Whittaker to produce a dozen short films documenting the history of Newcastle called *Stories of our Town*. They have made films about the murder of Awabakal leader Burigon and the trial of his murderer, the first trial and conviction relating to the murder of a First Nations person; the Star Hotel riot; naturalist sisters Harriet and Helena Scott of Ash Island; and Newcastle's BHP. I thank Mr Dormand and Mr Whittaker for sharing some of our region's rich past. In Glenn's case, live Aussie music's sad loss is our local history's gain.

MANAL KHAN

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (19:46): I congratulate Amity College, Prestons student Manal Khan on her incredible achievement in last year's HSC. Manal was a year 11 student when she completed last year's Advanced Mathematics HSC subject. She took the opportunity to take year 12 maths as she felt she was ready, and wow did it pay off. Manal placed equal first in the subject. Manal was among 118 students who were presented with 126 first in course certificates at the end of last year. I commend Manal and her teachers for such an outstanding achievement. Completing the HSC is a challenge in itself, but to complete it a year early is definitely commendable. Last year was tough for students and teachers, with the school year disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so I congratulate all of last year's HSC students on completing their studies under such unusual circumstances. Once again, I congratulate Manal Khan on her achievement.

BROUGHTON VALE-BERRY RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (19:47): On Friday 29 January 2021 I was very pleased to attend the Broughton Vale-Berry Rural Fire Brigade for its annual general meeting and to assist with the presentation of a few special certificates and awards. I was also pleased to announce \$3,395 in funding for a new fridge at the station. I acknowledge Group Captain Andrew Fielding, Mark Williams, Iain and Carolyn Kerr, Deputy Group Captain Stuart Thaler, President Keith Brodie, Dylan Bucci, John Trinder, Keith Fhreeve, Greg Tedder, Brian Coulthart, Ben Madden, Captain Keith Gray, David Southam, Glen Agar, Allen Armstrong, Greg Sales and Chance Dowling. Another round of new recruit firefighters just successfully passed their bush firefighter assessment. I congratulate Daniel Darlington, Billie Boskic and Mitchell Kowald; they will be great additions to what is an outstanding fire brigade. They put themselves in the line of danger during the most recent fires and I know that every members' community is proud of their Rural Fire Service volunteers. The Broughton Vale-Berry Rural Fire Brigade punches well above its weight and the community is incredibly grateful.

LYNCH'S HUB

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (19:48): I pay tribute to an iconic Novocastrian cafe that epitomises the Novocastrian spirit. For small and family businesses, the height of the COVID-19 restrictions was devastating. So when the northern beaches faced its second stint, many others around the State knew just how they were feeling. Understanding the region's plight, a Newcastle cafe stepped up. With in-kind donations from the United Services Club, Gamble and Brown cafe and Big Box catering, Lynch's Hub showed its support by holding a fundraising dinner at the end of January with the evening sales donated to another family business, Cabana Beach Kiosk in Narrabeen. Truly embodying the spirit of "we are all in this together", Novocastrians also stepped up and made the event a sellout one week before it was even held. I have no doubt it meant a lot to all involved, and I applaud Lynch's Hub and all involved for the fantastic initiative. Well done.

JAMES STIBILJ

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (19:50): James Stibilj is a talented young artist, showcasing skills well beyond his years. So much so that the Wahroonga resident took home the 16- to 18-year-old category Young Archie award for the portrait of his sister, titled *India*. With more than 1,800 entries received for the 2020 Young Archie competition, this is an outstanding result for James, who completed his HSC at St Leo's Catholic College in 2019. This is not the first time that James has been recognised in this prestigious competition; he was a finalist in 2016. James describes his work as more than just portraying a physical appearance but capturing "an expression of emotion and spirit". The Art Gallery of New South Wales established the Young Archie competition

in 2013. It invites budding young artists between the ages of five and 18 to submit a portrait. *India* was on display until 10 January 2021. I congratulate James and wish him all the best in his creative endeavours at the National Institute of Dramatic Art.

JACK ALBANESE

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (19:51): Mackillop Catholic College, Warnervale, student Jack Albanese has ended his year 10 school year by setting a new national record with Powerlifting Australia—not only once but twice. Jack competed in the Powerlifting Australia 2020 Australian Schools Bench Press championships, breaking the record for the 69 kilograms and under division when he performed a successful lift of 97.5 kilograms. After earning himself a national title and gold medal, not even a month later Jack broke his own record by successfully lifting 100 kilograms for this weight division. The competition required the school to submit a video, which was performed in the school gym, certified by teacher Mr Hughes. Jack committed strongly to train and build strength, successfully broke his own record and achieved what he was aiming for. Congratulations to Jack for setting a new record and I wish him all the best on this amazing journey that he has created.

BINGARA FISH HATCHERY

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (19:52): I recognise the Bingara Fish Hatchery for contributing to freshwater fishing in the Gwydir and Horton river systems. Maintained and operated entirely by the Bingara Anglers Club, a volunteer group, the hatchery was constructed 40 years ago taking advantage of the change in river flow after the construction of Copeton Dam. The hatchery breeds Murray cod along with golden perch and silver perch and releases the fingerlings into the river systems, making the district an incredibly popular fishing destination for amateur fishing. I congratulate the Bingara Anglers Club, particularly president Stuart Lanagan, on the success of the hatchery and on the consequent contribution to the district's tourism and the enjoyment of the anglers' fishing experience. Well done to the club on recently securing a major grant for expansion of the facility.

CHARLESTOWN ELECTORATE SURF LIFE SAVING CLUBS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (19:53): I take this opportunity to pass on my thanks and appreciation to the surf lifesavers and volunteers who work so hard to keep us safe at the beach. They have been busy this summer, with shark sightings closing a number of beaches in the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie areas. With so many cloudy days, when the sun comes out the beaches have been absolutely packed. The Charlestown electorate is home to some of the most stunning beaches in the world, which attract locals and tourists alike. It is thanks to the surf lifesavers and the volunteers, like the wonderful crew at Redhead Surf Life Saving Club, that we can trust we will be safe at the beach. I remind everyone that while we are at the beach over the remainder of summer to remember to stay safe: Swim between the flags, follow the instructions of surf lifesavers and take the time to thank them for their important work. They spend hours developing the skills to save our lives and they deserve our thanks.

KAYE VINCENT

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (19:54): I take this opportunity to congratulate Ms Kaye Vincent on her decision to retire after 31 years of service to the Junee community as the owner of Country Meadows gift shop in Junee. Country Meadows has stocked an abundance of lovely giftware and flowers over its many years in business, providing a unique service to the Junee community. As Junee's only florist, I know firsthand the quality of Kaye's work and how passionate she is. My mother has been a florist for 40 years in the nearby town of Temora and I am a second-generation florist, and very proud thereof. In my time in business I spent a lot of time working alongside Kaye in a profession that is beautiful but nonetheless very, very hard work. Those people who work 20, 30 or 40 years in the profession should be well and truly congratulated. On that basis, I wish Kaye all the best in her retirement alongside Frank, and thank her for her service. I know that her accomplishments will be long remembered within the community.

CENTRAL COAST AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (19:55): Recently the Central Coast Council Australia Day award nominations were announced. I congratulate Wyong District Netball Association president Christine Miles who was nominated in the Volunteer of the Year category. I know Chris very well. In 2020 she went above and beyond, being recognised for her time and dedication to all teams and to the club overall. It was not an easy year, but Chris still continued to run the netball season under restrictions and health requirements due to COVID-19. I know how much she stressed about that, but the club did a fantastic job to deliver the 2020 season. Wyong netball was also nominated in the Community Spirit and Activity category. The club is the largest female sporting organisation in the old Wyong shire, with over 2,500 members. I wish Chris all the best for the new season and urge her not to stress too much. It will be okay because she is in charge.

CENTRAL COAST LEAGUES CLUB PARK

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:56): I am delighted to provide an update on the new regional play space at the Central Coast Leagues Club park located in Gosford. The construction of sandstone animal islands is well underway and is set to open to the public in the not too distant future. The sandstone islands have been carved from local quarries and created to reflect Bulgandry site carvings as an acknowledgement of Gosford's Indigenous history. In particular, I thank the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council, including our own amazing Gavi Duncan, for collaborating with the New South Wales Government to deliver this fantastic park to our community. The play space at the leagues club park also features Aboriginal art poles that light up at night, and an innovative pool and water play space for children, which, by linking to Brisbane Water, will fill and drain with the tide, creating the illusion of sea creatures swimming in from Brisbane Water. I look forward to opening this fantastic play space to our community, which, through collaboration with many local stakeholders, will showcase local Aboriginal culture and attract many visitors to our region.

INTERLINE BUS SERVICES

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (19:57): I acknowledge Interline Bus Services for its commitment to supporting the New South Wales Government's vision to transition the State's bus fleet to electric vehicles. Last Monday I was pleased to join the transport Minister and the member for Camden, Peter Sidgreaves, to announce that Interline has purchased 10 electric buses that will be rolled out gradually in 2021. While taking a short ride on the first bus to be rolled out it was amazing to see how much quieter these trips will be for commuters. They will also be less disruptive for residents living along popular bus routes. Interline does great work servicing the Region 2 bus network, which includes the suburbs of Lurnea, Prestons, Casula and Liverpool in the Holsworthy electorate. The rollout of 10 new electric vehicles this year is an example of its commitment to ensuring that our region has quality public transport options. I look forward to seeing the additional electric vehicles rolled out throughout the year, providing south-west Sydney commuters with quieter and cleaner journeys.

LALINE YOUNG

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (19:58): I recognise the 32 years that Laline Young has worked on the Moree bus service and her retirement in December last year, which ended a 17-year run on Foxes Lane. It is fitting that Laline was given a suitable celebration for her many years managing both children and difficult country roads. Not only did she ensure children's safety but she also became a steady and friendly influence for her passengers as they started their school days. Laline brought to her career a sense of wellbeing and security that many Northern Tablelands constituents enjoy within their communities. I congratulate Laline on an impressive 32-year career, starting with the Moree bus service and culminating with Reynolds & Fogarty Moree bus service. I also commend Laline for her high regard for the welfare of the bus companies and for the care that she always showed her passengers.

ST JOHN AMBULANCE SUTHERLAND COMBINED DIVISION

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (19:59): I acknowledge members of the St John Ambulance Sutherland Combined Division, whom I presented with a number of prestigious awards on 15 December 2020. Elizabeth Eckermann of Sutherland received the NSW Premier's Bushfire Emergency Citation and the Greg Biddle Award for her work as a first responder during the Glen Innes bushfires of December 2019. Elizabeth joined the Sutherland cadet division of St John Ambulance at age 11. Cultivating her passion to serve her community, she became a paramedic for the NSW Ambulance service and was formally recognised as a member of the Order of St John in 2011. Elizabeth has held numerous leadership roles during her career, from divisional ambulance officer to State assistant commissioner of operations.

I also had the honour of presenting Superintendent Eric Tam of Jannali with the epaulette for his role as officer in charge, which he has held since late 2019. With over 20 years of service as a volunteer for St John Ambulance, it is undoubted that Eric is an invaluable asset to our community. I thank all members of St John Ambulance Sutherland Combined Division for their service to our community and I acknowledge the distinguished achievements of Elizabeth and Eric.

KEITH HYDE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:00): I congratulate Keith Hyde of Cowra on his recent nomination for honorary lifetime membership with Landcare NSW. Mr Hyde was the inaugural managing director of the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation and a founding member of the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation. Mr Hyde has been recognised for the knowledge he has brought to Landcare NSW over the past seven years and for helping to strengthen the organisation for the future through his experience in natural resource management and rural policy. Mr Hyde is an active member of the Hovells Creek Landcare Group and

is clearly held in esteem amongst his Landcare NSW peers. I take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to Mr Hyde and his fellow Landcarers at Hovells Creek, as well as others in my electorate, including Mid Lachlan Landcare, Weddin Community Native Nursery, Young District Landcare, Harden-Murrumburrah Landcare Group, Narrandera Landcare Inc., Kangaroooby Catchment Landcare, Mirrool Creek Landcare, Grabine Foggs Crossing Landcare, Gundagai Bushcare Group and June Area Landcare Network.

GOSFORD MUSICAL SOCIETY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:01): I recently had the great pleasure of attending the Gosford Musical Society facilities at the Laycock Street Community Theatre. I was very pleased that the State Government was able to provide \$200,000 worth of funding to the Gosford Musical Society to upgrade its facilities. What has been delivered by the fantastic team from W Residential is truly breathtaking. There has been a total upgrade of the kitchen facilities, in addition to upgrading all the toilets to modern standards and ensuring that they are disability accessible. I congratulate the team at the Gosford Musical Society. It has been a very tough year for president Ros English and the volunteer performers because of COVID, but it also provided the opportunity for this fantastic and necessary upgrade to their facilities. I congratulate Adam Weinert and the team from W Residential, who have delivered a stunning upgrade for the Gosford Musical Society.

GWYDIR SHIRE COUNCIL

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (20:02): I recognise Gwydir Shire Council's determination to return the Warialda Honey Festival in 2021 after COVID-19 forced the cancellation of the 2020 event. Tradition is important in the Northern Tablelands and the honey festival is a welcome drawcard to the community after a busy summer, offering food, fun and entertainment. It has not always been easy though. In 2016 organisers were forced to relocate to the town hall after the planned grounds were inundated with water from flooding. In 2017 rain threatened the festival again and controversy arose when the festival moved from the CBD to the recreation ground. In the sad years of drought the festival offered a welcome distraction. Then relief came—rain—but so did COVID. The festival was cancelled again. Warialda derives its name from the local Indigenous language, meaning "place of wild honey", and, as the wild honey can still be found, so will the honey festival endure in its glory. I congratulate Gwydir Shire Council on ensuring that the Warialda Honey Festival will take place with responsible COVID-19 safety procedures. I commend Gwydir Shire Council's Courtney Loosemore for taking on organisation of the event.

Community Recognition Notices

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE POLITICAL COMMENTATOR MUNGO MACCALLUM

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I wish to pay tribute to one of our most brilliant journalists, a man who cared deeply about people and their right to a decent life, as evidenced in his writing. It is, of course, Mungo MacCallum, known simply as Mungo. He and Jenny engaged with the local community, the nation and the world from their Ocean Shores home. I thank Mungo's family for sharing so much of your husband and dad with us. The brilliant mind, the incisive intellect, the laser-like way he could cut through political humbug. The deep laughter that lit up his face. I mourn the absence of Mungo's column, a column I hoped I never featured in on the wrong side. The most poignant words I had said about me were in a video recording Mungo did for *The Byron Echo*. It still touches me to my core. I feel very privileged as Mungo judged politicians with brutal candour. At Twin Towns Services Club in Tweed Heads, Mungo asked me—the emcee—why the attendance of the national press for a backbencher lunch? The backbencher was Paul Keating, in between being Treasurer and Prime Minister.

JANET LUMSDEN

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—I acknowledge Janet Lumsden, an exceptional person from St Ives in my electorate of Davidson. Janet was recently awarded a Community Caring Award by the Rotary Club of Wahroonga, for her compassionate and empathetic support of multiple sclerosis sufferers. In the 1970s, Janet launched a fundraiser for the MS Society. Later, she went to a meeting in Lindfield to start a group for people with MS, the Ku-ring-gai Multiple Sclerosis Support Group. It continues to operate to this day. Over the years Janet has raised funds, cooked for the annual fundraising dinner, and continues to serve on the Committee of the local group. I congratulate and commend Janet on her commitment and decades of service to sufferers of multiple sclerosis.

GLOW GYM FITNESS GRAND OPENING

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I was delighted to attend the grand opening of Glow Gym in Bankstown on Wednesday 20 January, to meet the team and receive a tour of its fantastic new COVID-safe facility. Glow Gym is a fitness and wellness centre owned and operated by women, for women in the Bankstown

area. In addition to providing health and wellness services, it is intended to serve as a communal centre for women in Bankstown. It is very encouraging to see female entrepreneurship in South West Sydney, particularly during this difficult economic climate, and particularly in the health and wellness industry at a time when looking after your physical and mental wellbeing is more important than ever before. I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate Glow Gym co-founders Ms Selma Roumieh and Ms Rasha Arafa for their successful grand opening, and wish them all the success with this new and exciting venture.

COMMEMORATION OF DIPLOMATIC ASSASSINATIONS

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I recognise the Commemoration held on Thursday 17 December 2020 of the assassination in Sydney on 17 December 1980 of two Turkish Diplomats. They were Consul-General Sarik Ariyak and Attache Engin Sever. They were murdered by what was believed to be an Armenian terrorist organisation. Mr Sever was the first to be shot. The Consul-General died at the scene and Mr Sever at hospital. The killings occurred in front of the official residence of the Turkish Consul-General in Portland Street, Dover Heights. The 2020 event was also held in front of the Consul-General's residence and featured, among many other dignitaries, Ali Sevim, the current Consul-General of the Republic of Turkey. The killers have not been apprehended. In December 2019 it was announced that Strike Force Esslemont has been established to re-investigate the assassinations. This re-investigation is of very great interest to many people, especially those in the Turkish Community, who wish for a successful conclusion.

BRENNA HARDING

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—I rise today to congratulate one of the wonderful members of our Coogee community, Brenna Harding, on being awarded the Randwick City Council Australia Day Community Service Youth Award. Brenna has worked tirelessly for her local community since childhood, and began advocating for same-sex parented families after appearing in an episode of playschool. At just 12 years old, she spoke at the same-sex adoption enquiry right here, in NSW Parliament House. Throughout high school she was a core team member of youth-led anti-homophobia organisation Wear it Purple, for which she now sits on the board. In 2015, Brenna founded Moonlight Feminists, whose purpose was to empower young women to be change makers in their environments and provide peer support and solidarity to young women who had experienced sexual assault. Her recent contributions to the domestic and family violence sector include project managing a video series for the LGBTIQ Domestic and Family Violence interagency, and a suite of five primary prevention and early intervention projects on behalf of the Eastern Suburbs Domestic and Family Violence Network. I would like to again congratulate Brenna for receiving this award, and thank her for all of her work in our community.

ST SAVA COLLEGE

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields)—A child's education is very important to parents. Whether it's helping out with homework, spending time helping in the classroom or expressing words of encouragement, parents want help with their child's education. The parents from Serbian Orthodox St Sava College at Varroville took their commitment to education one step further. Volunteers from the school community also rolled up their sleeves. They raised money and volunteered their time to help build the school. I had the privilege of attending the recent official opening of St Sava College with my federal colleagues the Member for Macarthur, Dr Mike Freeland MP and Member for Werriwa, Anne Stanley MP. The opening was a wonderful example of faith, community and education coming together. Congratulations to our local Serbian community for all their fundraising efforts and tireless volunteering to build the school, which welcomes students of all faiths. I send my best wishes to the school's leadership team, staff and students as they embark on their educational journey at St Sava College.

ROY O'DONOVAN

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)—By his own account, Irishman Roy O'Donovan would generally only play two seasons of football in any one place before he wanted a new challenge. Five and a half years ago, Roy and his wife Ellen decided that they would try their luck in Australia. Their son, Alfie, was born about a year after arriving. The majority of their stay has been in Newcastle, with Roy becoming a superstar for the Newcastle Jets. On Australia Day, Roy and Ellen became Australian Citizens and celebrated with a typical Aussie backyard barbecue. In the game prior to him becoming a citizen, Roy scored his 50th goal. Despite scoring 50 goals, putting him in the top 10 goal scorers in the A-League, Ellen still made Roy mow the lawn. In the game after the ceremony, Aussie Aussie Aussie Roy Roy Roy scored a crucial goal against the Western Sydney Wanderers to give the Jets a 1-1 draw. With their young son, Alfie, starting kindergarten, let's hope that Roy and Ellen remain in Newcastle and that he continues his career with the Newcastle Jets. Congratulations to Roy, Ellen and Alfie on becoming fair dinkum Aussies.

ANDREW BREEDING

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Congratulations to Andrew Breeding for being awarded the 2020 NSW Corporate Volunteer of the Year Award for his work with Dress for Success. For over a decade, Andrew has helped countless women fulfil their dream of gaining employment. Since 1997, Dress for Success in Marrickville has helped disadvantaged women, trans and non-binary people improve their employability and self-confidence. For over 10 years, Andrew has applied his skills and expertise as a career management consultant to assist local women prepare for interviews, build resumes, and regain the confidence they need to re-enter the workforce. This Award recognises the critical role Andrew has played in the Career Support Program and the positive impact he has had for so many vulnerable women in our community. During the pandemic, Dress for Success reported that nearly two-thirds of clients were not receiving an income, making the work of volunteers like Andrew all the more important. We know just how critical employment is to a person's sense of dignity, independence and wellbeing and organisations like Dress for Success are essential to ensuring everyone in our community has access to meaningful work. Thank you Andrew for your years of supporting the inner west community.

MERRYLANDS AGED CARE CENTRE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—The dedicated staff at Ostia Health, Merrylands Aged Care Centre have done an amazing job- keeping residents safe and upbeat, with a 'can do' and positive attitude to all of their work. I recently had the pleasure of visiting the staff and residents at Ostia Health Merrylands Aged Care Centre. It has been a difficult year for residents of Aged Care centres, who have lived under strict COVID-19 protocols to protect our elderly from the virus. The mental health of our elderly residents has been vitally important, as the community managed these challenges created by our COVID-19 protocols. I would like to thank all of the staff for their service to the community over the last year. Without the dedication and care shown by the nurses, doctors, cleaners and staff, the residents at our aged care facilities would not have been able to continue living fulfilling lives. I would like to especially thank the facilities manager, Jenny Mock, for welcoming me for a COVID safe visit, and allowing me to meet some of the amazing team at Ostia Health, Merrylands. Jenny leads a great team and I applaud your efforts.

LONG POINT VINEYARD – RFS LAKE CATHIE FUNDRAISER

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I rise to recognise the highly anticipated RFS fundraiser in my electorate for the Lake Cathie Rural Fire Brigade which is to be held on the 13 March 2021. Hosted by Long Point Vineyard, off Houston Mitchell Drive, the charity evening will feature a live concert by renowned singer/song writer Ben Lee, with music lovers already snapping up 150 tickets to attend the event. Marketing and events manager for Long Point Vineyard, Mel Leitch was delighted that the community were keen to support this tremendous cause, with \$5 from each ticket sold going to the Lake Cathie Rural Fire Brigade. Mel acknowledges the integral support provided by the Lake Cathie RFS when protecting their vineyards and infrastructure in October 2019 from the devastating bushfires that ravaged parts of Lake Innes Nature Reserve and threatened homes and property. The valiant efforts of our hardworking RFS volunteers saved the Long Point Vineyard from what could have been catastrophic for the owners and locals who cherish the chance to relax and enjoy a beverage at their favourite winery. I applaud Long Point Vineyard for raising valuable funds to support our local RFS in Lake Cathie.

ANNIKA TOOHEY

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today, I acknowledge a former Port Macquarie local Annika Toohey for being selected to play in the New South Wales Under-21 women's hockey squad. Annika was previously a member of Tacking Point Thunder Hockey Club and was known for her skills and talents on the field and an instrumental player in a number of games leading her team to victory. Now 19 years of age, Annika is well on her way in achieving her sporting goals in hockey, having been named recently in the Under-21 women's side for NSW. It is no doubt that selectors for the Hockeyroos will be observing the team's performance and although admittedly the competition will be fierce, Annika hopes that she will rise to the occasion and impress the officials so that one day she will be able to represent Australia. Moving to Sydney has opened a broad range of opportunities for Annika as she now is able to train with higher level players who have represented at State titles. However, she has never forgotten her grassroots at the Tacking Point Thunder and the local Port Macquarie-Hastings Association who has moulded her early development into the hockey star she is today. Congratulations Annika.

UNCLE IVAN WELLINGTON

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—Campbelltown has had many great advocates for our community over the years. My great mate, Uncle Ivan Wellington, certainly belongs in that category. Uncle Ivan is a regular at openings, award ceremonies and celebrations throughout the community. In fact, he has been for

many, many years. Not only he is a great advocate for the Campbelltown community, he is also an incredibly passionate advocate of the local Indigenous community. I was so pleased to see that Uncle Ivan was named Campbelltown's Citizen of the Year in 2021. It's one of many in a long line of much deserved accolades that he has received over the years. In 2013, Campbelltown Hospital unveiled the Uncle Ivan Wellington Lounge—a room that acts as a safe space for Indigenous patients and their families. I also presented Uncle Ivan with a Community Service Award in 2019. There is no doubt about the enormous contribution Uncle Ivan has made to the Campbelltown community and it is so pleasing to him recognised with this latest accolade. Well done mate. Congratulations and thank you again from me and the entire community of Campbelltown.

PROFESSOR THOMAS MASCHMEYER

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—Professor Thomas Maschmeyer, a catalytic chemist and constituent of Davidson, recently received the 2020 Prime Minister's Prize for Innovation. Professor Maschmeyer is a Professor of Chemistry at The University of Sydney and is the founding Director of the Australian Institute for Nanoscale Science and Technology, the Laboratory of Advanced Catalysis for Sustainability and the University of Sydney Energy Storage Research Network. Professor Maschmeyer invented a new and efficient way to convert renewable and plastic-waste into its constituent chemical materials for reuse, potentially addressing the need for more efficient commercial waste recycling. He also reimagined zinc-bromide chemistry to develop a completely new solar-energy battery technology, which could potentially improve the performance of renewable energy storage. These innovative inventions should help build jobs in the renewables and manufacturing sectors, helping to develop Australia's economy. I congratulate Professor Maschmeyer on his achievements.

GREAT LAKES PRO SURFER ROSS CADDEN

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—Mr Speaker, I rise to congratulate Forster Surfer Ross Cadden who has secured a wild card to compete at the Great Lakes Pro at Boomerang Beach this month. The eighteen year old was awarded the wild card after taking out the Boomerang Beach Boardriders open men's championship in 2020. The Great Lakes Pro will be Ross's first professional contest but the Forster local is going into the competition with confidence, aiming to take out the top prize. I again congratulate Ross on his maiden debut and wish him and fellow local competitors Shane Cadden and Charlize Everitt luck as they contest the Great Lakes Pro.

LOWER NORTH COAST JUNIOR SURF LIFESAVER OF THE YEAR

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—Mr Speaker, I rise to recognise Hannah Carmichael and James Williams who were recently named Junior Life Savers of the year for Surf Lifesaving NSW's Lower North Coast branch. Hannah and James have both displayed great dedication to the Forster community through their Surf Life Saving Club. The pair have also been great competitors at the SLS NSW Country Championships and State titles. I would also like to recognise nominees Luke McNeil, Sophia Blomgren and Phoenix Austin. All the award nominees have demonstrated great leadership and initiative in club and community activities. Hannah and James will now be invited to Surf Lifesaving NSW's Junior Lifesaver of the year development camp to allow them to further develop their skills and open up new surf lifesaving opportunities. I wish both the winners and nominees luck in their future Surf Life Saving endeavours.

PETER JIRGENS

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)—As part of this year's Australia Day celebrations, I was delighted to see Shoalhaven local Peter Jirgens awarded Citizen of the Year at our local council awards, recognising his tremendous volunteering contribution for over twenty-five years. This includes his involvement with the Cambewarra Ratepayers Association, Tapitalee Creek Landcare, Shoalhaven Riverwatch and the Shoalhaven Landcare Fox Control Program. As a life-long resident in the region and founder of Jirgens Civil, a local civil engineering, environmental and earth moving company, Peter has lent his expertise on a number of projects across our community helping with the construction of walking tracks, bridges and playground equipment. Thank you Peter for your ongoing support and leadership in our community. I wish you all the best for your future endeavours.

SAM POOLMAN – NEWCASTLE YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—As the Young Citizen of the Year, you must significantly contribute to the community, be an inspirational role model for the Australian community and have your contribution positively impact your local government area. Sam Poolman has ticked all these boxes and more. Sam was named Newcastle Young Citizen of the Year for 2021 for her contributions to women and girls in sport. She represents Newcastle in the Giants Netball team, is an ambassador for the Confident Girls Foundation which works to inspire and empower young netballers, founder of ASPIRE netball, led a fundraiser in 2020 that raised \$12,000 for Netball Bushfire Relief to assist bushfire affected communities, and is a much loved role model. Sam

is a proud Novocastrian, and has always been passionate about giving back to her community, the community that she believes has given so much to her. In 2019 Sam was named Wallsend Woman of the Year. I am pleased that Sam continues seeking out opportunities to improve her local community and encourage the next generation of athletes. Thank you Sam, for all of your efforts, and congratulations.

ABSEC CHRISTMAS DRIVE

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Thank you to everyone who generously gave toys for my Summer Hill Christmas Drive in December and made Christmas a little brighter for kids in need. 2020 tested us all, but our community yet again looked out for one another and showed such incredible generosity of spirit. Bill Pritchard, Acting Executive Leader at AbSec wrote to me and to all those who contributed. He said:

The generosity of everyone in the Summer Hill electorate is especially heart-warming after such a difficult year for many, we looking forward to working together again to improve the lives of Aboriginal children.

Due to the sheer number of toys and books donated, Absec staff were not only able to light up the lives of inner west kids, but got extra presents out to kids living out in Dubbo. Of course, the pressures AbSec and indigenous families face are year round, and I encourage everyone to jump online or call AbSec to make a donation today. Thank you again to all those who donated toys and to the incredible staff at AbSec for all the work they do to improve the lives of indigenous kids across NSW.

AUSTRALIA DAY COMMUNITY AWARDS AND CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—The annual Fairfield City Australia Day celebrations were held at the Prairiewood Leisure Centre with members of the local community and special guests. It was wonderful to be in the presence of Australia Day Ambassador Ms Maria Venuti OAM an iconic Australian entertainer, as well as Uncle Tony who gave the traditional Acknowledgement of Country welcome. I would like to congratulate all award nominees for their work and advocacy across many areas of everyday life. Their work makes the lives of so many much better due to their unwavering commitment. Our community is blessed to have many champions that go above and beyond serving others. The 2021 Australia Day Awards winners are:

Mr Aleks Duricic for Sports Achiever of the Year

The Horsley Park Rural Fire Brigade for Volunteer of the Year

Ms Emily Khoshaba for Young Citizen of the Year

Mr Tom Murphy for Citizen of the Year.

I offer my congratulations and many thanks to all the winners for their service to our community.

ZEN TEA LOUNGE FOUNDATION

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—Recently I visited the Zen Tea Lounge Foundation headquarters in Smithfield along with the Member for Bankstown Ms Tania Mihailuk MP. This organisation provides a safe space for the women in our community who have been affected by domestic violence, abuse and isolation. The founder of the Zen Tea Lounge Foundation is Ms Amy Nguyen. During our visit Amy and Zen Tea Café volunteer Steven gave us an insight into what the foundation does for affected women in our area. The Foundation and auxiliary catering restaurant offer women who have been affected by domestic violence support, training and the necessary skills to rebuild their lives with financial as well as emotional freedom. Funds for the running of the organisation are obtained via tea and meals sales sold in the tea lounge, which acts as an employment and training facility for women who need assistance. Women who train here can continue to work at the organisation or they can build the necessary skills to branch out on their own. The Foundation provides much-needed support in our community and I want to take this opportunity to thank Amy, Steve and their team of assistants and volunteers for this wonderful service.

ST GEORGE/SUTHERLAND SUPPORT GROUP OF PARKINSON'S NSW LTD

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the compassionate work of the volunteer-run St George/Sutherland Support Group of Parkinson's NSW, whose monthly support meetings help community members who have been touched by Parkinson's disease. The support group meets on the 4th Wednesday of every month from 10am at the Sylvania Community Hall, and provide monthly updates of their initiatives and news in the Chit Chat newsletter written by group members themselves. Local constituent and President of the executive committee Janece Pulbrook leads the hardworking Support Group team including; Secretary Christina Farrugia, Treasurer Keith Chapman, Welfare Officer Valda Johnson, Chit Chat Editor Ian Chalmers and Committee members Nan Godwin, Trish Stanley, Jaqueline Parker, Ron Simpson, Wendy Ross and Connie Harrison. Part of more than 70 Parkinson's Support Groups throughout NSW, the team of volunteers meet together to share resources, practical aid and experiences to better encourage and support each other. The Support group meetings

range from group discussions, to educational sessions by guest speakers, social outings or "just sharing a cuppa." I commend the members of the St George/Sutherland Support Group for the positive impact they make in our local community.

HSC FIRST IN COURSE

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate the bright minds of our community, Oliver Crowther-Miller of Menai High School and Renata Konya of Sylvania High School, for achieving first in their course in the HSC. Oliver ranked first in Information and Digital Technology and Renata Konya ranked first in Hungarian Continuers, demonstrating their passion for learning and intellectual perseverance. Students who achieve first in their course have exhibited outstanding academic brilliance by ranking first against their 66,000 peers in the NSW cohort. Completing the HSC in a normal year is an achievement in itself, so to do so during a year like 2020 whilst achieving exceptional marks is a credit to Oliver and Renata. I thank the experienced and dedicated teachers of our community, alongside the supportive family and friends who have encouraged these students through their HSC year and played an important role in their achievements. I commend Oliver and Renata on their outstanding academic accomplishments and wish them well in their future endeavours.

LORETTA COSGROVE

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I am delighted to acknowledge Loretta Cosgrove. I have been advised by the Irish Consul-General in Sydney, Owen Feeney, that Ms Cosgrove has very recently been awarded Ireland's Presidential Distinguished Service Award. Ms Cosgrove is the first female recipient of the award in Australia and only the fourth overall from this country. I'm advised she has received this award for her services to the Irish community in Sydney. This in particular relates to her leadership and championing of diversity within the community. She established and for a decade led the Sydney Queer Irish (known as SQI). Additionally she has contributed to many other Irish community and cultural celebrations. With Loretta's leadership, SQI has participated in Mardi Gras and celebrated and shared Irish values of equality and inclusion. The awards were established in 2012 following the 2011 Global Irish Economic Forum. They recognise the contribution of members of the Irish Diaspora.

EMILY KHOCHABA

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—I'd like to acknowledge Emily Khochaba and thank her for her ongoing efforts to improve our community. Emily was awarded the Fairfield Young Citizen of the Year Award on Australia Day. Emily has been a school representative since she was in year eight and has been an incredibly active member of our community. Emily has given of her time and resources to helping the Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal, Fairfield Relay for Life, the Christmas Trolley Drive and multiple other fundraisers. These charities are vitally important to improving people's lives within our community and Emily's contribution has had a direct impact to people. She is a strong advocate for youth mental health in her school and in our community. We know after the challenges of the pandemic and lockdown, what a difficult year it has been for our students. Those who stand up for mental health deserve our respect. Emily's been an inspiration for young people and puts other people first. Her continued efforts to assist all members of our community is a fantastic example of community mindedness. Thank you Emily for everything you do for the local community and congratulations.

MOUNT COLAH FOOTBALL CLUB OVER-35A SIDE

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)—I would like to congratulate Mount Colah Football Club women's over-35A side for their fantastic 2020 season. The side is extremely popular with the club able to field teams in divisions 1, 2 and 3. With the Division 1 and the Division 3 teams both taking out the premierships. With their fourth premiership in 5 years the Division 1, 35As had an average of 4 goals per game and a winning streak of 7 in a row making it a spectacular season. They were also the first Mount Colah Football team to qualify for the NSFA and MWFA Champions Cup. Congratulations to all the players in the Over 35s squad and coach Vin Turner on an amazing season. We are seeing more and more girls wanting to play football, like the 35As, and as a result the Berowra and Mount Colah Football teams have formed a partnership. The new girls teams will be called the Northern Galaxy and will focus on pathways for girls playing football. Thank you Mt Colah President Paul Ferry and Berowra President Brad Rayner on this wonderful partnership, ensuring girls have somewhere to play soccer in our local area.

PAMELA PRICE

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Speaker, today I congratulate Pamela Price on being a Joint Winner of the Volunteer of the Year category of the Central Coast Australia Day Awards. Pam is the founding member of the Doyalson Squadron of the NSW Australian Air League. The purpose of the Doyalson Squadron was to establish a female group on the Central Coast and provide equal opportunities and experiences for females through the Australian Air League. Pam worked tirelessly in her role; organising camps, excursions, flying experiences

and educational activities, which have all been extremely valuable to cadets. Pam ensured the squadron's work continued despite COVID-19 restrictions, last year organising meetings and sessions to be held over Zoom. I congratulate Pam, as well as the other eight winners and three highly commended recipients for being recognised in this year's Central Coast Australia Day Awards. I thank them all for their generous and invaluable contributions.

HUNTER HOMELESS CONNECT

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—I would like to acknowledge the extraordinary people at Hunter Homeless Connect, who have put together the My Community Directory with the goal of allowing social support services across the Hunter to connect with one another and provide support to people most in need. The last twelve months has seen an increase in the number of people needing and seeking out support to deal with traumatic life events, with the double hammer blows of COVID-19 and the recession putting many at risk of experiencing homelessness. The My Community Directory's purpose is to provide users with an easy way to find information on specialist homelessness and related community support services in the region. There is a printed directory, and an online version which is updated continually. My thanks to Nissa Phillips, HCC's Connecting the Hunter Program Coordinator, Michelle Faithfull who is the Community Directory Coordinator, and of course to the Management Committee: chair Jenn O'Sullivan, secretary Marg McKay, treasurer Nikki Ashworth and members Peta Winney-Baartz, Alyson Segrott, Danielle Simmonette, Rowan Bilkey and David Couri. HCC's work is important and inspiring, and I know they will keep it up into 2021.

KINDNESS CUPBOARD

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—After ten years in operation, The Place, Charlestown's Community Centre, has been working non-stop to help support and improve our local community. Now, they have teamed up with ProjectKindness to launch the Kindness Cupboard. The Kindness Cupboard is filled with non-perishable foods and hygiene items available for anyone in the community that finds themselves in need. It provides a helping hand to those who need it, along with the opportunity for people to give back and support others on the premise of "take what you need and leave what you can." ProjectKindness is an organisation that works to help people be kind to one another by connecting people with in need with donated goods and services that can help change their lives for the better. With so many people doing it tough in the Charlestown Electorate and around New South Wales, it is really heartening to see that The Place had the forethought to set up a Kindness Cupboard. This is yet another fantastic initiative on the part of The Place and ProjectKindness and another example of how the Charlestown Electorate comes together to support those facing tough times. There can never be too much kindness.

ETHAN MITCHELL AWARDED BERT EVANS SCHOLARSHIP 2020

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—A Bert Evans scholarship is a tremendous honour. I wish to congratulate a constituent Ethan Mitchell who was awarded a Bert Evans Scholarship for 2020. Ethan is employed at Established Plumbing Services and I commend him on his determination to develop his skills in vocational education and training. In total there were 95 Bert Evans Apprentice Scholarships awarded. I am pleased my government continues to support apprentices through this fantastic scholarship program. The Bert Evans Scholarship program was launched in 2014 to support apprentices facing significant hardships in completing their qualification. It was named in honour of the late Bert Evans AO who was a fierce advocate for vocational education for more than 30 years. Once again, congratulations to Ethan and the other 94 scholarship winners. I take this opportunity to wish them all the very best as they kick start their career and trust they will have a very bright future.

GLOUCESTER AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS 2021

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter)—I would like to congratulate the following winners of the Gloucester Australia Day Awards 2021.

Diann Relf - Local Citizen of the Year

Charles Tonks – Local Young Citizen of the Year

Local Project of the Year – Gloucester Charities

Local Community Business of the Year – Gloucester Community Op-Shop.

The recipients are to be commended for their community work within the Gloucester region and I thank them for their contribution to the Upper Hunter electorate.

PROFESSOR RONALD IAN BARTSCH, AM

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer)—I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Professor Ronald Ian Bartsch AM, an Epping constituent and Cheltenham local for being made a Member of the Order of Australia in the 2021 Australia Day honours list for significant service to aviation law, and to safety and compliance. Ron is a world-leading expert in aviation law and safety. He was admitted to legal practice in 1993 and has been a lecturer in aviation law for over 25 years. He is currently a casual lecturer at the University of NSW. In addition, Ron has many years of industry experience and is currently Director of Regional Express Airlines (Rex Airlines), Managing Director of AvLaw, an aviation consulting company Director of Aviation Aerospace Australia. Ron has logged over 7,000 flying hours and has been the principal author or co-author of several publications relating to aviation and aviation law, and most recently authored *The Corona Dilemma: 20-20 Thinking for the Next Normal*. Thank you, Ron, for your contribution to this important field and congratulations on your well-deserved award.

VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I would like to recognise the Vietnamese Community in Australia (VCA) – NSW Chapter, which hosted its Medical Forum End of Year Dinner on Saturday 28 November. The VCA's Medical Forum program organises quarterly information sessions and free medical advice for the local Vietnamese community in their native language, conducted by registered medical practitioners and specialists across a wide range of areas. The Medical Forum program is a highly valuable initiative to provide medical advice while overcoming the language barrier some members of the community may face in the medical system. I acknowledge VCA NSW Chapter President, Mr Paul Huy Nguyen, Vice-President Ms Kate Hoang, and Medical Adviser Dr Brian Cung, and thank them for their continued support and advocacy on behalf of the Vietnamese-Australian community. I would also like to thank the medical practitioners who volunteer their time and resources to the Medical Forum program, for protecting and improving the health and wellbeing of the local Vietnamese community.

MAJA MAZIUK

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)—Today I would like to acknowledge a rising star, Squash sensation Maja Maziuk. This is not the first time I have spoken in Parliament about this superstar, and I am sure it will not be the last. Late last year the Berowra Heights teenager was crowned the Under 15s National Champion at the Australian Junior Championships on the Gold Coast. Maja was up against Isla Harris from Western Australia in the final. It was tight but she took the game 9-11, 11-9, 11-7, 11-6. At just 13 years old Maja is already taking the Squash world by storm. She has taken out the National U11 and U13s title, not once but twice. I myself have played Maja at Thornleigh and she is an exceptional player. Congratulations Maja, it is a phenomenal achievement to take out the National title again and I wish you all the best and have no doubt your star will continue to rise in 2021.

TRISH BENNELL AWARDED LOCAL SERVICE AWARD

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge an incredible Mosman local, Trish Bennell. I nominated Trish for a Community Service Award in recognition of her outstanding community volunteering efforts in my electorate. The NSW Community Service Award recognises individuals in NSW who have substantially helped to improve the life of members of their community, and through her volunteering work, Trish has certainly done that. Trish has been volunteering for more than twenty years, firstly with the Mosman Meals on Wheels, and for the last six years with the Cerebral Palsy Alliance. Trish, who is 76, was also presented with the 2020 Senior Volunteer of the Year Award for the Sydney North Shore Region, and was a finalist for the 2020 NSW Volunteer of the Year Award. Trish has been described by other volunteers as having impeccable organisational skills and an efficient and elegant manner in her work. Congratulations to Trish on receiving this award in recognition of her work in our local community.

LOCAL SERVICE AWARDED TO DENISE WARD

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker, Today I rise to acknowledge the extraordinary service of Denise Ward who this month marks 10 years as Executive Officer at the Crows Nest Centre. Denise's job at the centre is to lead. Among her many tasks, she identifies community needs, plans new services, manages staff and volunteers, and creates an attractive working environment. Overseeing 17 employed staff and over 200 volunteers, Denise and the Crows Nest Centre serve the needs of older residents in the local area with meal delivery, assisted shopping, clean linen services, social outings, in-centre communal games, entertainment, and much more. Denise also oversees an employment support program assisting skilled migrants to find work successfully, and to meet Australian workplace expectations. The Crows Nest Centre provides a range of programs and services to a diverse range of community groups including culturally specific activities for Japanese mothers,

Chinese seniors, Persian and Spanish speaking women. I also hosted a Seniors Forum at the centre, and again it was thanks to Denise and her team that it was such a success. Congratulations to Denise on receiving this much deserved award.

HORACE "TAFFY" DAVIES

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I'd like to acknowledge the passing of Horace 'Taffy' Davies from Bonnells Bay who was just months away from his 100th birthday. Taffy was a truly wonderful man who had a fascinating life. Taffy was a spirited character who was born in Wales in 1921, served with the British Navy in WWII and migrated to Australia in 1959. He was one of 10 children. At the age of 80, he wrote his life story into a book called *My Journey Through Life*, and I still have a copy on my bookshelf. The autobiography took him 10 years to finish, with Taffy typing it out one finger at a time. In later years, Taffy engaged in social media and regularly used his smartphone and iPad which he received for his 90th birthday. Taffy was also gifted at cross-stitching, a hobby he enjoyed for more than 30 years. He was even named the supreme champion in the cross-stitching competition at Morisset Show one year, with a work that took him two years to complete. He was a wonderful man, now sorely missed by his family and the local community.

BEVERLY COWDROY

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I'm honoured to acknowledge the efforts of a wonderful woman from Kilaben Bay who has devoted more than 45 years of her life to volunteering in the community, while at the same time raising three children and caring for chronically ill older family members. Beverly Cowdroy's selfless commitment to the wider Toronto community is truly remarkable. She has volunteered across multiple organisations, groups and institutions. Drawing on her experience as an occupational therapist, she helped to establish the Volunteer Training Centre in Hamilton for the Department of Health, and then concurrently as a volunteer lead the transformation of Toronto Day Centre into the Toronto Activity Centre, which enabled participants suffering stroke or age-related illness to meet for activities to improve their mobility and quality of life. Beverly also participated in Toronto Uniting Church's Pastoral Care activity, initiating its reorganisation to satisfy government accreditation and OHS requirements. Beverly took on the position as Secretary of Toronto High School P&C, continuing in that role for 8 years, and has been instrumental in the expansion and growth of Toronto U3A. I congratulate Beverly on her wonderful and selfless contribution to the wider Toronto community.

GEOFFREY JOCHELSON

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron)—I congratulate Mr Geoffrey Jochelson of Kensington on his receipt of a Medal of the Order of Australia in the 2021 Australia Day Honours List for services to the construction industry, particularly security of payment. Geoffrey's tireless advocacy for the rights of sub-contractors to receive prompt payment for their work led to the introduction in this place of the Building and Construction Industry Security of Payment Act 1999. The Act replaced the lengthy and costly process of litigation with a statutory compulsory adjudication scheme that can see a claim for payment, which might take years and incur enormous legal fees, resolved in just a matter of weeks. The NSW scheme was so successful that over the following decade it was adopted by every State and Territory in Australia, and the model has now been adopted by New Zealand, Singapore, and Thailand. His initiative has improved the lives of hundreds of thousands of sub-contractors here and around the world by ensuring millions of dollars every year are paid to the small businesses and tradespeople that make our economy tick. Congratulations Geoffrey on this immense honour.

BILLY KENNEDY, OAM

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron)—I congratulate Mascot Juniors rugby league legend William "Billy" Kennedy on being awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in the 2021 Australia Day Honours List. Bill has been a fixture of Mascot Jets, the South Sydney Rabbitohs, and South Sydney District Junior Leagues for nearly 60 years. He's been a Life Member of the Jets and the Juniors for 60 years – most of his life, which is no small achievement. He's given his whole life volunteering for the Club in a range of different positions, whether it be as an administrator, a player, a coach, or an elected official. His most important work, however, was as Grounds Manager for Mascot Oval, where he set up and packed down the playing field every weekend for nearly 30 years. He has sacrificed countless hours of his time to give kids in the Botany Bay community a chance at following their dreams and playing rugby league. These are just a few of the reasons why the grandstand at Mascot Oval was named in honour the Kennedy family, and why his admission to the Order of Australia honour is so well deserved. Congratulations Bill.

ANN-MARIE HAY

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Speaker, today I would like to recognise and congratulate Ann-Marie Hay of Deniliquin. Mrs Hay has made the decision to retire from teaching after 40 years in education, leaving her role as indigenous learning support teach at Deniliquin High School at the end of the school year.

Mrs Hay has had a wonderful career in teaching, educating a large number of students in the Deniliquin region. Leaving school in 1976, Mrs Hay worked alongside the indigenous community at St Therese's Mission school in Wilcannia. After obtaining her teaching degree in Canberra, Mrs Hay returned home to Forbes where she taught at St Laurence's for three years before being appointed as principal in Barham for a further four years. Mrs Hay has also held the position of deputy principal and then principal at St Michael's Primary School in Deniliquin for a number of years. Mrs Hay has finished her expansive teaching career after a decade at Deniliquin High School. Congratulations Ann-Marie on your many years of service.

ANNE HAY TRIBUTE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—It is an honour to rise and pay tribute to Anne Hay. Anne left this world peacefully on 17 January 2021, surrounded by family and close friends at St Joseph's Nursing home in Lismore. She was 77. Anne was a mother, grandmother, educator, dog lover, disability advocate and a great intellectual. Anne was known and loved by many for her compassion, wit and kindness. Education, words and books were a lifelong passion of Anne's. She graduated from Sydney University with a Bachelor of Arts in pure Mathematics, English, Philosophy and Government in 1962 and completed a Diploma of Education in 1963. Anne worked for TAFE in Lismore from the 1980s until her retirement. She was a strong advocate for students with disabilities, especially for those with hearing impairments. This advocacy earned her a NSW Premiers award in 1998. Anne raised six children in Lismore, Liz, Emma, James, Patrick, Daniel and Sally with her husband Frank who maintained a strong friendship throughout Anne's life. She also mothered many dogs, which was a passion of her life and gave her much joy. Vale Anne, I hope you are having a nice cup of tea and dancing to The Seekers.

DISTRICT COUNSELLOR DONNA BOUGHTON

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise Mental Health Counsellor Donna Boughton of Moree for her dedication to holistic wellbeing and her commitment to the people of the Northern Tablelands. Donna has studied continuously since her introduction to psychology some fifteen years ago, believing that there is no end point in self-development. Her knowledge in matters of mental health and the variety of ways she can work effectively with individuals has proved invaluable. Therefore Donna's clients span issues relating to addiction, self-harm, parenting, relationships, personal development, anxiety and the list goes on. I congratulate Donna Boughton on the proven success that has come from her commitment to her clients' well-being. I commend Donna for her genuine interest in the wellbeing of her clients and for her desire that all people should know the peace that comes with mental health.

WYNDHAM COLLEGE EARLY WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY ENTRANTS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—Well done to the thirteen pupils of Wyndham College for earning early entry spots at Western Sydney University for 2022. Students from the College were selected to study a university course each, alongside their Year 11 studies. These courses included tertiary content across chemistry, communication, criminal justice, critical studies of society, health, psychology, and statistics. I want to recognise: Annalise Ahmad; Joshua Andrijich; Olivia Campos; Kyle Cavanagh; Lauren Commins; Rylea Conlon; Ellie Hindmarch; Tara Hughes; Iluka Jelley; Rachel Lee; Haille Parton; Hayley Rochester; and Brianna Seaman.

Congratulations to the students who have also received funds from the University for their future WSU education. Wyndham College is a great educational facility for seniors across Western Sydney and hosts many vocational education and training courses which are highly desired by local students. The College is part of the Nirimba Education Precinct which has TAFE and WSU facilities. I acknowledge the Seven Hills Electorate students from Lalor Park, Kings Langley and Seven Hills who attend Wyndham College.

SUE WALKER OF BLACKTOWN HOSPITAL

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—I seek to acknowledge Sue Walker, and her service to the Seven Hills Electorate as a nurse educator at Blacktown Hospital. After a long and successful career spanning nearly 50 years as a registered nurse, Sue has recently decided to retire. Her career began in 1972 at Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children and she has worked tirelessly since then. For the last 25 years of her career, Sue worked in the Intensive Care Unit, training the next generation of nurses. Sue is a strong advocate for practical education and through her job she was given the opportunity to equip nurses from a range of backgrounds with specialist nursing training. Even in retirement, Sue plans to spend time volunteering for local community organisations and causes close to her heart. She recently told The Pulse "I can't stop and do nothing. I want to keep doing things for other people". I wish Sue the best of luck in this next chapter of her life. The Seven Hills Electorate community is forever grateful for her commitment to the health of Western Sydney residents.

INVASION DAY

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today, on the first day of NSW Parliament for 2021, I would like to acknowledge local residents who rallied on Invasion Day to protest the ongoing injustices against the First Nations peoples of this country. I was humbled to join thousands of people marching in solidarity with First Nations leaders to recognise January 26th as a national day of mourning. The growing support in our community to reject racism is a heartening sign that change is coming. The Balmain Electorate is on the lands of the Gadigal and Wangal people of the Eora Nation. I acknowledge their traditional ownership of this land and pay my respects to past, present and emerging elders. Sovereignty was never ceded. I know I speak on behalf of everyone in our community when I say thank you to the powerful and tireless efforts of First Nations peoples in the Balmain Electorate and beyond because this land always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

JEN MEAD – BINGARA VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise the success that Tourist Officer Jen Mead has brought to the Bingara Visitor Information Centre during the almost two decades that she has been on the job. For many years Bingara was a hidden treasure along the banks of the Gwydir River offering areas to fossick, camp, or horse ride. But with the first motorhome rally in 2008 and the influx of travel enthusiasts, Bingara's visitors increased with the hospitable greetings and direction to activities that Jen and her army of volunteers could offer. The Bingara Visitor Information Centre has been developed into a point of interest in itself at its CBD central location offering an array of merchandise, local and travel information, tours of the Roxy Theatre and popular Greek Museum, and bookings for events. I congratulate Tourist Officer Jen Mead and volunteers Faye MacCartney, Lee Loudon, Brian and Susanne Hughes, Jan & Tony Miller, Mandy Loudon, Jennifer Brown and Ross and Jos Cooper. I commend Jen and her workers at the Bingara Visitor Information Centre for their contribution to the community by promoting Bingara and the District as a great place to visit.

BYRON SHIRE AUSTRALIA DAY CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNERS

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I congratulate the Byron Shire Council's Australia Day Citizen of the Year Award winners for 2021, recognising their achievements and valuable contribution to their community. Citizen of the Year, Zenith Virago, is the founder of the Natural Death Care Centre and V-Day event organiser. Zenith has conducted numerous weddings and funerals, supporting people to navigate life's end whilst removing much fear and uncertainty from the process. Volunteer of the Year Peter Mair's contribution has been exemplary, as a 49-year member of the Tweed-Byron State Emergency Service, where he is currently commander. The Shire's 2021 Ambassador is Brad Farmer, founder of the Surftrider Foundation in Australia. Nickolla Clarke, whose artwork illuminates Byron's Railway Park and Mullumbimby Gateway, is Creative Artist of the Year. Young Citizen of the Year Mia Thom has been a leader on human rights issues and climate change. Pamela Wark, a dedicated and inspirational educator, was recognised for her 45 years of service with the Senior Citizen award. I extend my thanks and respect to them for their selfless service.

TRIBUTE TO GLENN WHEELER, OAM

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—I was thrilled to see Glenn Wheeler being awarded a Medal in the General Division of the Order of Australia in the Australia Day 2021 Honours list. The Award is well-deserved public recognition of Glenn's service to broadcast media and commitment to charities such as Variety, the Cerebral Palsy Alliance and Parkinson's NSW. He has also been a supporter of Rotary, Lions and the Starlight Children's Foundation. Mr Wheeler's enormous heart, courage and remarkable generosity in the face of severe personal adversity have earned him enormous admiration throughout the Shire. I thank and congratulate Glenn on his fine achievements.

BLAND SHIRE OPEN GALLERY

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Mr Speaker, Bland Shire Council are seeking expressions of interest from local and regional artists to display their works in a newly transformed space within Bland Shire Council chambers, on the mezzanine level. The Bland Shire Open Gallery will be open to the public seven days a week. The Open Gallery will be the perfect opportunity for artists to showcase their talents and importantly, it will be a new drawcard for the Bland Shire to attract tourism. The Gallery will host different exhibitions throughout the year and there will be an opportunity for artists to sell their pieces to members of the public. I encourage artists of all genres to get involved in showcasing their work at Bland Shire Council and once the Bland Shire Open Gallery opens, I look forward to seeing the exhibition myself.

102ND BIRTHDAY EMMA PATTEN

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—On the 28th January, Emma Patten celebrated her 102nd birthday. This is an incredible achievement and one worth acknowledging. Mrs Patten and her husband moved to Australia from England in 1991 and celebrated the special occasion with her family and friends. Emma's secret to a long and happy life is to "live moderately and pray often. Be happy with what you have and be grateful for your good health". Very wise words indeed. I congratulate Emma on this important milestone and send her my very best wishes as she looks back on all the happy memories she has experienced in the past 102 years.

MAITLAND'S CITIZEN OF THE YEAR, DR HELEN TOLHURST

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—Congratulations to Dr Helen Tolhurst who has been crowned Maitland's 2020 Citizen of the Year. Helen is a former general practitioner who was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2019. Parkinson's is a neurological condition that affects about 40,000 Australians. No drug can prevent its progression, and no two people who live with the disease will experience the same thing. Helen quickly recognised the importance of connecting those who live with the disease. It was through her efforts that the Maitland Parkinson's Support Group was born. During the pandemic, Helen transitioned group members to an online platform so engagement could continue. At a time of great isolation and uncertainty, this link became a lifeline.

Helen is a moderator of the national Parkinson's Disease online community and is an awareness advocate who has appeared in many local media stories. A keen artist, Helen also organised an art sale which procured more than \$2000 for the Maitland Parkinson's Support Group. Thank you, Helen, for your work to improve the way we support and understand the challenges faced by people who live with Parkinson's Disease, not just locally but across our nation. Congratulations again on your award.

MAITLAND'S YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR, ALLY MEYN

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—Congratulations to Ally Meyn, who last month was presented with the prestigious 2020 Young Citizen of the Year Award. At just 24 years of age, Ally has turned her passion for helping others into a career with Maiwel, helping people living with a disability or other disadvantage to gain employment. Not only has her passion become a career for Ally, but she has become a mentor to other young people, helping them to achieve their employment goals, and is President of the Hunter Valley Business Network International (BNI) group.

Ally works with people who are dealing with various challenges, ranging from mental health issues through to physical disability, and helps them achieve their employment goals. Through her local BNI group, Ally is also passionate about working with members of the Maitland business community to help make them aware of the value of employing people with special needs. In the past year alone, Ally has played a significant role in helping more than 300 vulnerable members of our community. I commend her for her dedication and success, and congratulate her on being crowned our Young Citizen of the Year.

KOREAN LIFELINE

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield)—I bring to the attention of the House the efforts of Korean Lifeline, an organisation which has been supporting the Korean Australian community since 2004. Korean Lifeline is a 24/7 hotline which was started by Professor Jong-Hwan Kim. Professor Kim travelled to Sydney from Seoul and saw a need for culturally and linguistically appropriate support services for the Korean Australian community. It is now the largest, not-for-profit counselling service for Korean Australians, with plans to expand its services to perinatal mental health for women and new migrants. It is important the Parliament recognises organisations like Korean Lifeline, who are often at the front line providing assistance to our most vulnerable members of society. On behalf of this Parliament, I thank Korean Lifeline for their tremendous efforts and their dedicated service to the community.

**The House adjourned pursuant to standing and sessional orders at 20:04 until
Wednesday 10 February 2021 at 9:30.**