



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Tuesday, 16 February 2021

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 16 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.

Announcements

NATIONAL APOLOGY

The SPEAKER (12:01): Today we commemorate the thirteenth anniversary of the National Apology, a historic acknowledgement of the systemic wrongs that were done to the Stolen Generations. I especially welcome Uncle Michael Welsh and his colleague. Uncle Michael Welsh is a Stolen Generations survivor from the Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation. This morning he shared his story at an event held in the Jubilee Room. Hearing the stories of Stolen Generations allows us all to join in the healing journey and be part of a solution moving forward. I thank Uncle Michael for being here today.

ROTARY CENTENARY

The SPEAKER (12:04): This year Rotary celebrates 100 years in Australia and New Zealand. Australia is the tenth-largest Rotary country with over 25,000 members belonging to more than 1,000 clubs. My electorate has benefited from the civic spirit and tireless efforts of local Rotary clubs in Belrose, Frenchs Forest, Ku-ring-gai, St Ives and Roseville Chase. I am sure that many members, if not all members, can say the same for their electorates. I acknowledge the National Chair of the Centenary Committee of Rotary Australia, Garry Browne, AM, and his team for their efforts in highlighting that special occasion. May the good work of Rotary continue for many centuries to come.

EDAPP

The SPEAKER: I advise members that representatives from EdApp are here in Parliament House today. They are located near the lifts on Level 7. As members will recall, EdApp has partnered with the Parliament to deliver a mobile phone app that provides short, bite-sized courses for members as part of the Parliament's Professional Development Program, which was launched late last year and which is very easy to do. There is a course on entitlements, and a series of courses on the Code of Conduct for Members will be launched soon. I strongly suggest that members who do not have the app on their phone see Ali and Melissa from EdApp to ensure they download the app. For members who do have the app, I advise them to visit Ali and Melissa for a reminder of what the app is about and how to use it. I strongly encourage all members to visit the EdApp pop-up. The app will become even more relevant when the course on the Code of Conduct for Members becomes available in the next week or so. I thank members who have completed the entitlements course for their feedback. The EdApp pop-up will be near the lifts on Level 7 until about 12.30 p.m. today.

[Notices of motions given]

Bills

ROAD TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (DRINK AND DRUG DRIVING OFFENCE) BILL 2021

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 10 February 2021.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (12:20): The Opposition supports the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Drink and Drug Driving Offence) Bill 2021. In his second reading speech, the Minister specifically mentioned the Sakr and Abdallah families, whom he suggested were the Government's motivation for introducing this legislation. Siblings Antony, Angelina, Sienna and their cousin Veronique were killed by an alcohol- and drug-impaired driver in Oatlands in February last year, and we have just passed the anniversary of that tragic event. I met those families when they visited the Parliament last week. Their grace and strength in launching their "i4give" initiative is an example of the best of humanity. It is something that is very special. I know their experience has touched everybody in this House and anybody with kids who has had even a passing fear that something terrible could happen to them, particularly when they are doing what we want them to be doing—enjoying the outdoors together on a hot summer's day. The Abdallahs and Sakrs are a beautiful family.

The object of the bill is to introduce a combined alcohol and drug-driving offence under the Road Transport Act 2013 for drivers with prescribed concentrations of alcohol combined with the presence of a prescribed illicit drug and to provide penalties for the offence. The Minister said that police will not be requiring all drivers who undertake breath-testing to then take a drug test, only those with mid- and high-range alcohol levels and those with low alcohol levels who had a previous offence. The drug test for tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, from cannabis, methylenedioxymethamphetamine—MDMA or ecstasy—methamphetamine and cocaine will also take place. Drug testing is done in three stages. The first stage is a roadside drug test which acts as a screening test. The second stage is a roadside confirmation test. In the third and final stage, the roadside drug test results are sent for further confirmatory testing at a laboratory. If the roadside drug test result indicates the presence of a prescribed illicit drug, the driver will not be charged with the combined offence until confirmatory laboratory test results are returned. Regardless of the result of the roadside drug test, the driver will be charged with a drink-driving offence.

The penalty framework includes fines, licence disqualification, alcohol interlock programs, vehicle sanctions, prison terms in extreme circumstances, and requirements to attend an education and behaviour change program. All these penalties and requirements currently exist for other separate drink-driving or drug-driving offences. However, in recognition of the increased risk of combining alcohol and drugs, the maximum penalties for the combined offence will be higher. The new combined alcohol and drug-driving offence carries fines of up to \$11,000 and up to two years in jail. As this is a combined offence, the bill also expands the mandatory Alcohol Interlock Program, which requires offenders to undertake a drink- and drug-driving education and behaviour change program. The Opposition will be watching closely to see that the Government puts whatever revenue is raised as a result of the new penalty framework into launching pedestrian safety campaigns in the next 12 months. The Minister and his department have indicated that they will do that and that they are taking this issue seriously. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (12:24): The Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Drink and Drug Driving Offence) Bill 2021 is part of the rapid response package that Minister Constance and I announced in November last year to save lives on our roads. I stress from the outset that this is about saving lives. I have said it many times and I will say it again: There are too many people dying on our roads and far too many dying in our regions. Each person is a friend, a family member, a colleague, and each death is preventable. As Ministers responsible for road safety, Minister Constance and I are notified every time someone loses their life on our roads. It is terrible to lose a loved one in a road accident, but it is even worse to know that their life was lost because someone else was being irresponsible and reckless.

At the end of the day, getting behind the wheel of a car while under the influence of drugs or alcohol is a choice. It is a choice that could cost you or someone else their life or livelihood. The Government has invested millions in driver education through its road safety education programs, alongside hundreds of millions in vital lifesaving road infrastructure and billions in major road upgrades. The Government will keep investing in those programs because they save lives. But, at the end of the day, with all the investment in educating people and improving our roads, some people still choose to do the wrong thing and risk the lives of others. That is, quite simply, unacceptable. Irresponsible and selfish decisions by a small minority cost people their lives.

We all saw the tragedy last year when a young man driving under the influence of illicit drugs and high levels of alcohol lost control of his car and took the lives of four young, innocent people. Minister Constance spoke at length about the grief that those children's families continue to go through every day. As a parent, as so many of us in the Chamber are, I cannot imagine their pain. Nothing can bring those children back, but by passing this legislation we might just deter another person from making the same reckless decision and prevent more lives being needlessly lost on our roads. The bill introduces a new offence designed to target the 1 per cent who deliberately choose to risk people's lives with their reckless behaviour. The purpose of the combined offence is to introduce a new offence with an associated range of penalties that reflect the seriousness of the increased road safety risk of driving with the presence of a combination of alcohol and prescribed illicit drugs. The new offence shows that this risky behaviour will not be tolerated, and it will help to reduce the devastating impact of road trauma on the community.

As we have heard, between 2015 and 2019, 98 people have lost their lives in crashes involving drivers or riders with illegal levels of alcohol combined with prescribed illicit drug presence. Three-quarters of those fatalities occurred on country roads. It is important to be clear who we are actually targeting. Eighty-five per cent of drivers involved in a crash with the presence of alcohol and an illicit substance are mid- to high-range offenders. That means that the people who are continuing with this behaviour are doing so in extremes, or are repeat offenders. We want those people to think twice about their actions, find a plan B and get home a different way.

The other elements of the road safety package that we announced last year, which is designed to reduce road trauma right across New South Wales, do not involve legislative changes but are equally important and worth summarising. Last year 139 people in New South Wales lost their lives because someone was driving too fast.

That is 47 per cent of the road toll. Speeding remains the leading factor in death and injuries on our roads, and there was a rise in speed-related fatalities last year. That is why the mobile speed camera program is being enhanced and expanded—to bring New South Wales into line with other Australian jurisdictions; to achieve better practice; and to respond to recommendations from the Auditor-General. The portable warning signs have been removed and the vehicle livery is being removed from 30 per cent of the vehicles, with more discreet contemporary markings placed on the remaining 70 per cent of vehicles. We have seen how having no warning signage for mobile phone detection cameras has deterred people from using their phones illegally behind the wheel, and we want the same effect with speeding.

The power to avoid penalties for speeding is totally in the control of the driver. We want drivers to be safe, to be compliant with the road rules, and not to face penalties. However, when people continue to break the rules and put lives at risk, they will pay the price and we will use that money to invest back into safety treatments across our regional road network through the Community Road Safety Fund. Some \$46 million will be invested over three years in a mass action program to install audio tactile line marking across 3,300 kilometres of high-risk country roads. The rest will be added to the Government's Safer Roads Program, targeting road safety upgrades on country roads where two-thirds of all road fatalities occur. This will build on our already record investment into the Saving Lives on Country Roads initiative, which has helped to reduce fatalities on country roads by 21 per cent, from 234 in 2019 to 184 in 2020.

This is a really important package of initiatives which I know is going to help to reduce road trauma across the State and, in particular, in country New South Wales. I ask the House to support these initiatives in order to save another parent, another friend or another colleague from the heartbreak of losing someone they hold dear. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (12:31): The Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Drink and Drug Driving Offence) Bill 2021 is part of a rapid response package that was announced in November last year to save lives on our roads. The purpose of the combined offence in the bill is to introduce a new offence with an associated range of penalties which reflect the seriousness of the increased road safety risk of driving with a combination of alcohol and the presence of a prescribed illicit drug. This new offence shows that we will not tolerate this risky behaviour, and it will help us as we work towards zero tolerance and reduce the devastating impact of road trauma on our community. As we have heard, 98 people have lost their lives in crashes involving drivers or riders with illegal levels of alcohol combined with prescribed illicit drug presence. Of great concern to me is that almost three-quarters of those fatalities occurred on country roads.

As well as supporting this new combined offence, I will speak about the rest of the package that is designed to reduce road trauma right across New South Wales. The other parts of the package do not involve legislative changes but are equally important and worth summarising here. As the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads said, last year 139 people in New South Wales lost their lives because someone was driving too fast. That is 47 per cent of the road toll. Speeding remains the leading factor in death and injuries on our roads, and there was a rise in speed-related fatalities last year. Of the 139 deaths last year, 91 were on country roads. Tackling speed is an effective way of consistently influencing the road toll because it reduces both the likelihood and severity of all crashes. Importantly, our trauma data shows that the problem is network wide.

It is for the purpose of reducing trauma and death that the mobile speed camera program is being enhanced and expanded, and I note that it will bring New South Wales into line with other Australian jurisdictions. It is in response to recommendations from the Auditor-General. Automated speed camera enforcement is one of the most effective, evidence-based and low-cost measures to reduce speeding and save lives and injuries. Importantly, fines raised will be injected directly into the Community Road Safety Fund, investing in improved safety on our roads. I have seen the new vehicles, and without the previous roadside warning signage in Albury it will be interesting to see data about the impact of this initiative in due course. The portable warning signs have been removed and the vehicle livery is being removed from 30 per cent of the vehicles, with contemporary markings which are more discreet being placed on the remaining 70 per cent of the vehicles. We have seen how having no warning signage for mobile phone detection cameras has deterred people from using their phones illegally behind the wheel; we want the same effect with speeding.

The purpose of the mobile speed camera program is to deter drivers from speeding by providing broad network-wide deterrence. Enforcement at a larger number of locations across the road network is required to deliver enhanced road safety benefits from the program. The removal of portable warning signage will enable enforcement at more sites due to the changes in operational requirements. The monthly hours of enforcement will be increased from 7,000 hours to 21,000 hours per month and keep pace with population growth. The changes are backed by research that tells us that a general effect on speeding across the whole road system is best achieved if there is a perceived risk of being caught when speeding in any place, at any time. We want people to know they can be caught anywhere, anytime on the New South Wales road network so that they slow down and help to curb

the trauma we see tragically affecting family after family. Modelling conducted by Monash University indicates that between 34 and 43 lives will be saved and 600 serious injuries will be prevented per year in New South Wales. The Government cannot ignore such data.

The scale of road trauma in Albury gives me pause for reflection. Over the five-year reporting period of 2015 to 2019 for my electorate 31 people were killed and 299 seriously injured. The fatality rate of 9.9 per 100,000 people was higher than the State average of 4.6. Five fatalities were recorded during the first nine months of 2020. Twenty-three per cent of those killed or seriously injured were aged 17 to 25 years. Males constituted 87 per cent of fatalities and 64 per cent of serious injuries. Sixty-nine per cent of serious casualties were motor vehicle occupants, and 22 per cent were motorcyclists. Two people were killed in crashes involving a heavy truck. Speeding was a factor in 42 per cent of fatalities and 30 per cent of serious injuries. Fatigue was a factor in 19 per cent of fatalities and 16 per cent of serious injuries. Alcohol was a factor in 16 per cent of fatalities and 7 per cent of serious injuries. There were five fatalities from crashes involving a driver or motorcycle rider with the presence of an illicit drug. Road trauma has a major impact on our local hospital as well. These accidents resulted in 1,000 people being admitted to a health facility located within the electorate of Albury over the five-year reporting period of 2015 to 2019.

We want drivers to be safe and compliant with the road rules and not to face penalties. However, all net funds from this initiative will be invested back into safety treatments across our regional road network through the Community Road Safety Fund. Some \$46 million will be invested over three years in a mass action program to install audio tactile line markings across 3,300 kilometres of high-risk country roads. The rest will be added to the Safer Roads Program, targeting road safety upgrades on country roads, where two-thirds of all road fatalities occur. This will build on already record investment into the Saving Lives on Country Roads initiative, which has helped to reduce fatalities on country roads by 21 per cent, from 234 in 2019 to 184 in 2020. Those who do the wrong thing will be funding safety upgrades to help make our roads safer for everyone. This is a really important package of initiatives, which I know is going to help to reduce road trauma across the State, particularly in country New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:39): I speak on behalf of The Greens in debate on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Drink and Drug Driving Offence) Bill 2021. Any loss of life, especially one that could have been prevented, is a tragedy. My heart goes out to all of the families and friends who have lost loved ones as a result of an unacceptable decision by an individual to drive under the influence and cause serious harm or fatalities. The bill creates a new combined offence of mid- or high-level drink driving with the presence of drugs. The penalties for the offence are high, with up to 50 penalty units, or a \$5,500 fine, and two years' imprisonment for a first offence. There is strong evidence that drivers who are significantly impaired by legal or illegal drugs and also have alcohol in their bloodstream pose a significant risk to our community. However, The Greens have concerns that this bill does not target impairment but instead imposes the lower "presence" test on just four illegal drugs.

This means the focus will be on the trace amounts of those drugs in a person's bloodstream, not whether they have enough drugs in their system to significantly impair them. People who have consumed large amounts of benzodiazepine chased down with a bottle of wine will not be captured by this new law; someone who has had three schooners of beer and a joint that day will be captured. Our concern is that the focus needs to be on impairment, not on presence. Likewise, the bill fails to capture the risk posed by even low-level consumption of alcohol by a person who is impaired by drugs. Someone who has consumed a large amount of any illegal drug, and many legal drugs, and followed it with even a small amount of alcohol poses a significant risk to road safety, which is not captured at all in this bill.

We hope that the Government and others will consider the amendments The Greens will move in the upper House to address these concerns. The amendments will seek to impose a more logical and supported "impairment" offence rather than a presence offence when considering these matters. We need to make sure that these laws target and focus on what we have all expressed concern about in this Chamber and in the community. The problem is that impaired drivers on our roads are causing significant harm and fatalities. We should all work together on the amendments to ensure that the laws we pass do what is intended, which is something all those who have suffered injury or loss deserve. The laws must help to prevent future fatalities and serious injury without having unintended consequences. The Greens will be moving amendments in the other place to ensure that we can achieve that. We hope that the Government, the Opposition and the crossbench will consider those amendments closely.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (12:42): I speak in debate on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Drink and Drug Driving Offence) Bill 2021. I have mentioned the accident at Oatlands a number of times in this Chamber and I am blessed to have become good friends with the family. At the outset, I acknowledge the Minister and thank him for bringing legislation to the Parliament that goes some way towards ensuring that no family ever experiences anything like that again. The history of this bill goes back to the night of 1 February 2020. When

people look back, they might remember what they were doing at that time. It was unfathomable that people could die in those circumstances. To lose three innocent kids from one family and one from another is beyond anything we can imagine. These things have an incredible way of bringing people together, and I cannot think of too many things over the past 10 to 15 years that have so captured the heart of the nation and left such an indelible mark. The Minister has spoken about the good that has come from this, thanks to the Sakr and Abdallah families, who last week launched their i4Give Day, attended by the Premier, Prime Minister and some members of this Parliament.

Forgiveness is one thing but, as Bridget Sakr said during the presentations, "Forgiveness does not mean that you forget or that you do not want or expect justice to be served." In this regard, I know that the Minister's office has worked with the families. I commend Minister Constance and everybody else who has come on board. It is quite funny; it is amazing what we can achieve when we work together across party lines to make sure that we get a really good outcome. I know others have raised some concerns that the bill may be unfair in some way or another. People say that we should not put emotion into things, but our lives are about emotion. Our lives are about lived experiences. One has only to spend 10 minutes with these families to know that. Whether these experiences are unavoidable, we do not know. But now we can say that hopefully some other justice will come their way.

Linking the drink-driving and drug-driving offences will go a long way towards reducing the road toll. The ultimate goal is to have a road toll of zero. That is the dream, but what can we do to make sure we get to that point? That is really important. The great thing about parliaments and legislation is that we can take real experiences and try to make changes to avoid them in the future. Other members have spoken to the details of the bill; I will not go through them. It is designed to ensure that people think twice—or three times—because they do not know what is going to happen. Nobody deserves to die and there is no such thing as "innocently walking". People should not be dying, and people certainly should not be dying when they are just walking and they have no idea what is coming. I think that is what has captured this place so much. Sometimes I get accused of wearing my heart on my sleeve, but I think that is what this is about. It is about the law that comes in as a result.

The member for Canterbury—who is in the Chamber—the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. John Graham, the member for Kogarah, the member for Granville and I met with the family last week to see how they were going. They felt that they had been consulted, which is so important. One thing the family asked me to raise—and I will raise it here—is that we also need to start looking at pedestrian safety. That is really important. How do we ensure that we do everything we possibly can to make pedestrians safer? We cannot prevent everything from happening; if something is going to happen, it is going to happen. What do we need to do about pedestrian safety? A perfect example was about five months ago in Greenacre, where a car went straight through the front of a shop. Members may have seen the footage. We cannot stop that happening, but if there is a request for bollards let us put in bollards.

Let us start thinking about what we can do to mitigate some possible circumstances and to ensure pedestrian safety. I would love to think people go to a zebra crossing and look both ways. But they do not; they just walk straight across. What can we do to change that? I trust that the Minister, working with everybody he possibly can, will continue along those paths. The family's other concern—and I think this merits discussion well into the future—is the culpability of passengers. Maybe it is too big an issue to address right now, but it is worth considering. In other circumstances one would say, "This person is an accessory." What happens to the person who might have been an enabler of an act that resulted in serious injury or death? It is probably too big an issue for me to talk about right now, but these are things that we can continue to improve. If everything is about improving legislation, then this is one step and we will continue with it. It would give the family an enormous amount of closure and help them a great deal.

I acknowledge the member for South Coast. Making the roads in that area safer has made an enormous difference. It means people will be safer and hopefully it will reduce the number of accidents and fatalities. Anything that we can do as a Parliament to try to make the roads safer is a good step. Members have proposed amendments to the bill; because of the importance of the legislation, I am not going to quibble too much about them. The families themselves are grateful to this Parliament for having put the legislation forward. I respectfully suggest that the Minister tries to involve those families in any rollout of the things that the Government does. Let us see if they could be part of the rollout message or campaign. There is an enormous amount of respect out there for the dignity, grace and conduct of the Abdallah and Sakr families. We can all learn something from watching people like them in their grief. I do not know whether I could do what they have done. I do not know whether I could be so forgiving. They are amazing people.

We need to do whatever we can to reduce deaths and opportunities for accidents, reduce pedestrian danger and make people think twice before they do something. We need to put interlocks onto cars and give proper disincentives. We need to do that not just by wielding the stick but also through rolling out an education program.

Let us restart with that idea. Let us tell people, "This is what will happen. That is why you do not do this. Think about the consequences it might have if you jump behind the wheel after you have had a few drinks. Think about the family it might affect. Think about the kids and the parents that may be lost."

There is so much that can be done, but this proposed amendment to the Act is really important. It gives respect to the incident that happened. Nothing will ever bring those children back; nothing will ever change in that regard. But if the families can see this Parliament make a law that could potentially stop anybody else from having to go through what they went through, how could members not support such a thing? I acknowledge the Minister and a number of members of Parliament who have worked with the families. Whilst it is not related directly to the amendment, at the moment there is a process for a memorial to take place where the children fell. I hope the memorial can be achieved and that the legacy of that tragedy makes us better, not only as individuals but also as a society.

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (12:52): I contribute to debate on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Drink and Drug Driving Offence) Bill 2021. The bill builds on recent reforms to the drink- and drug-driving laws in New South Wales and introduces a new combined offence for drivers who have in their system prescribed concentrations of alcohol combined with the presence of a prescribed illicit drug. The combination of drugs and alcohol increases the risk of a fatal crash by 23 times. In the year ending June 2020 around 9,000 drivers were detected with illicit drugs in their system, while around 16,000 drivers were detected with illegal levels of alcohol in their system. Between 2017 and 2019 there were 60 fatalities on our roads where alcohol was a factor and 78 fatalities where illicit drugs were present. Those deaths were largely preventable. This is about people taking personal responsibility when they get behind the wheel of a car.

Consultations for the Road Safety Plan 2021 indicated that 90 per cent of the public considers alcohol and drug testing important for road safety. Similarly, Australia-wide research commissioned by the Transport Accident Commission found that drink driving is highly socially unacceptable, with only 4 per cent of respondents regarding it as acceptable. However, the statistics indicate that the message is not getting through to some drivers, who continue to drink and/or take drugs and drive. Of the fatalities that occurred on our roads between 2017 and 2019, 17 per cent involved illegal levels of alcohol, 21 per cent involved the presence of illegal illicit drugs and 6 per cent involved the combination of illicit drugs and alcohol.

Deterring drink and drug driving remains the most important road safety priority as we work together to reduce road trauma in New South Wales. The Government brought in a package of reforms to the drink- and drug-driving laws. In 2018 the first stage included increasing the maximum court-imposed penalties for driving under the influence of alcohol or a drug and introducing mandatory alcohol interlocks for all mid-range drink-driving offenders, as well as vehicle sanctions at the roadside for high-risk, repeat drink-driving offenders. The reforms were supported by a statewide integrated communication and education campaign across digital, social and radio media.

The second stage of the reforms commenced in May 2019, introducing tougher penalties to further deter drink and drug driving and reduce trauma on New South Wales roads. Changes include: drivers who commit a first-time, low-range drink-driving offence can now have their licence suspended immediately at the roadside, effective for three months, together with a \$581 fine, effective from 1 July 2020. Penalties for drivers who commit an offence of driving with the presence of an illicit drug in their system for the first time also changed. They can now receive a three-month licence suspension and a \$581 fine, also effective from 1 July 2020. The reforms were brought in through the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Penalties and Other Sanctions) Act 2018.

In September 2018 the Standing Committee on Law and Justice inquired into the bill. During the inquiry the New South Wales Government made a commitment that the effect of the reforms will be monitored by independent evaluators and this would be guided by an evaluation framework. The first monitoring report was made publicly available in July 2020 and, aligned with the intent of the reforms, demonstrated an increase in the proportion of mid-range prescribed concentration of alcohol offences resulting in the issuing of a mandatory alcohol interlock order and an increase in the proportion of low-range offences dealt with by a penalty notice instead of a court attendance notice.

Under the guidance of an evaluation working group, an operational review is nearing completion. It indicates that the reforms have been implemented as intended and key stakeholders have a strong understanding of the goals of the reform. These are reforms built on the continuing success of the drink-driver laws in New South Wales. It was 40 years ago that we introduced the .05 blood alcohol limit. In 1980, 389 people were killed in alcohol-related crashes alone in New South Wales. That is almost 100 more deaths than the entire road toll in 2020. Random breath-testing started in 1982. Since then, trauma from fatal crashes involving alcohol has dropped. In 2020 there were 51 fatalities from drink-driving crashes and 61 from drug-driving crashes. Over this period large-scale enforcement has been supported by public education campaigns and community attitudes to drink driving have shifted dramatically. Police now conduct millions of breath tests each year in New South Wales.

New South Wales crash data indicates that since 2014 there has been a 7 per cent increase in the number of fatalities and serious crashes involving drivers or riders with the presence of an illicit drug in their system. In 2019, 82 drivers or riders who had the presence of an illicit drug in their system were involved in 80 fatal crashes, resulting in 84 deaths. That is 24 per cent of all fatalities on New South Wales roads. In 2020 there were 61 fatalities. New South Wales has a two-tiered approach to tackle drug driving. There is one offence for driving under the influence where the driver is proven to be behaviour impaired. This offence applies to the driver who when stopped by the police is visually affected by a drug and is a more serious offence. The other offence is for driving with the presence of a prescribed illicit drug in their system. The mobile drug-testing program, which tests oral fluid, tests for detectable levels of four illicit drugs: ecstasy, cannabis, cocaine and methamphetamine, including speed and ice.

Each year police conduct hundreds of thousands of drug tests. That process involves two roadside tests followed by laboratory analysis of an oral fluid sample. An offence is committed if the lab test confirms drug presence. Some 95 per cent of positive roadside drug tests are confirmed as positive at the laboratory. The implementation of large-scale roadside testing maximises the deterrent effect of that approach. New South Wales has a zero-tolerance approach to driving with prescribed illicit drugs. That efficient approach is considered best practice. Therefore, it has been adopted widely across Australia.

Since 2015 we have tripled the number of roadside mobile drug tests undertaken by the NSW Police Force and we have committed to deliver 200,000 tests each year. As I said, the current mobile drug and random breath-testing programs are achieving success by deterring most people from drink and drug driving. I thank those people for their responsible behaviour. However, some people still choose to put their own life and others' lives at risk by drink and drug driving. I am sure members agree that it poses an inexcusable risk on our roads. The presence of an illicit drug in the system of a driver or rider involved in a fatal crash is strongly associated with increased levels of risk-taking behaviours such as speeding, illegal alcohol consumption and, to a lesser extent, fatigued driving. The new combined offence, with its harsher penalties and focus on behaviour change, has been designed to deter people from that risky and socially unacceptable behaviour.

I provide statistics on the scale of road trauma in the Camden electorate. During the five-year reporting period of 2015 to 2019, 12 people were killed and 253 were seriously injured. The fatality rate of 1.7 per 100,000 population was lower than the State average of 4.6. Some 22 per cent of serious casualties were people aged between 17 and 25. Males comprised 83 per cent of fatalities and 62 per cent of serious injuries. Motor vehicle drivers comprised 62 per cent of serious casualties. One person was killed in a crash involving a heavy truck. Speeding was a factor in four of the 12 fatalities and in 20 per cent of serious injuries. Fatigue was a factor in two of the 12 fatalities and in 9 per cent of serious injuries. Alcohol was a factor in two of the 12 fatalities and in 6 per cent of serious injuries. Two fatalities resulted from crashes involving a driver or motorcycle rider who had an illicit drug present in their system. The 265 serious casualties cost the community an estimated \$220 million. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (13:02): It is a great shame to debate the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Drink and Drug Driving Offence) Bill 2021 in response to such a tragedy in our community. It is incredible that we have to chase down the issues in this way. It is particularly sad when families lose their children. In this case, in February last year at Oatlands the Abdallah and Sakr families lost their children as they walked innocently to buy an ice cream from the local shop. That was an unspeakable tragedy. I lend my voice to those of the many who have extended their thoughts and best wishes to the Abdallah and Sakr families. Everyone in Lake Macquarie and around New South Wales was heartbroken by the incident that claimed the four angels and share the families' grief. However, they have been uplifted by the families' strength, capacity for forgiveness and willingness to seek change.

I will not speak about the bill in great detail because the Minister and previous speakers have done that. The bill introduces a combined alcohol and drug-driving offence for a person who has both a prescribed illicit drug and a prescribed amount of alcohol in their system. Each single offence is bad enough, but the bill provides more significant penalties when both are detected, including licence and vehicle sanctions, an extension of mandatory alcohol interlock orders, higher fines and requirements for offenders to undertake education and behaviour-changing programs. Between 2015 and 2019, 98 people died as a result of New South Wales road crashes caused by drivers affected by a combined cocktail of drugs and alcohol—not one or the other but both. That is a significant number, given that the State's annual road toll is down to about 350.

As I have mentioned before in this House, the Lake Macquarie electorate has a significant problem with driver behaviour. In fact, the fatality rate on Lake Macquarie roads is still one and a half times that of the State average. We do not have localised data on how often drugs and alcohol were involved in those fatal crashes but we know it was a significant factor in many of them. Every death on our roads affects families, friends, first responders and many people within the orbit of those who are lost. For families and friends, it is a loss that will

never be healed or forgotten. Every attendance at one of those fatalities chips away at the ability of the first responders to attend the next time there is a call out. It just breaks them down and they suffer post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of cleaning up that mess. Very often the driver knowingly and sometimes wilfully made the choice to drive. There must be a cultural change and that is why I will be supporting the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Drink and Drug Driving Offence) Bill 2021.

I note that it has been forecast that further amendments may come from the Legislative Council. Let us look at them objectively to see whether they add value to the legislation. We must change the culture on our roads. I commend the Government and the Minister for the bill.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (13:06): Like earlier Labor speakers, I support the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Drink and Drug Driving Offence) Bill 2021. May God bless the Abdallah and Sakr family, friends and others who have suffered over many years by the loss of a family member or friend because of a road accident. Road safety is a huge issue in New South Wales. Local members of Parliament see those tragedies in our electorates. A lot has been said about the bill. I acknowledge the Minister for Transport and Roads, his staff and all those who have worked very quickly to get the bill in the Parliament. As a mother, my heart is in my throat every time I let my children walk along the road.

Today is the first time I have allowed my 11-year-old to walk from the coffee shop to school with a friend. They have to cross one street and then the lollipop person, a wonderful gentleman, helps them. Some people call me a helicopter parent, which is probably the Greek mother in me. As Australians, we grew up being allowed to walk along the street; it was a big part of our growing up. We would walk to the local swimming pool, buy an ice cream or just walk around the block and even ride our bike. It is harder now for parents to make the decision to allow their child to go and buy an ice cream. On that day the Abdallah and Sakr families did what all Australians have done—that is, they let their children walk to buy an ice cream but tragedy struck.

As my good colleague the member for Lakemba said, I do not know whether I could be as forgiving or have that strength. I admire and am inspired by the Abdallah and Sakr families for the way in which they have held onto their faith. May God bless them. I do not know whether I could be that person. It is heartbreaking. When I heard their story last year a couple of other people and I went to pay our condolences at the Oatlands Golf Club. Thousands of people were there that day who hugged the family. Those little kids—those angels—are in our hearts. They are precious little angels and I cannot imagine the daily grief. I want the families to know that, unfortunately, this tragedy has brought all of us together to do something that is right and that will ensure that, as previous members have said, people think twice about whether they drink or take drugs and drive. That is absolutely lethal and the book should be thrown at them. I commend the Government for working quickly to bring this bill to the House.

We do not want to see any more of these tragedies. Again, I acknowledge the families for not only raising this issue but also making people aware of road safety. Every week in my electorate someone raises it—whether it be a parent, action group or even, a few weeks ago, a principal from one of the local schools who has been the road safety person at Kingsgrove North High School, trying to be the traffic cop. We have called on the Government to take action on road safety, particularly around the schools in my electorate—it should not take a pedestrian getting hit or somebody dying. When it writes letters back to me, Roads and Maritime Services should reconsider stating that there have been only two incidents—and I am talking on behalf of my electorate—when 1,200 students from high school and primary school all leave at once and there are no signs. I have been calling for action for a long time. I keep getting generic letters in response, stating that there has not been a near miss or a response from police. That is not good enough. I do not want to see anybody die because we were ignorant and did not do anything about this matter when it was raised.

The Government should consider the issues that have been raised. I know that we have local traffic committees and all of us are working hard as local members to ensure the safety of our communities. As each member knows, at three o'clock or 2.30 p.m. thousands of kids in our electorates leave school and cross the road, walk to the station or catch the bus, and in the bush kids who are six, seven or eight years old are catching the bus. Their safety comes first. I do not want to hear that because there have been no incidents nothing will be done about it. That mentality is wrong and must change. I urge the Minister—and I acknowledge the work he has done on this bill—to consider that. When we put forward representations we should not receive letters back that imply that in order for us to get something done in those areas there must be an incident or fatality. From the bottom of my heart, I thank the Abdallah and Sakr families. Last week, as the member for Lakemba and the member for Kogarah stated, we met with Leila and Bridget. I want them to know—I beg your pardon? I can speak and I will take my time. Do not roll your fingers at me.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I was telling the member for Goulburn—

Mrs Wendy Tuckerman: He was talking to me.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: No, I saw what he did. I commend the bill to the House and urge members to support it. I am sorry and grief stricken at what happened to this family. I will do whatever I can from an Opposition point of view to make sure that we do everything we possibly can—consulting with the family and other families who have been in this position—to make sure this bill is passed and that other safety issues are taken into consideration.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Just to clarify, I was motioning to the member for Goulburn that we would not have time for her contribution so we will roll it into the next session. I am sorry for that miscommunication. I will now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

Members

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: On behalf of Ms Gladys Berejiklian: I inform the House that in the absence of the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education that the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade will answer questions related to skills and tertiary education today. The Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation will answer questions related to sport, multiculturalism, seniors and veterans today.

Question Time

ROUSE HILL HOSPITAL

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:17): My question is directed to the Premier. In 2015 the Premier promised to build a new hospital in Rouse Hill. Six years later, Blacktown Hospital is so overstretched that it has been ranked the most under pressure hospital in New South Wales. Why has the Premier failed to deliver the hospital that she promised and that north-western Sydney desperately needs?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:18): I am pleased to say, in case the Leader of the Opposition missed this point, that it was the Liberal-Nationals Government that carried out the stage one of the Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital upgrades. I visited those hospital campuses and commended the staff. From memory, one has a specialist dialysis unit, which services many Indigenous Australians who live within the Mount Druitt community, and also a specialist oncology service. I am pleased with the investment we have already made in the Blacktown Mount Druitt Hospital. I am also pleased that the health Minister through the Treasurer has announced that stage two upgrades are underway to Blacktown Mount Druitt Hospital. We appreciate the significance of the health task ahead of us. Everybody will argue—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: How is this irrelevant?

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

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order is relevance. The question was about Rouse Hill hospital.

The SPEAKER: The question also referenced Blacktown hospital and the Premier has been speaking to that.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We know the Leader of the Opposition is desperate for a distraction. The member will not even let me answer the question on Blacktown Mount Druitt Hospital.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I will not hear another point of order straightaway. The member will resume her seat. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the first time. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the second time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The member knows she has thrown another own goal today. She asked me about a hospital that this Government has already invested in.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Clearly the member is distracted today. She has asked me a question about hospitals that we have already invested in.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The only distraction is the Premier's distraction away from Rouse Hill hospital.

The SPEAKER: The Premier is being relevant. I call the member for Auburn to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Unless I am incorrect, the Leader of the Opposition's question was about hospitals in Rouse Hill, Blacktown and Mount Druitt. In relation to Rouse Hill hospital, firstly I say our Government—

[Opposition members interjected.]

The SPEAKER: Order! I heard the question. The question referenced both hospitals and the Premier is being relevant.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We are investing more than \$10 billion in health infrastructure. That includes Rouse Hill hospital. I am pleased that the Government has already committed \$300 million. Health Infrastructure is finalising the detailed investigation. As we know, stage one will establish a contemporary advanced facility for that region. Those opposite cannot comment on investments in western Sydney when it comes to health. Whether it is Liverpool Hospital, Campbelltown Hospital, Westmead Hospital or Nepean Hospital, the Liberal Party and The Nationals have delivered for western Sydney.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We are making the investments in western and south-western Sydney Health, which the Opposition did not do when it was in government.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am pleased to say that across the breadth and width of New South Wales, the Liberal-Nationals Government has delivered over 100 hospital upgrades already and I am pleased to list some of those, whether they are in our regional communities, our western Sydney communities or across the board. You do not need me to talk about our investment in health; all you need to do is look at our response to the pandemic.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Ryan Park: It's not about COVID.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It pains me that the shadow Minister does not think that investment in hospitals results in a response to COVID. Our investment in health is helping us during the COVID pandemic, whether it is in service delivery, staff or infrastructure.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It was this Government that upgraded Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital. It is this Government that will deliver stage two. It is this Government that will deliver many more hospitals. We know the Opposition is desperate when it asks questions about things we are already delivering. It has no strategy, no questions and a weak leader.

EDUCATION STANDARDS

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (14:23): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Government is raising education standards and providing students with the skills for the twenty-first century?

The SPEAKER: I do not want the member for Keira to interject between the question being asked and the response commencing. The member is doing it habitually. If the member does it again, he will be called to order immediately. I call the member for Baulkham Hills to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:23): I thank the member for Riverstone for his question because in addition to ensuring much-needed infrastructure is delivered in his community, he has a passion for education standards, being an educator prior to entering this place. I am pleased that he has asked the question of me today so I can update the House on two important announcements regarding education that the New South Wales Government made this morning. I was very pleased to be with the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Education at the brand-new Inner West High School, a new high school that commenced last year. This year the school has a cohort of year 7 and year 8 students. The campus is outstanding in that it combines old, historic buildings with new.

Every year a new year is added to that school the student population will increase. I was so pleased to be able to visit the school and make two important announcements, the first being fast-streaming our talented teachers. On average it takes about 15 to 20 years to become a principal within the public school system in

New South Wales. We appreciate that for some people who have the talent, the merit and the skills it should not and will not take them that long to become a principal or a leader within a school community.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We also know that those high schools and primary schools that do well often have outstanding leaders in teachers and principals assisting the student community. We know what good leadership means when it comes to raising standards across the board. For that reason we will start with a cohort of 50 targeted graduates and also younger teachers, who will go through various training and skills development to prepare them to lead a school within 10 years as opposed to within 15 or 20 years. Part of the rotation of those targeted teachers will involve them doing a stint in our regional communities as well as acquiring those skills, because we know that being a principal takes much more than just being a great teacher; it takes skills in management and a whole range of other issues that principals have to contend with.

The fast-streaming program is an exciting addition to our reform in this sector, which is raising standards. I thank everybody involved in the development of the program. The program will commence from term 1 next year when the first cohort of 50 graduates and teachers will be identified and go through the process of being given the skills and the exposure to become great school leaders in the future. This is part of accepting that reform in education is about preparing this generation and the next generation. If COVID has taught us anything it is the importance of our students and all of us being equipped—

[*An Opposition member interjected.*]

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: If COVID has taught us anything it is the importance of equipping our students to re-skill very quickly, to be flexible and to make sure that if there are disruptions in education that they are able to deal with that and cope. Today's announcement goes towards the rigorous programs we have for enhancing standards. The second very important announcement we made this morning ties in with the curriculum review we are doing. It is a one-in-30-year opportunity for us to review the curriculum. There are three plans in reforming the curriculum: first, decluttering the curriculum, and we have already stripped out many courses that were not necessary; secondly, to have a focus on literacy and numeracy, science and those core subjects that allow students to flourish and to be innovative in all different types of fields into the future; and, thirdly—

Ms Anna Watson: That's taken you 10 years, has it?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Well, you did not do it in government. You were there 16 years and you did not do any of it. Finally, the third plank of our curriculum reform is, most importantly, to encourage students to get qualified for a vocational education and training course, whether it is through TAFE or other courses, whilst they are in year 11 and year 12. I was very pleased to be able to announce with the Deputy Premier and the education Minister that from term one next year there will be 20 additional courses that students can do whilst they are in high school. Those courses not only will go towards their HSC but also will go towards their Australian Tertiary Admission Rank [ATAR] and students will leave school with a certificate in their hands, ready to get a job, do an apprenticeship, get a trade, go to university or go to further learning. From term one next year there will be 20 additional courses. [*Extension of time*]

Ms Trish Doyle: Is there one on pork-barrelling?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: No, they learn that in Young Labor.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I know that there are some members opposite who care about this stuff. I know that some members opposite do care about students and their opportunities to gain accreditation. To be able to study and contribute towards their HSC and also towards their ATAR is a wonderful revolution in our education system. It will not matter where the student lives or is educated, they will have access to a Certificate II or Certificate III in cybersecurity, allied health, robotics, construction, design, conservation and ecosystem management—

The SPEAKER: The member for Port Stephens will cease interjecting.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: —accounting, computing, web design, business operations, events, horticultural production, automotive technology, aged care and health administration. There will be 20 extra courses that go towards the HSC, their ATAR, getting them a job or further learning. Whether that further learning is in a TAFE—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: —or in a university or other place of learning, those young people will have those qualifications—opportunities that those opposite did not find fit to give to students when they were in government. We are the party for education.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We are the party for education, we are the party for the workers, we are the party for those who want to get ahead in New South Wales.

PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:30): My question is directed to the Premier. Christina Kokkinis is a resident of south-western Sydney who has waited nearly two years to have basic cataract surgery. How can the Premier explain to Christina and other south-western Sydney residents living in those suburbs that we have a health system that is functioning and not in crisis when she is potentially going to go blind as a result of the wait?

Mr Brad Hazzard: Well, she wouldn't because she would be lifted from category 3 to category 2 or category 1 if that was the risk. So that is poppycock.

The SPEAKER: The Premier does not need the assistance of the health Minister.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:31): As the Minister for Health and Medical Research articulated so eloquently—or perhaps not so eloquently—

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members are not helping the Premier.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: He was actually; he gave me the answer. As has been articulated by the health Minister, it should be noted that in New South Wales if you need urgent medical attention you will receive that urgent medical attention.

The SPEAKER: Order! This is a serious issue. The Premier will be heard in silence.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Neither the health Minister nor I nor any member of our Government will say that we have a perfect health system, but is it one of the best in the world? Yes, it is. Unfortunately, sometimes people fall through the cracks or do not get the service they feel they are entitled to.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Of course that occurs from time to time. Does human error creep into the system from time to time? Of course it does, and when it happens to a family member or a loved one it is an absolute tragedy. But nobody in this State can say confidently that our system is not one of the best in the world. It has not happened overnight, but it is because of years of investment. As this State's Premier, I stand tall behind the work done by our health experts—our health professionals on the front line who do not forgive themselves when they go to deal with pandemics or other crises. Our frontline workers, who for years on end have been supported through our investment, are now showing their true colours and showing all of us what they are made of.

I am proud of the record investments we have made in health. Is it a perfect system? No. However, have we invested record amounts in service delivery? Yes. In the next four years we will be investing in an extra 5,000 nurses and midwives. This year alone a record number of interns were welcomed into the system—1,000 extra interns. We know more than ever before that our health investment is targeting those communities that need it the most—the areas where we are growing the fastest, and around Sydney that is western and south-western Sydney. All the hospitals in those communities, whether it is Westmead, Nepean, Campbelltown, Liverpool, Mount Druitt or Blacktown, are getting investments from the Government. When you add up the number of people who go through our system every year, and those who seek urgent help and receive relief, many more people have a positive experience than those who do not.

But we are working hard every day to make the system better and stronger. Every day we continue our investments and continue to listen to our clinicians when they give us advice. In fact, if we had not listened to our clinicians, we would not be in the position we are in today. But the system can always improve; we can always do things better. That is why our Government listens. We listen and make the changes we need to. We listen to clinicians when we are building new operating theatres and when we are providing and recruiting new staff.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Keira and the member for Port Stephens will cease interjecting. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the second time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: One of the most important reforms in health that our Government did about a decade ago was to establish the local area health districts. Because of that we were able to fight the

pandemic on the ground with the community. Making sure that our local area health districts knew their community, citizens and populations—no other State did that. No other State has that structure. Of course, we are always learning and will continue to invest in record amounts and will always stand and listen side by side with our health clinicians.

WORLD SURF LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (14:35): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade. Will he update the House on how the Government is turning New South Wales into the home of world sport while creating valuable jobs for our community?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:36): I thank the member for Tweed. He is always 100 per cent for the Tweed. I remember last year we were there. We were able to work with the World Surf League [WSL] and win the Tweed Coast Pro, which was an opportunity to showcase the beautiful Tweed, its coastline and waves. It was an opportunity to showcase the region to millions of viewers who follow surfing across the globe. Last year I was dubbed the Minister for the National Rugby League when I worked hard with the NRL to see the season get underway and focused on how important sport was. This morning when we announced the event at Narrabeen one of the jourmos dubbed me the Minister for surfing. I can promise members that they are not going to catch a photo of me on a surfboard, but I acknowledge the Minister for abs, who had his photo on the front page this morning. If the World Surf League Championship Tour event does not attract millions of people to go visit Narrabeen, those abs will. I say well done this morning to the Minister for abs. He is someone who is passionate about surfing but more importantly—

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Show us!

Mr JOHN BARILARO: No, you're not allowed to use props in the House. I cannot use any props. The importance of this morning's announcement is how we are driving investment in New South Wales and its regions. I was at Lennox Head only a few weeks ago. We were going to announce one of the WSL championship tours up at Lennox Head, but that community decided it did not want to support such an event. That is a missed opportunity. I also make this point: We are always accused and I am accused of pork-barrelling in our electorates when the electorate of Ballina had an opportunity for a significant investment and turned it back. Enough with the accusations. The opportunity that came out of the rejection from Lennox Head was that we were able to steal two events. Firstly, we were able to steal the event from Victoria. Unfortunately, Premier Andrews has not been able to give confidence to the WSL. We were able to pinch the iconic Bells Beach Rip Curl Pro, which was part of the WSL Championship Tour for God knows how long—decades. It was rejected by Victoria. Of course for Premier Palaszczuk—the Snapper Rocks pro in Queensland was again rejected by the WSL. They found a home for it here in New South Wales.

We are assisting them with the quarantine, flying in athletes and their officials. Those officials and athletes will be part of our communities. That investment in attracting these events to this region will see in one way about \$15 million invested back in those communities of Narrabeen and the peninsula—a region and part of Sydney that did it tough over Christmas. Because of the lockdown and virus, those businesses did it tough. Attracting world-class events like the WSL Championship Tour event into Narrabeen is the best way we can inject money back into that economy. It means people will visit, go and hopefully enjoy one of the local cafes and, more importantly, support that region. We have an opportunity to showcase Narrabeen and its beaches not just through the Minister for abs' abs but through the beautiful beaches to about 10 million viewers who follow the World Surf League through Seven and Fox Sports. I was in Newcastle with the member for Newcastle, Mr Crakanthorp, where we announced the Merewether Beach event, which was exciting because not only are we going to see these professional surfers come to Newcastle but also there were two locals at the Merewether Surfboard Club who got the wildcard entries.

Attracting the best surfers in the world to New South Wales supports our locals and sports stars of the future. That is a fact. Santa Cruz and Hawaii were shut down. Bells Beach and Snapper Rocks are, of course, no longer happening. If it were not for New South Wales, the WSL Championship Tour would not be happening globally. I acknowledge the Premier and the health Minister for their leadership and the ability of this State to manage the COVID pandemic and to try to get back to a level of normality where you can have a safe New South Wales but at the same time have the economy going. We should be proud of major sporting events driving the focus on tourism in New South Wales. Many other State Premiers and States claim to be the best. The writing is on the wall. We hosted the NRL season, Origin and test cricket. Now we will host the best of the best surfers. We have theatre in town producing some of the best productions globally, all focusing in Sydney and New South Wales. [*Extension of time*]

We are proud of the work we have done, but we know that rebuilding the economy will take investment. We have focused that investment in areas that we believe will give us great bang for buck—in this case, being able to support the World Surf League. I put this fact out there: It has been 30-plus years since New South Wales last hosted a WSL Championship Tour event. So this is exciting. My hope is that the investment this year to attract those events to Newcastle and Narrabeen opens the floodgates for other events to be hosted in New South Wales. Sports tourism is a big driver of tourism and the economy. It creates jobs; it supports businesses. More importantly, it showcases the wonderful nation that we have, the wonderful beaches and regional New South Wales. It puts a spotlight on this great State. We have such beautiful natural attributes. We should always showcase them, especially using the opportunity to do that through sports or other events.

I acknowledge the tourism Minister. His agency Destination NSW's focus on driving tourism through events and its focus on parts of the State has kept the tourism economy going. If it were not for the focus by the tourism Minister, parts of regional and rural New South Wales would have missed out on the opportunity. While international borders were closed, people flocked to regional and rural New South Wales. Post-bushfires, post-drought and post-COVID, we have seen a boom in tourism in regional and rural New South Wales, but today's announcement is a special announcement because we are supporting the fantastic people on the Northern Beaches, who did it tough through summer. It is time for them to step up, for them to have the focus and for the businesses on the Northern Beaches to have a bumper couple of months and weeks when we host one of the great surfing events in the world.

PUBLIC HOSPITALS

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (14:43): My question is directed to the Minister for Health and Medical Research. The parliamentary inquiry into south-west Sydney health has heard how staff are starved of resources and the serious effect it is having on patient care. Will the Minister commit to implementing all of the inquiry's recommendations to ensure that our hospitals are adequately funded?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (14:44): I thank the member for Campbelltown for his question. I acknowledge that each and every one of the members in this place is genuine about trying to ensure that the health service and facilities in New South Wales lead the nation and in fact lead the world, but just occasionally an element of politics gets into some of these questions. The member for Campbelltown is well aware of the work that is going on at Campbelltown Hospital. Almost \$700 million is being spent just on Campbelltown Hospital. The current development will take it from 248 beds to 480 beds, pretty well doubling the number of beds in the hospital. That is being done by this Liberal-Nationals Government. Some 50 per cent more birthing suites are being constructed, again by the Liberal-Nationals Government. It was not done by the former Labor Government.

Mr Stephen Bali: More people have moved there. Come on.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: If the member for Blacktown likes, I will come to him in a minute. I have a lot to tell him. He actually knows a lot of it because of private discussions; he knows exactly what is going on. Campbelltown Hospital is expanding from 10 to 15 birthing suites and from 30 to 58 maternity overnight beds, while growing its special care nursery by 60 per cent.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question is in relation to what we have heard during the parliamentary inquiry into south-west Sydney health, not the bricks and mortar being built. It is about the recommendations that will provide the care and funding that patients desperately need and deserve.

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that the Minister is addressing the issue of south-western Sydney health resources and at some stage I expect that he will refer to the inquiry.

Mr Ryan Park: To the point of order: In your ruling, are you saying that if we mention one word in the question then the Minister can address that one word and not the actual substance of the question?

The SPEAKER: I am happy to clarify that. The question specifically referenced resources for south-western Sydney health and the related inquiry. The Minister is talking about south-western Sydney health. I have also reminded him at some stage to refer to the inquiry, but I am satisfied that the Minister is being relevant.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: The budget for south-western Sydney has dramatically increased under the Coalition Government. It is currently \$2.1 billion. The staffing of those hospitals is being done commensurately with the increase in the physical structures, none of which were provided by the Labor Government that was in office for 16 years. As we are reaching the conclusion of the rebuild of Campbelltown Hospital—along with the building of numerous hospitals across western and south-western Sydney, as the Premier said—obviously staffing

levels are being increased. Additional funding of \$2.8 billion was given this year for another 8,300 staff. Many of those staff are going into south-west Sydney.

We will continue to do what we have done in our 10 years in government, which is to rebuild the entire health system after 16 years of a Labor government that did not build or rebuild the health system. More broadly, the Government and I are looking closely at any comments that were made in the former inquiry, and in the current regional and rural inquiry. We will continue to respond to those. Straight after hearing complaints yesterday from the member for Blacktown about the Blacktown Hospital, a patient rang me and said, "I was in Blacktown Hospital yesterday. I have to say it's a fantastic rebuild and the staff are wonderful." I thank the doctors, nurses and staff who are committing themselves to working in our new facilities.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question directly related to the parliamentary inquiry and whether the Minister will commit to implement the findings of that inquiry to ensure that staff are getting the resources that they need for patient care.

The SPEAKER: The Minister has been directly relevant to that question.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (14:49): My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on the importance of sound financial management to a government's pandemic response?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:49): I thank the member for Hawkesbury for her question. She is the second-best member for Hawkesbury in history.

Ms Robyn Preston: Rozzoli was great.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It was not Pringle. While the pandemic has some time to run, the success of government responses not just here in Australia but around the world are directly proportionate to the foundations that each of those governments has laid heading into it. Governments that do well make tough reforms in the good times, enabling them to deal with difficult times that come their way. Coming into the pandemic 12 months ago, the New South Wales Government provided average surpluses of \$3.8 billion for five years. We had a \$100 billion infrastructure pipeline. Our unemployment rate was at or below the national average for 75 consecutive months. We had the lowest net debt on record.

We have been building our future State off the back of our asset recycling program, which was opposed by those opposite. That is why they left us with a \$35 billion infrastructure backlog. We have been able to invest those proceeds from asset recycling into a significant infrastructure agenda, driving economic growth. As part of that, we have seeded the NSW Generations Fund. We set up a debt retirement fund at a time when there was negative net debt. It is now at \$14 billion and will grow to \$70 billion by the end of the decade. As the debt position increases over time as we deal with the pandemic, that ensures that we are able to invest where it matters.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Low-energy Lynda is back. Economic growth has averaged 2.3 per cent over the 10-year period that we have been in office.

The SPEAKER: That is enough from the member for Maroubra.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Unlike the member for Maroubra, we have cut \$5 billion in taxes since 2016. That put the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government in a position to weather any storm, drought, bushfire or even a one-in-100-year pandemic that came our way. As the Deputy Premier knows all too well, we invested \$4.5 billion in drought support and \$4.4 billion in bushfire support. We have supported not just our communities but infrastructure projects like the fence-building project, driving jobs growth and economic growth in the regions. Despite that almost \$9 billion in investment and the almost \$30 billion invested in the pandemic response, we still project that we will return the budget to surplus in 2024-25. That shows what you can do when you leverage that strong fiscal and economic foundation to drive us through this one-in-100-year pandemic. If members go back to 2011 and imagine that it was not COVID-19 but COVID-11—

Mr Ryan Park: That's a while ago.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It is, but that is the whole point. Obviously the member for Keira was not listening. I have talked about the strong foundations. Let us talk about the rubble that would have been left behind under the previous Government, with average deficits of \$7.2 billion and an infrastructure backlog with an infrastructure cancel culture.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: We were in surplus for 15 out of 16 years.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the first time.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Do not try to defend that record. No-one believes the member for Maroubra. A debt affordability of 6.5 per cent is more than double what it is today.

The SPEAKER: The member for Blue Mountains will remain silent.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: We had 75 consecutive months at or below the average unemployment rate. Under Labor, the State had almost 70 months with an unemployment rate above the national average.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Net debt was projected to hit \$55 billion while delivering a \$35 billion infrastructure backlog.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: They are facts. The highest payroll tax rate in the nation—we have taken that threshold from \$750,000 to \$1.2 million. That is the lowest headline rate in the nation. [*Extension of time*]

The bloke who did not know the Health budget in the election campaign was made the shadow health Minister, and then he ran a campaign to increase taxes on every single small business leading into a pandemic. That cash flow has helped people to invest in their businesses. And then there is the health response: Labor closed 2,500 beds, while we are building 40 new and upgraded hospitals. We have a strong health response. The Opposition talks about the average waiting time—during Labor's time in office it went from 1.2 months to 3.2 months. Public waiting lists increased during Labor's time in office by 55 per cent, or well over 22,000; that is what we had under Labor. Despite all of that, I was shocked when a poll came in overnight that said Jodi McKay was the preferred Premier—of the prison population. Anthony Roberts wants to keep our prisoners in while Jodi McKay wants to let them out.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 73. Clearly the Treasurer has an improper motive in his personal reflection on another member, and it is inappropriate. I ask that he be called to order. It is very clear that is what he is doing.

The SPEAKER: At this stage I am satisfied that there has been no breach of a standing order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: For the first time in her life she has had a captive audience. She said that she has never, ever written a letter of support; well, no-one has ever written her a letter of support and no-one ever will.

Ms Anna Watson: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms Anna Watson: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129. Will the Treasurer actually start his answer? The Treasurer is nowhere near answering the question he was asked. I ask that he be brought back to the question and stop babbling on about everything else.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: And you are nowhere near being elected in New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: I was listening to the member for Shellharbour. The Treasurer has 15 seconds left in which to complete his answer.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I have finished.

RURAL AND REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (14:56): I direct my question to the Deputy Premier and Leader of The Nationals. The Deputy Premier has described in evidence to the parliamentary inquiry into rural and regional health that it is horrific. Nurses in my community are leaving their shifts emotionally and physically shattered, and a patient died tragically at a local hospital while no doctor was physically present. Will the Deputy Premier concede that our health system treats the regions as second-class citizens and accept that it is his job as the Leader of The Nationals to prevent that?

Mr Brad Hazzard: That is not true. There is a fortune going into it, and we are getting staff left, right and centre.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: I asked the question of the Deputy Premier.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Why didn't you ask me? I think I know why.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the health Minister to order for the first time.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:57): I thank the member for Lismore for her question. I have the opportunity to talk about the track record of the Government when it comes to health. As we heard from the Premier earlier, no health system is ever perfect, regardless of the investment. In this year's budget alone something like \$950 million was spent on regional hospitals, on new hospitals and on upgrades to hospitals. The Government has invested in excess of \$280 million in Lismore Base Hospital, which is one of the most impressive hospitals up on the coast. On top of that we are spending \$800 million on The Tweed Hospital. Again, the health Minister and the Premier were there for that milestone moment, along with the member for Tweed to showcase the investment in the Tweed.

The SPEAKER: Order! That is enough from the member for Swansea. She will remain silent. This is a serious issue.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Right across regional and rural New South Wales members will see record investment and the landscape will change when it comes to Government investment in hospitals. A hospital was built down in Bega on the South Coast. A hospital was promised and is being built in Goulburn. Hospitals are being built in Dubbo, Parkes and Forbes. There are investments in Cowra and in Griffith—\$220 million has been provided for a hospital at Griffith.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129. The Deputy Premier appears to be missing the point. The member for Lismore asked about nurses and the people who are within the hospitals. Bricks and mortar do not save lives.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier is being relevant and he has indicated that he is about to address the issue.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I am being relevant. We have also made election commitments around the 5,000-plus new nurses who are going into the system, and 45 per cent of those nurses will go into regional and rural New South Wales. That commitment was made by this Government. If you want to attract the best doctors and the best nurses, you have to build the best world-class facilities. That is what the Government has been doing for a decade: It has been building infrastructure in regional and rural New South Wales. We are not just building hospitals for today, we are building the capacity for the future. Absolutely no-one can have a go at the Government in relation to investment in regional and rural New South Wales. But do we have issues in the bush in relation to service delivery and attracting GPs? The answer is yes. But the issue around GPs is not just a State issue; we will have to work with the Federal Government when it comes to GPs in the bush.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: What are your friends in Canberra doing?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Well, what are we doing? We are always finding innovative solutions—

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: —in regional and rural New South Wales to deliver on behalf of our communities. We are investing in the infrastructure and the people, and that will make a difference.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I have said this clearly: I welcome the upper House inquiry into rural and regional health because there is always an opportunity to put a spotlight on it. But I will not come into this House and demonise the people who are working in our hospitals. Those professionals and those nurses are doing a wonderful job protecting us, and keeping our communities strong and safe.

The SPEAKER: Order! One more word from the member for Blue Mountains and she will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We want a safer and stronger regional New South Wales. We are investing in the infrastructure and, more importantly, in the people. Yes, we have issues and we will have to address those issues. We know the issues and I have with me the Secretary of NSW Health, Elizabeth Koff. She is a fantastic secretary who I have committed to work with, especially when I was the Acting Premier, to understand how our health professionals come together to manage the COVID pandemic. We have some of the best personnel in the world working in Health. We have a world-class health system. But it will never be perfect because it is a human system. Can we put more resources into it? Of course we can, but we must also focus that investment in a way that produces outcomes.

It is very difficult to attract the best GPs and specialists to rural and regional New South Wales. We have to find innovation in that space. If we have learned anything from COVID, it is that we can do a lot more through

technology. We must look to adapting to technology, building the great hospitals and attracting the best people to regional and rural New South Wales. That is my commitment, that is the Premier's commitment and that is the health Minister's commitment: We will continue to see investment in regional and rural New South Wales like we have never seen before, and no-one can question that. Let us take the politics out of this. No-one can question the investment in health under this Government.

The SPEAKER: The member for Port Stephens is on her last warning.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: In the overall budget there has been an increase each and every year through our local health districts, empowering locals to make decisions at a local level. We are seeing investment in the capital and right across the State, including in regional and rural New South Wales. I am proud of the investment from this Government. I am proud of the investment that is driven by the health Minister, who has a real focus on the regions. There is more to learn going forward.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: Again I take a point of order under Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: I will rule on that straightaway. The Deputy Premier is being relevant.

Ms Kate Washington: Because 800 people have made submissions—

The SPEAKER: The member will resume her seat.

Ms Kate Washington: —to the rural and regional health inquiry.

The SPEAKER: The member for Port Stephens is out right now, overnight.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: As I said, I welcome the committee inquiry's report.

Mr Ryan Park: Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I have given the member for Port Stephens her final warning. She was on three calls to order. Last week I warned members that if they did not stop interjecting when I asked them to do so, they would be asked to leave the Chamber. The member for Port Stephens will leave the Chamber. She is out overnight. I will not hear further.

[The member for Port Stephens left the Chamber at 15:02 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Of course, as I said earlier, I welcome the upper House inquiry. There is always more to learn. What we will do in response— *[Time expired.]*

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Does the member for Swansea wish to take a point of order that is not related to time?

Ms Yasmin Catley: No, it is not related to time.

The SPEAKER: Is it not related to this question?

Ms Yasmin Catley: No, it is not related to time or to the question. I want to bring it to the Speaker's attention that social distancing is not being practised in the House at the moment. It is very important to ensure that we practise social distancing.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. Members must ensure that they are socially distancing, though I do understand the challenges.

POLICE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (15:03): I address my question to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is investing in our police and emergency services to create new jobs for citizens across New South Wales?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (15:03): I thank the member for Goulburn for that wonderful question. In a previous life, the member for Goulburn dedicated her service to fighting paedophilia. She worked on some of the most distressing and disturbing child sex crimes that this nation has ever seen. I do not think there would be a member of this Chamber who does not condemn paedophilia and all those who try to protect it. I thank the member for Goulburn for the work that she has done. She is a beacon for members on this side of the Chamber, who always root out evil and will never stand up for those who want to dismiss crimes against children. The member for Goulburn will always be somebody who wants to stand up for what is right and who will take responsibility for her actions.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Auburn to order for the third time. This is the member's last warning.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I know the member for Goulburn would never advocate for somebody who is not worthy of advocacy.

[Opposition members interjected.]

Can you hear that noise? That is the Labor caucus defending Jodi McKay. That is Anthony Albanese standing up and saying, "Jodi has my support." That is the machine of Sussex Street standing up—

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr Greg Warren: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question from the member for Goulburn was in direct relation to support for communities, investment and police. I have not heard one reference from the Minister in relation to the question.

The SPEAKER: I ask the Minister to return to the question.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I was highlighting the difference between the member for Goulburn and the member for Strathfield. The member for Goulburn will stand up for what is right. The member for Goulburn will always advocate for children and the rights of children. The member for Goulburn will always condemn paedophilia. The member for Strathfield, however, has decided that she would prefer—

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. The Minister is making a personal reflection that should only be done by way of substantive motion. I again draw attention to the fact that we have not heard one reference to the question of the member for Goulburn.

The SPEAKER: I am not satisfied on the first point. On the second point, I refer the Minister to my earlier ruling.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I am only reciting what is on the public record. I do not want Jodi to go; nobody on this side of the Chamber wants Jodi to go. I was going to bring a defibrillator down here in case she was going to have a cardiac arrest. I want her to stay. We had every plan to make her stay, but her signature on the letter is her death warrant.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: Her signature is her political death warrant.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr Dominic Perrottet: Are you going to knock on the door like you knocked on Robbo's, Michael?

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

Mr Dominic Perrottet: You went knocking, didn't you?

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

Mr Michael Daley: Mr Speaker, you have asked the Minister to comply with your earlier warning twice now.

The SPEAKER: I have. Is the member taking the same point of order?

Mr Michael Daley: Yes.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. The Minister will be more relevant to the question.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: It is the member for Maroubra who has the blood of John Robertson on his right hand, the blood of Luke Foley on his left hand and the blood of Jodi McKay on his shoes.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 73. I know—and I think all members know—there is not a person in this place who does not have the interests of children in their heart.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: That is not what it says here.

Mr Ryan Park: This is not what it is about, mate. You do not use this place to do that.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat. I ask the Minister to be directly relevant to the question.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: The question relates to how professional our police are. The member for Goulburn was an exceptional police officer, and she dedicated her life to investigating sex crimes. That point is very pertinent to this Chamber in the current climate. I am quite happy to stand here and boast about the fact that the Government is spending \$1.7 billion on our emergency services and disasters this financial year. That is being supplemented by the record budget that we are putting into the New South Wales police. [*Extension of time not granted.*]

COAL ASH DAMS

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (15:09): My question is directed to the Minister for Energy and Environment.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Question on notice.

Mr GREG PIPER: No, it is without notice.

The SPEAKER: That is enough from the member for Swansea.

Mr GREG PIPER: With understandable increasing community concern about the massive and growing stockpiles of coal ash from thermal power stations—yes, in Swansea as well—what is the Government doing to ensure that material will not just be left for future generations to deal with?

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (15:09): I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for his question and for the opportunity to visit his electorate late last year to see the impact of those ash dams on not only the environment but also his whole community. It is a really important issue and one that the Government takes very seriously. In New South Wales we have strict regulations, enforced and upheld by the NSW Environment Protection Authority [EPA], around how ash dams are managed. But the community needs to have confidence that those liable for the problem will take responsibility for it. It is the Government's job to make sure that happens.

The last thing the Government wants is business creating a mess and leaving it for the rest of us—including the community of the member for Lake Macquarie—to deal with. The best outcome is for coal ash to be re-used and recycled. Using ash, new products can be created that do not leave the community exposed to that substance. It can be used in creating new products like green cement, for example. Recycling coal ash not only helps improve the environment near those power stations, but also helps reduce the amount of carbon used in industrial processes like creating cement. It is a great outcome for the environment in many ways. That is one area the Government focused on when developing its 20-Year Waste Strategy and implementing its net zero emissions programs.

Green cement can create the opportunity to protect the environment and create jobs, not only in the Lake Macquarie and Hunter regions but also right across New South Wales. There are huge emerging opportunities, particularly as the world moves to a net zero global economy. Creating jobs, growing our economy, reducing our emissions and protecting our environment have always been the focus of the Government. How can we get good environmental outcomes whilst growing the economy as well? I look forward to providing an update to the House about the 20-Year Waste Strategy. We are currently in the final stages of the development of that strategy. I assure the member for Lake Macquarie that there will be a role for the re-use of coal ash in that plan, creating a circular economy using coal ash to try to reduce the amount that is being put into those ash dams. Thanks to the advocacy of the member for Lake Macquarie, the Government has included that as part of the 20-Year Waste Strategy.

The Government is looking at a number of mechanisms to increase the uptake and use of coal ash, including boosting demand by using more recycled material in infrastructure projects. It will be investing in the development of standards and certifications around the use of recycled content for industry, making it easier for industry to purchase and use products that use coal ash. In addition, it will be providing direct investment in the development of technology and innovation to increase the beneficial re-use of recycled products like coal ash. It will look to foster partnerships between industry and government to address information barriers. Finally, central to the Government's plan will be using the purchasing power of government to drive demand for the use of recycled products, including products that use coal ash in their production.

In the meantime, we need to make sure that we have very strong regulations in place to protect the environment and people who live near those dams. The EPA will continue to be a tough cop on the beat and a strong environmental watchdog, protecting communities like those represented by the member for Lake Macquarie. The Government will ensure that it continues to have strong regulations in place to protect our environment, to protect communities like Lake Macquarie, and to ensure that New South Wales remains the best place to live, work and raise a family. But not even the EPA can have enough regulations in place to protect the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr Ryan Park: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. Mr Speaker, one of the earlier rulings you made was that answers need to be generally relevant. The question is about coal ash.

The SPEAKER: The Minister has been directly relevant. I will allow a slight digression, as I normally do when Ministers have been relevant.

Mr Ryan Park: To the question about coal ash?

The SPEAKER: And the environment.

Mr MATT KEAN: While we are focused on recycling waste, they are focused on recycling wasted leaders. Isn't that right, member for Maroubra?

Mr Stephen Bali: Point of order—

Mr MATT KEAN: We have been waiting all year for the member for Strathfield to make an impact.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr MATT KEAN: She certainly delivered today.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr Stephen Bali: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 74 (2). The Minister is being quarrelsome. He is causing disorder in the House.

The SPEAKER: I have already ruled on that point of order. I said I would allow the Minister a slight digression. He has been relevant for the vast majority of his answer.

Mr MATT KEAN: We are talking about coal ash. We are also talking about the ashes of the leadership of the Leader of the Opposition. Last week she was "missing McKay"; this week she has been found out.

Mr Greg Piper: Point of order—

Mr MATT KEAN: She has been found out by everyone.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

Mr MATT KEAN: Last week I thought what Stephen Kamper did through *The Daily Telegraph* was impressive. But it was not as damaging as Chris Minns' hit today.

The SPEAKER: Before I take the point of order from the member for Campbelltown, I will acknowledge the member for Lake Macquarie first because he was on his feet.

Mr Greg Piper: I thank the Minister. I have heard enough.

The SPEAKER: That is somewhat of a relief for my friends in Barwon. It is not my first rodeo, but that was a bit of a wild ride. That is a special reference to the member for Barwon and his great colleagues there.

TRANSPORT AND ROAD PROJECTS

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (15:15): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on the Government's 130,000 jobs being created across transport and road projects? Are there any upcoming job opportunities?

Mr Ryan Park: I know where this is going.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (15:16): Don't get excited, Ryan. It's not you, mate. You are not coming back.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Between you and the member for Maroubra—and the member for Kogarah is not here. I don't not know where he is but I am sure he must be doing something.

Mr Dominic Perrottet: He's doorknocking.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Doorknocking! Chris Minns is doorknocking this afternoon. He is doorknocking up on level 10; not in his community. It is always great to get a question about job opportunities.

Some 130,000 jobs are being created in the transport and road space, and of course one in the Labor Party. I will have more to say about that in a minute.

Mr Michael Daley: We can't wait. It will be so skilful too!

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Where is your conscience today? We had it a couple of years ago. It has disappeared. We are investing \$107 billion in infrastructure. Very pleasingly, over \$70 billion of that is in transport and roads. The result will be 130,000 jobs across the State. That could not come at a better and more important time.

Mr Michael Daley: You can have your light rail back if you like, Andrew.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: You wanted me to extend it.

Mr Dominic Perrottet: Why are you so chirpy today?

Mr Michael Daley: It didn't go anywhere. It stops in the middle of nowhere.

The SPEAKER: The member for Maroubra and the Treasurer will desist.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I think the member for Coogee might have a view about her electorate, which you just described as "nowhere". That's fine. Let's just talk about the jobs.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Dominic Perrottet: Are you back, mate? Why have you just come back today?

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: He is the comeback kid. No doubt we will see what he has to do about this later. In relation to the Sydney Metro City & Southwest metro project, 50,000 jobs are associated with us building a fully automated train from Chatswood to Sydenham onto Bankstown. To see some 50,000 jobs is extraordinary. Certainly it is great to see those jobs being created, many of which started when we invested in the Northwest Metro. Sydney Metro Western Sydney Airport will create 14,000 jobs and hundreds of new apprenticeships. I love the numbers for the Sydney MetroWest project. That will create 10,000 direct jobs and 70,000 indirect jobs over the next 10 years for community members who will be able to draw a wage, put food on the table and look after their loved ones. It is exciting for those people in western Sydney.

[An Opposition member interjected.]

Metro, people. Obviously, you do not know what that is, but I will keep saying it: It is a rail project, not a road project. Some 6,000 people have been inducted into the Parramatta Light Rail project. We have great jobs in the north-west. A company in north-west Sydney, R2P, is investing very heavily in local manufacturers that then make component parts to put in—

Ms Yasmin Catley: We're no good at that. Haven't you heard?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Ironic, isn't it? You don't single out Australian manufacturers, who do an incredible job. We have been running a program called More Trains, More Services for purchasing more trains, and guess what—Australian manufacturers are contributing to those trains. In terms of roads: stage one of the M6, 5,300 jobs; Sydney Gateway, 4,000 jobs; and 5,000 indirect jobs from those projects. Overall WestConnex has created 16,000 jobs and hundreds of apprenticeships. The WestConnex M4-M5 link, which those opposite oppose, will create 7,000 jobs. To quote the Premier, we are the party of the worker. The job numbers clearly demonstrate that. There is one other job opportunity, and that is in the Labor Party. It is driven by a matter of conscience. After what we saw on display today in relation to that job opportunity, I am not surprised by the Leader of the Opposition. I listened to her intently on Ray Hadley's program this morning when she played the victim card about herself. We learnt that Federal Labor leaked this information. It then becomes a matter of conscience for the caucus.

The SPEAKER: I issue a final warning to the member for Auburn.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: If the leader is not going to take action about what she did—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: And it is quite easy to claim you did not know about the person you wrote a letter about and that you did not know who you were writing to.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: And it has major ramifications. I think you would need to question yourself.

Ms Eleni Petinos: Mr Speaker—

Mr Michael Daley: Mr Speaker, you have made several rulings today about other attempts by previous Ministers to do what the transport Minister is trying to do now. He is in breach of a number of standing orders. I ask that you call him back to the leave of the question and also that he not breach Standing Order 73.

The SPEAKER: Before I rule on that point of order, I will hear from the member from Miranda, who was on her feet.

Ms Eleni Petinos: I seek further information from the Minister.

The SPEAKER: I will address the point of order and the request for an extension of time. However, first I acknowledge former Minister Adrian Piccoli in the advisers gallery. It is nice to see him back. I miss his comedy. In relation to the point of order, I allow the Minister a slight digression, as I have allowed others when they have been highly relevant. I grant the Minister an extension of time.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: As I was saying, this morning I listened intently to Ray Hadley. If you are going to write a letter but you do not know who you are writing it to or who you are writing about, and if it ends up in proceedings before the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, questions arise in relation to matters of judgement, leadership and conscience. That is where I think enough is said. The Opposition had a caucus meeting this morning. We know it was heated because it has already been leaked.

Mr David Harris: You're a joke!

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: You know what—if the Labor Party wants to call us a joke and retain the member for Strathfield as its leader, I know who is the joke: It is the caucus.

Committees

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 26/57

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 25/57

Ms FELICITY WILSON: As Chair: I table the following reports of the Legislation Review Committee, dated 16 February 2021:

- (1) *Legislation Review Digest No. 25/57.*
- (2) *Legislation Review Digest No. 26/57.*

I move:

That the reports be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Ms FELICITY WILSON: I also table extracts of the minutes of the committee meeting regarding *Legislation Review Digest No. 24/57*, dated 17 November 2020.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

The SPEAKER: I announce that the following electronic petition signed by more than 20,000 persons has been lodged for presentation:

Freshwater Manly Ferries

Petition requesting the Government cancel the decision to replace the heritage-style Freshwater Manly ferries, proceed with the scheduled maintenance program for these ferries and develop a fleet replacement plan which includes double-ended 1,000-plus passenger ferries on the F1 Manly route, received from **Mr Chris Minns**.

The SPEAKER: I set down debate on the petition as an order of the day for a subsequent Thursday.

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

Molong Railway Station

Petition requesting the Government restore and upgrade Molong railway station and railway line within the guidelines of the Heritage Act 1977 and include Molong in the New South Wales Central West railway line passenger services, received from **Mr Philip Donato**.

Business of the House

BUSINESS LAPSED

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 1756 to 1801 have lapsed.

Bills

**ROAD TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (DRINK AND DRUG DRIVING OFFENCE)
BILL 2021**

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (15:25): I speak in debate on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Drink and Drug Driving Offence) Bill 2021. The bill provides for initiatives to support a reduction in drink and drug driving. The penalty framework includes the mandatory Alcohol Interlock Program and the education and behaviour change program for combined offence offenders, in addition to fines, licence suspensions and vehicle sanctions, as well as possible custodial sentences for more serious offences. The Alcohol Interlock Program was introduced in New South Wales in February 2015. Since then courts have been required to order offenders convicted of high-range, repeat and other serious drink-driving offences to complete a minimum licence disqualification period and a period of participation in the interlock program of at least 12 months. In 2018 we expanded the interlock program to include offenders convicted of a middle-range prescribed content of alcohol first offence, or driving under the influence first offence where the offence involves alcohol and a motor vehicle.

Interlock programs are designed to enable offenders to return to licensing after an offence, but only if they completely separate drinking from driving. Participation in the program means an offender can only drive a vehicle with an interlock installed in his or her vehicle, which must be regularly serviced by an accredited interlock service provider. When an interlock is installed the driver must provide a breath sample that the interlock analyses for the presence of alcohol. If the driver fails the test, the vehicle will not start. Randomly timed breath tests must also be passed during a journey. He or she must also attend a medical consultation to specifically discuss alcohol use and health risks before an interlock licence will be issued by Transport for NSW. The interlock device records information, such as attempts to drive the vehicle with a positive blood alcohol reading, which is monitored by Transport for NSW. At the end of the court-ordered interlock period, offenders are permitted to move to a licence that does not have an interlock condition only if they have complied with the program and their data indicates they can separate drinking from driving over a sustained period.

A 12-month minimum interlock participation period ensures all offenders have time to learn to separate drinking and driving behaviour before moving to a licence without the interlock requirement. A person who receives an interlock order and does not enter the interlock program is disqualified from holding a licence—other than a learner or interlock licence—for a period of five years from the date of his or her conviction. This is a current feature of the Act and is not being changed by the bill. In June 2019 a process evaluation of the interlock program was completed. It aimed to assess program implementation, improve program delivery and refine policy settings. It found that the rollout of the program was an overall success and sentencing patterns reflected the intent of the legislation. The participant survey showed that 82 per cent of respondents approved of the program, though the take-up rate for the interlock licence—54 per cent—could be improved. Participants said that the interlock licence helped them separate drinking from driving and maintain work and family commitments. The effectiveness of the interlock program reflects the results of other evaluations across Australia and throughout the world where interlock devices are mandated for drink-driving offences.

In 2020 Austroads published a report on the effectiveness of drink-driving countermeasures, which looked at best-practice evidence from around the world. It found that alcohol interlocks are one of the most effective measures in preventing drink-driving offenders from driving while impaired by alcohol. Since the introduction of the interlock program in New South Wales 31,000 interlock orders have been made by courts. Currently there are almost 10,000 active interlock participants, and in 2020 around 6,500 interlock licences were issued. In late 2020 Transport for NSW accredited a new interlock provider, increasing the number of interlock providers to four. Having four accredited interlock providers means that customers will have more choice about where they get their interlock service from and should encourage price competitiveness between providers for improved customer

outcomes. Costs associated with installing and servicing alcohol interlocks must be paid for by the participant and are around \$2,200 to \$2,500 a year.

To increase accessibility of the program a lower rate is available for certain concessional healthcare cardholders, while short-term financial assistance may be available from Transport for NSW for participants in severe financial hardship. Although interlocks have proven to be effective at supporting offenders to separate drinking from driving, to entrench this behaviour change in the long term there is evidence that interlocks should be supported by an education and behaviour change program. As part of the 2018 drink-driving reforms, the New South Wales Parliament passed provisions for a new education and behaviour change program, and committed to expanding the education available to drink and drug drivers. We also have the Traffic Offenders Intervention Program and the Sober Driver Program in New South Wales. Evaluations of the Sober Driver Program have shown that it reduces repeat drink-driving offending by around half. However, currently the only people required to attend the program are those with an interlock exemption.

Best practice shows that to bring about sustained behaviour change, offenders should participate in both an education and behaviour change program and the interlock program. Therefore, we plan to extend the availability and requirement to complete a proven impaired driving education program to those with the combined offence. Drink- and drug-driving education courses using behavioural approaches have been proven to reduce recidivism, especially when combined with other penalties. This Government, which introduced the mandatory Alcohol Interlock Program and provisions for an expanded education program, is committed to building on countermeasures that are proven to deter drink-driving behaviour and reduce recidivism. I support expanding those countermeasures to the combined offence to help reduce the tragic trauma outcomes we are seeing on our road network. I thank the Minister and his staff for their response to ensure that these measures are enacted for the safety of all.

I reflect on some of the statistics coming out of the Goulburn electorate. Some 60 people were killed and 318 seriously injured over the five-year reporting period from 2015 to 2019. The fatality rate of 17.5 per cent per 100,000 population is almost four times higher than the New South Wales State average, which is extraordinary. Some 10 fatalities were recorded during the first nine months of 2020. The age distribution was similar to the New South Wales State average, with 34 per cent of serious casualties aged 40 to 59 years. Males comprised 69 per cent of those serious casualties; 69 per cent of serious casualties were motor vehicle occupants and 24 per cent motorcycle riders; and 11 people were killed in crashes involving heavy vehicles. Speeding was a factor in 48 per cent of fatalities and 34 per cent of serious injuries; fatigue was a factor in 25 per cent of fatalities and 23 per cent of serious injuries; alcohol was a factor in 15 per cent of fatalities and 7 per cent of serious injuries; and there were six fatalities from crashes involving a driver or motorcycle rider with the presence of an illicit drug.

The estimated cost to the community for the 410 serious casualties is around \$620 million for the five-year reporting period from 2015 to 2019. Road trauma resulted in over 320 people being admitted to a health facility located in the electorate of Goulburn over the five-year reporting period. Those are phenomenal statistics. I commend the bill to the House for the good of all. Let us hope that safety improves for our road users.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (15:34): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Drink and Drug Driving Offence) Bill 2021, also known as the Four Angels Law. I begin by expressing my deepest sympathy and condolences to the Abdallah and Sakr families. Words cannot describe the loss and grief that they have suffered following the tragic events of February last year. The loss of four innocent young lives—the four angels referred to in the bill—is so terribly sad. The bill, in essence, closes a loophole that has existed in legislation for many years now. It is indeed unfortunate it took the tragic events of that day to initiate the bill. That is by no means a criticism, but rather an observation.

Prior to my arrival in this place, in a previous life as a police prosecutor I prosecuted hundreds, probably thousands of people—men and women, young and old—for drink-driving offences. Unfortunately, despite the constant media campaigns, it is still a prevalent offence in the community—and especially in regional areas. I worked in both metropolitan and rural areas and there is, at times, a propensity for some selfish and reckless individuals to have a few drinks and then think it is okay to drive home. Maybe it is because of a lack of public transport in the bush or the "she'll be right" laid-back country attitude. Whatever the ill-informed reason, we, as a Parliament representing the community, need to send a crystal-clear message: You need a plan B if you plan on having a few drinks.

Spend a morning in any Local Court on a busy list day and you will see dozens of people appear for drink- and drug-driving offences. I think the situation has improved compared with a decade or more ago, but there is still a long way to go. There have been technological advancements in drug detection and the introduction of the offence of driving under the influence of an illicit substance, which we are seeing more and more before the court. If a driver is involved in a motor vehicle collision and taken to hospital, they are subject to blood and

urine testing, and on occasion a result is obtained that they are suffering the effects and/or are under the influence of both alcohol and an illicit drug. Ironically, the normal practice would be that a charge would be laid of driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, with the usual statutory penalties of driving under the influence to apply, regardless of how many drugs were detected in a person's blood.

Until now there was not a discrete offence to capture that criminality—which, when we think about it, is unusual. This new offence will close that loophole. A driver who gets behind the wheel of a motor vehicle affected by a cocktail of both excessive amounts of alcohol and illicit drugs is showing complete and selfish disregard not only for the law but also for other road users and themselves. It is a disaster waiting to happen. Criminal behaviour like that means they forfeit their right to be able to drive and to be trusted on our roads. For those reasons I am comfortable in supporting this legislation.

The introduction of a new offence of combined alcohol and drug driving and the significant increases in penalties that appropriately and adequately reflect the objective criminality and danger posed to other innocent road users are welcome. They will go some way towards acting as a general deterrent, better reflect community expectations and appropriately punish those who do the wrong thing. Those who are prepared to take their lives and those of other road users into their hands when they put the keys in the ignition and drive down the road should be warned that they are facing significant penalties and long periods off the road if they run the risk and are detected.

It was concerning to hear the statistics the Minister referred to in his second reading speech that between 2015 and 2019 there were 101 serious motor vehicle collisions involving drivers or riders with illegal levels of alcohol combined with prescribed illicit drugs present in their system. Those crashes resulted in 98 people losing their lives and 52 being seriously injured. Some 84 per cent of the 101 crashes involved drivers or riders with mid- or high-range alcohol levels, with the majority occurring on country roads. I am a regional member of Parliament—as you are, Madam Deputy Speaker—and I am sure you will agree that we are even more in tune with the devastating effects that road accidents have on families and the wider community we represent. Unfortunately, they seem to happen frequently and, in many cases, involve someone we know, directly or indirectly—such is the nature of life in smaller regional towns.

I also share the Minister's concerns that research has indicated that driving or riding with mid- or high-range levels of alcohol combined with a mixture of illicit drugs increases the risk of fatal collision by 23 times. I support the regime of increased penalties, disqualification and also the use of interlock devices for offenders, and believe compulsory attendance at a traffic offender course is also useful. I appreciate that lawyers and others will be concerned that some drugs—for example, cannabis—may remain in a person's bloodstream for some days, weeks and possibly even longer and that, although it is present in the blood, it has no effect on their level of impairment. That may or may not be true; I am not an expert in the field. No doubt that argument will be raised in courts across the State. However, it is a moot point in my view.

If a driver is driving with a mid- or high-range level of alcohol—two or three times the legal limit, or possibly higher—with the cumulative presence of an illicit drug in their system, then the law should come down hard on those individuals. Holding a driver licence is a privilege not a right, and other road users have a right to feel safe when using the road. We do not want to see another family go through what the Abdallah and Sakr families have had to endure. For those reasons, I commend the bill to the House.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (15:41): I speak in debate on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Drink and Drug Driving Offence) Bill 2021. The bill introduces important changes to drink- and drug-driving legislation to create a new combined offence for drivers with prescribed concentrations of alcohol combined with the presence of a prescribed illicit drug. In my electorate of Hawkesbury 36 people were killed and 395 seriously injured over the five-year reporting period from 2015 to 2019. Alcohol was a factor in 17 per cent of fatalities and 8 per cent of serious injuries. There were eight fatalities from crashes involving a driver or motorcycle rider with the presence of an illicit drug in their system. One death or injury is one too many, and we must reduce the scale of road trauma through the important initiatives included in the bill.

The intention of the bill is to increase deterrence and send a clear message to drivers that they are putting themselves and others at significant risk when mixing alcohol and prescribed illicit drugs, and that this high-risk behaviour will not be tolerated on New South Wales roads. The new offence is supported by an evidence-based penalty framework with penalties designed to deter people from driving after they have consumed alcohol or taken illicit drugs. As the Minister outlined in his second reading speech, the bill allows police to suspend the licence of a driver who is issued with a court attendance notice for a prescribed concentration of alcohol [PCA] offence. Immediate suspension already occurs for PCA offences. It is designed to ensure that an offender cannot continue to drive until the matter is heard in court. Studies show that sanctions imposed immediately, such as a licence suspension, are a more effective deterrent than sanctions imposed weeks or months after the offence took place.

The licence suspension will remain until the offence is heard by a court. If the driver is convicted and disqualified by the court, the court will take the period already served under suspension into account when imposing the disqualification period. As with existing licence suspensions, drivers can appeal the suspension. The process for appeals will remain the same. In comparison, when a court disqualifies a person from driving, their licence is cancelled and the person has to go through the process of reapplying for a licence.

The bill allows police to apply vehicle sanctions, which already apply in street racing, aggravated burnout, engaging in a police pursuit, excessive speeding by more than 45 kilometres per hour over the speed limit and repeat mid- and high-range drink-driving offences. Vehicle sanctions also apply to instances where a person, when required by police after a failed breath test, refuses or fails to submit to a breath analysis or provide a blood sample. The Vehicle Sanctions Scheme is designed to immediately separate dangerous drivers from their vehicles, reducing their personal risk and the risk faced by others on the road.

While vehicle sanctions can apply only for second and subsequent mid- and high-range prescribed concentration of alcohol offences—not first offences—they can apply to a first high-range combined offence. That reflects the seriousness and much-increased risk of driving with both a high level of alcohol and a prescribed illicit drug presence. Where a driver commits one of those offences and is the registered operator of the offending vehicle, police may confiscate the numberplates at the roadside or impound the vehicle. The confiscation of plates is a preferred and practical alternative to impounding the vehicle and is cheaper to administer. The numberplate removal is a swift and public penalty. Police immediately remove numberplates and attach a numberplate confiscation notice to the vehicle. The notice states that the numberplates have been removed and that it is an offence to drive the vehicle during the confiscation period.

Penalties are severe for those who choose to continue driving a vehicle that has had numberplates confiscated. A person convicted of an offence of operating a motor vehicle on a road during a plate confiscation period faces a maximum court-imposed fine of \$3,300 and vehicle forfeiture. With a second or subsequent offence, the motor vehicle may be permanently confiscated. Numberplate confiscation or vehicle impoundment in New South Wales is usually for three months. It can be up to six months if the offender is disqualified from driving at the time of the offence. There are current appeal rights to address concerns of potential family hardship. For example, a family member can apply to the Local Court to get a vehicle or numberplates back before the impoundment or confiscation period ends. They must show the court that they need to use the vehicle for specific purposes.

The court will consider whether it is reasonably likely that the vehicle will be used to commit sanctionable offences again or whether any extreme hardship will be caused to someone other than the registered owner because the vehicle or numberplates have been taken away. The court cannot release a vehicle or numberplates earlier than five days after they were confiscated. The initiatives in the bill to allow licence and vehicle sanctions to be applied to the combined offences are eminently sensible and in line with other comparable offences, including drink driving.

I congratulate Minister Constance on his rapid response to the devastating occurrence on 1 February last year when four angels had their lives taken. I know that the Minister has worked closely with the Abdallah and Sakr families and that this is a very important bill for him. Leila Abdallah and Bridget Sakr were in this House only last week to hear Minister Constance speak on the bill and of the tragic circumstances that caused us to come to this place and discuss this issue. These are sincere intentions to amend the law and to try to prevent any other families from having to go through such unspeakable grief and pain. The four angels are looking down on this House and relying on us to deliver changes in law that will protect others.

We have to create awareness in drivers, who must understand the consequences of drinking, taking drugs and getting behind the wheel of a vehicle. There is zero tolerance for such behaviour, and the bill reinforces the Government's position. All of us have a duty of care, and the bill is the first step to ensuring that we introduce further protection of lives, whether they are pedestrians, passengers or drivers. I stand here today to honour the four angels: Antony, Angelina and Sienna Abdallah and Veronique Sakr. Their tragic deaths are not in vain. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (15:49): On behalf of The Greens I contribute to the debate on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Drink and Drug Driving Offence) Bill 2021. We support the bill. However, we would like to strengthen it and we will seek to do that in the other place because we believe the bill should do exactly what it sets out to do. We recognise that over a year ago the tragedy occurred of the four young people who were killed in Oatlands and we understand that, for their families, there is no second opportunity to get it right. We believe any death of any person or any harm on the roads as a result of someone being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or both, is a crime and should be punished by the full extent of the law.

The purpose of the bill is to amend the Road Transport Act 2013 and to introduce a combined alcohol and drug-driving offence for drivers with prescribed concentrations of alcohol combined with the presence of a prescribed illicit drug. The bill introduces a new range of penalties attached to the offence, designed to better deter the high-risk behaviour and to reduce the number of motor vehicle accidents—and we get that. With the drink-driving laws over the past 20 years-plus, we have seen that whilst deaths and accidents still occur, there has been a huge improvement in that it is a major deterrent to people that they will be pulled over and that they will be tested. The intention of the bill is to deter drivers from putting themselves and others at significant risk when driving with a mix of alcohol and prescribed illicit drugs in their system.

I note that the member for Goulburn spoke about the alcohol education programs that are very successful in changing the behaviours of offenders. The bill provides for higher penalties for the combined offence and, as well as high fines and custodial sentences, it includes licence and vehicle sanctions. The bill creates a new combined offence of mid- or high-level drink driving with the presence of drugs. The penalties are up to \$5,500 and two years' imprisonment for a first offence. There is strong evidence that drivers who are significantly impaired by legal or illegal drugs while also having alcohol in their bloodstream pose a significant risk. But we, and certainly my community, want to see an impairment test included in the drug testing.

The bill reinforces that it is an offence if there is any presence of a prescribed illicit drug, but there are only four prescribed illicit drugs—ecstasy, cannabis, cocaine and methamphetamine—and the drug testing does not include a test for benzodiazepines, hallucinogens or opioids, which we believe is a problem. We would like to see the testing go much further, as it does in Norway, where 20 illicit drugs are tested for. But at the heart of that testing is an impairment model—scientific testing of the impairment level of a person who has consumed, for example, cannabis, which we know stays in the system for days, if not weeks. We are certainly not suggesting that people should be mixing a cocktail of alcohol and drugs, but we want testing to be expanded to focus on the actual significant impairment in the bloodstream of people who have consumed not just the four prescribed drugs but also all legal and illicit drugs if they impair a person's driving.

I do not want to be on the road when someone, through a loophole, has had a drug test and drug driving is not picked up because the person is on a cocktail of pills that are simply not tested for. We would like to see the drug test expanded to other drugs. Unlike random breath testing for alcohol, which measures levels of alcohol in the blood that have been scientifically proven to impair driving, roadside drug testing detects the mere presence of a few select substances in saliva, meaning the drug could have been consumed days prior. As a result lots of people in the northern rivers region are entering the criminal justice system, and when people enter the criminal justice system they often become hardened criminals. There is no deterrence. If the Minister is serious that this is about deterrence, then let us go all the way.

This is certainly not the fault of the police. This is the fault of legislation that is not grounded in the truth of impairment and treats trace the same as impairment. We support this legislation and we know that we need to get this right. We want to see the community protected. We never want to see a situation where the lives of four beautiful young people out for a walk—Antony, Angelina, Sienna and Veronique—are tragically cut short by a driver who is under the effects of both alcohol and drugs. But this legislation as it stands may or may not deter that kind of individual. We know we need to get this right and that there is still work to be done. The Greens are very willing to make those amendments. Ironically the Norwegian Government has gone so much further and, as I said, is testing for 20 types of drugs and it is a much stronger set of laws. We think impairment levels and testing are at the heart of keeping the community safer overall.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (15:55): I support the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Drink and Drug Driving Offence) Bill 2021 and thank the Hon. Andrew Constance, MP, Minister for Transport and Roads, for introducing it to the House. It is important to acknowledge the reason why the Minister has introduced the bill. This legislation, also known as the Four Angels Law, is in response to the horrific and tragic deaths of four children—Antony, Angelina and Sienna Abdallah, and their cousin Veronique Sakr—who lost their lives this time last year in a crash at Oatlands. The bill's purpose is to introduce amendments to the Road Transport Act 2013 and, in particular, to introduce a combined alcohol and drug-driving offence for drivers with prescribed concentrations of alcohol in combination with the presence of a prescribed illicit drug.

The bill also proposes a new range of tougher and higher penalties in an effort to better deter this dangerous type of behaviour and to avoid road trauma that stems from the number of crashes that are happening on our roads. Any death on our roads is a tragedy and we must head towards zero fatalities. Unfortunately, between 2015 and 2019 15 people were killed and 398 seriously injured within the Holsworthy electorate. Although the fatality rate of 3 per 100,000 population was lower than the State average, it needs to be lower. That is why I have supported, and continue to support and strongly advocate for, safety upgrades to our local roads such as Heathcote Road. Of the people killed and seriously injured on my local roads during this period, alcohol was a factor in 13 per cent of

fatalities and 7 per cent of serious injuries, and there were three fatalities from crashes involving a driver or motorcycle rider with the presence of an illicit drug in their system.

This bill's intention is to deter drivers from putting themselves and the wider community at risk when they drive under the influence of both alcohol and illicit drugs. Some of the penalties for the combined offence under the bill's proposals include higher fines, and licence and vehicle sanctions. It also expands the mandatory alcohol interlock order to the combined offence and requires offenders to attend a drug-driving education and behaviour change program. It is true that there are issues within society that contribute to this problem; however, this bill is a step towards reducing the number of tragic crashes on our roads and the loss of life as a result. The New South Wales Government along with the emergency services and the wider community must work together to reduce road crashes and improve safety for all motorists in New South Wales. This bill seeks to do just that, with the new offence an example of the commitment this Government is making.

This bill is a response to the newly announced saving lives accelerated package, which introduced several measures to reduce problems on the roads that are consistent and dangerous. One of these problems included combined drink and drug driving. The driver who killed the four children in February last year was three times over the alcohol limit and was also affected by illicit drugs. This fatal crash touched the lives of everyone in Australia, as it simply should not have happened. This bill seeks to prevent more families from going through such a tragic and terrible loss. We are all part of that greater responsibility—to obey the rules and save lives on our roads. The New South Wales Government's Road Safety Plan 2021 featured targeted and proven initiatives to address specific areas of trauma and types of crashes on our roads. These included those that involved drink and drug driving. As part of this plan, penalties for drink driving have been increased considerably. Transport for NSW is also developing a drink- and drug-driving education strategy for offenders.

The NSW Police Force has also increased random breath and drug testing on our roads. While all of these strategies have proven successful, more work still needs to be undertaken to address the trauma that stems from road accidents and crashes. This bill is the first step in addressing this. The numbers and statistics of serious casualty crashes involving combined drink and drug driving are staggering. Between 2015 and 2019 there were 101 serious road crashes in which the offender was under the influence of both alcohol and illicit drugs. All of these crashes had an extreme impact on the community—whether it be the immediate families, emergency services, the hospital system and so on. Unfortunately, as a result of these crashes 98 people lost their lives and a further 52 people were seriously injured. Of the crashes between 2017 and 2019, 17 per cent included high levels of alcohol, 21 per cent involved the presence of illicit drugs and 6 per cent involved a combination of both. These numbers show that this is a serious issue within our community. The effects of alcohol and illicit drugs combined with driving put the community at significant risk.

As research states, the combination of both alcohol and illicit drugs increases the risk of a fatal crash by 23 times. This statistic is overwhelming. This is why we need to continue to deter drivers from getting behind the wheel and driving when they are under the influences of alcohol, illicit drugs and, most importantly, a combination of both. It is true that the current approach to decrease this dangerous and high-risk behaviour is through deterrence. To maximise deterrence and stop offenders from engaging in such behaviour, the certainty of punishment, severity of punishment and swiftness of punishment need to be addressed. This bill seeks to strengthen these three points in an effort to toughen the deterrence methods. The New South Wales Government has committed an extra 200,000 mobile drug tests yearly to the NSW Police Force. Under the bill, if a driver tests positive to mid- or high-range alcohol levels at a roadside breath test, they will then have to undergo a drug test. This is due to the increased crash risk that occurs when a driver is under the influence of alcohol at a mid to high level. If a driver tests positive to a low-range alcohol level at a roadside breath test, they too will have to undergo a subsequent drug test. That is to combat repeat offenders.

The New South Wales Government is utilising resources on the most at-risk drivers to ensure that the number of crashes is reduced. The bill's proposals also introduce tougher penalties for offences. Maximum fines are increased and minimum automatic licence disqualification periods are also increased. Penalties for second and subsequent offences have also been increased to around double that of first time combined offenders. The New South Wales Government is ensuring that swiftness of the penalty is also increased. Under the bill a driver's licence is immediately suspended, as this has shown to be more effective as a deterrent. This bill proposes that the drug test will test for the presence of illicit drugs that have been proven to significantly impair driving. That is tetrahydrocannabinol from cannabis, methylenedioxymethamphetamine, or MDMA or ecstasy—methamphetamine, which is also known as speed or ice—and cocaine. As part of the roadside drug test, if it comes up as testing positive to the presence of an illicit substance, the driver will not be charged with a combined offence until results are received from the laboratory. Regardless of the results, the driver will be charged with driving under the influence of alcohol.

In the event that the driver's laboratory results test positive to the presence of illicit drugs, they will then be charged with the combined offence and the original offence of driving under the influence of alcohol will be withdrawn. The driver's licence will be suspended immediately until the court date. This is to ensure that they do not repeat offend during this period. The intention is clear: to increase deterrence and ensure that drivers are not putting others at risk by driving under the combined influence of alcohol and drugs. This is further shown through the bill's proposed increased, tougher penalties. They are designed to be much more severe. The penalty framework includes fines, licence disqualification, alcohol interlocks, vehicle sanctions, imprisonment, and the requirement to attend an education and behaviour change program. While all of these penalties exist for current separate offences, for the combined offence the maximum penalties will be much higher. This directly reflects the higher risk of driving under the influence of both alcohol and drugs.

The current maximum fine for a first-time mid-range drink-driving offence is \$2,200. However, the maximum fine for a first-time mid-range combined offence is \$3,300. The minimum licence disqualification period for a combined offence will be 12 months, in comparison to six months for committing a drink-driving offence. The penalties are significantly higher for second-time or subsequent offenders to acknowledge the seriousness of this offence and the issue of repeat offenders. As a community, we cannot continue to see tragic fatal crashes on our roads as a result of careless and reckless behaviour. This bill is definitely a step in the right direction and is at the forefront of tackling a major issue. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:05): I support the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Drink and Drug Driving Offence) Bill 2021, otherwise known as the Four Angels Law, which will provide for increased penalties for those who drive under the combined influence of alcohol and drugs. The bill is named after the Abdallah siblings—Antony, Angelina and Sienna—as well as their cousin Veronique Sakr, who were all tragically killed by a drug- and alcohol-affected driver in 2020. The families will carry this event for the rest of their lives and one can only imagine the deep hurt that this will cause for generations. They should never have had to endure that. I know that the hearts of all members across this Chamber go out to both families and to all those impacted by this tragedy. It is one of those events that causes the State to stop, pause and reflect on the horrific nature of this crime.

The Government must continue to ensure that we head towards zero fatalities for drink-driving and drug-related incidents and deaths on our roads. Zero is the only acceptable number. This is about protecting lives, including the lives of children, both born and unborn, who have been cruelly taken from us by these types of horrific criminal acts. Sadly, the death of children by alcohol- and drug-affected drivers is an issue that continues to impact on our community in New South Wales and throughout Australia. I refer members to the recent incident in Queensland when young couple Matthew Field and Kate Leadbetter were killed whilst walking their dog on Australia Day by a young driver allegedly under the influence of both drugs and alcohol. Kate was carrying their unborn son, Miles, who was due to be born in three months.

Closer to home in New South Wales, Brodie Donegan was injured when Justine Hampson smashed into her car in 2009 whilst under the influence of drugs. Her child, Zoe, was stillborn and is another example of the loss of a young life. Ms Hampson was charged with dangerous driving causing grievous bodily harm to Ms Donegan but faced no charge in relation to young Zoe's death. The protection of life must be paramount in everything we do in this Parliament. We must continue to ensure that we are fighting to protect all lives who are victims of crime, including those who are yet to be born. The legal issues surrounding women's health care, reproductive rights and options are separate to this issue, which is about justice for victims and the loss of life from crimes committed on our roads.

We need laws in this State that protect against horrific crimes such as these and entrench within our community an understanding that anyone who commits such a crime will be dealt with harshly and justly. As we have often seen, it is not just the driver who is impacted by reckless and selfish acts on our roads. The Government has moved too slowly to protect our community in this space. The impacts of drink and drug driving on victims and their families will often stay with people for the rest of their lives. For too long now we have let our community down, with the Government not acting to protect us from drug- and drink-driving offences. By not acting, the Government has left families in New South Wales exposed.

Throughout 2020, with COVID-19 and the challenges that have been thrust upon the people of New South Wales, we have seen a rise in drink-driving rates. In January and February last year, speeding was a factor in 30 per cent of road deaths. This percentage rose to 72 per cent in March and 54 per cent in April. This bill creates new offences for combined alcohol- and drug-driving offences, and outlines appropriate penalties for drivers convicted of either high- or mid-range drink driving while under the influence of drugs. Those convicted will face up to two years' imprisonment and a fine of \$5,500 for the first offence, rising to \$11,000 for the second offence. Those fines are appropriate and send a strong message to those who would potentially do us harm to think twice before getting behind the wheel of a car while under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or both.

The bill amends the Road Transport Act 2013 to define the new combined drink- and drug-driving offence as a major offence. This increases the penalty for those offences and initiates automatic driver licence disqualifications. Section 205 of the Road Transport Act 2013 is amended to set out the disqualification penalties that apply for the combined drink- and drug-driving offence as part of its designation as a major offence. A driver can be disqualified from holding a licence for up to four years depending on the severity of the offence and the driver's history of offences. Drivers convicted of this new offence will also be subject to a mandatory interlock device order for a minimum period of up to two years for high-range first offences and four years for subsequent offences.

The bill introduces rules regarding testing and evidence that are similar to the rules for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The amendments are sensible and ensure that offenders are treated in a consistent manner for those offences. Although offenders cannot be charged with this combined offence until a secondary laboratory test is completed, they will still be removed immediately from the roads. Their licence will be suspended while confirmation is sought for the drug offence, helping to keep our community safe. This is an important step for public safety, ensuring that drivers who have committed this act are immediately taken off our roads until a court has heard the case. The bill also amends the Road Transport (General) Regulation 2013 to ensure that offenders who have committed an equivalent offence in another jurisdiction will have it recognised in New South Wales courts as their first offence. That will allow for higher penalties if they commit a combined drink- and drug-driving offence in New South Wales.

The recognition of offences committed outside New South Wales when determining penalties will help to ensure that offenders are treated equally if they have shown a dangerous pattern of behaviour. The bill must form part of a strategy by the Government to change the culture of taking drugs whilst under the influence of alcohol and getting behind the wheel. We must engage further with the community to change this behaviour and ensure that no more lives are stolen from us, as we have seen with the Abdallah, Sakr and Field families. We must ensure that no more lives are tragically lost through the selfish acts of drug- and alcohol-affected individuals who use motor vehicles as a weapon to kill. I commend this bill to the House and ask members to continue to implement legislative reforms that protect our children.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (16:13): The Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Drink and Drug Driving Offence) Bill 2021 will introduce a combined alcohol and drug-driving offence under the Road Transport Act 2013 and provide the penalties for the offence. The bill also makes other minor and consequential amendments. Put simply, this bill is a no-brainer. The safety of motorists and pedestrians on New South Wales roads is of paramount importance to the Government and this Chamber as a whole. Driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs of any kind has no place on our local roads and streets, and it will not be tolerated by the Government. We have made the commitment to lowering road trauma and moving our great State towards zero fatalities through education, awareness and harsher penalties. The bill is a strong and thorough reflection of that commitment and for that reason I support it.

In my local community, we place immense value on road safety and awareness. However, the reality is that road trauma can occur anytime and anywhere. For the five-year reporting period of 2015 to 2019, eight people were killed on the roads in the electorate of Oatley and a further 126 were seriously injured. So, in those five years 134 people were killed or seriously injured in my electorate. That number represents around one-third of the students of any given primary school—a truly terrible statistic to reflect on. I am pleased to say that the fatality rate of 2.9 per 100,000 population was below the State average of 4.6. However, one death is one too many and there is no room for complacency in our local community.

It is a worthwhile exercise to assess who was involved in that local road trauma. Thirty-six per cent of the serious casualties were people aged 60 and over. Of those serious casualties males comprised 61 per cent, 23 per cent were pedestrians and 8 per cent were bike riders. These statistics inform us where to direct education and awareness programs to ensure that we continue to move towards zero fatalities. It is equally crucial to analyse what was involved in that road trauma. Speeding was a factor in five of the eight fatalities and 17 per cent of serious injuries. Fatigue was not a factor in any of the fatalities but was a factor in 6 per cent of serious injuries. Alcohol was a factor in two of the eight fatalities and 6 per cent of serious injuries.

There were four fatalities from crashes involving a driver or motorcycle rider with the presence of an illicit drug, which means that six out of 10 fatalities in my local community were a result of drugs and alcohol. Seventy-five per cent of deaths could have been avoided if motorists were not under the influence. That statistic underlines the importance of expanded penalties for drink and drug driving, for which this bill is of enormous significance. The estimated cost to the community of the 134 serious casualties was over \$125 million for the five-year reporting period of 2015 to 2019. That \$125 million could have been invested in local education, health and other projects. However, when it comes to serious casualties, money is the least of our troubles. Every death is an empty seat around a dinner table and has a very real effect on local families.

The community has recently been saddened by the loss of a teenager from a local school in my electorate—Marist Catholic College Penshurst, where I went—in an incident on King Georges Road, Hurstville. We felt the extreme impact of this sudden, fatal crash. The Government should be doing everything it can to ensure that no family has to endure such trauma again. The bill is a big step on our journey towards zero fatalities. I commend the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Drink and Drug Driving Offence) Bill 2021 to the House.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:18): I support the important Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Drink and Drug Driving Offence) Bill 2021, known as the Four Angels Law, which introduces a combined alcohol and drug-driving offence under the Road Transport Act. For the first time they will be considered together, and that is important because the effects of intoxication can often be magnified when alcohol is combined with another drug or multiple other drugs. This offence has been introduced in memory of the Abdallah siblings, Antony, Angelina and Sienna, and their cousin Veronique Sakr, whom we tragically lost on 1 February last year. In addition to the four angels, a number of other cousins were injured very badly in the same accident. It was absolutely horrific.

I have spoken in this place before about the distress that the accident caused to the entire family. I know them through their work with Team Jesus, a group that feeds the homeless in Blacktown at a site owned by Danny Abdallah, where I have joined them on a number of occasions. I know that the family have become very well-known to other members of this House over the past year since the tragic and horrific loss of their children. This really important bill overcomes what I believe is a gap in our legislation that was horrifically highlighted by the actions of the driver that evening, who, in addition to driving under the influence of both alcohol and drugs, broke a number of other road rules. He was speeding, he ran red lights and he crossed over double lines to overtake people. His behaviour was absolutely disgraceful and it caused the loss of four lives.

Under this legislation police will not require all drivers to undertake a drug test in combination with a breath test, only those with high- and mid-range alcohol levels, or those with low alcohol levels when they have had a previous offence. Drivers will be tested for tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, from cannabis, methylenedioxymethamphetamine, or MDMA, methamphetamine and cocaine. I think it would be very useful if the police also tested for hallucinogens and opiates because it is becoming quite well known that people are able to pass a roadside drug test even though they have taken those drugs. That is particularly concerning because in some respects those drugs are far more likely to make somebody unable to control a vehicle.

The penalty framework for the new offence ranges from fines and licence disqualification to mandatory alcohol interlocks, vehicle sanctions, prison terms and, most importantly, a requirement to enter education and behavioural change programs. The new offence carries maximum fines of up to \$11,000 and up to two years in jail. This is going to be very important for improving driver behaviour and sending a clear message to the community that this just cannot continue. Even very low ranges of alcohol in combination with other drugs can affect someone's ability to control a vehicle safely and that can cause horrific accidents, as we saw last year.

I reflect on the actions of Danny and Leila Abdallah immediately after the accident and in establishing the inspiring i4Give Day with Veronique's parents, which was launched on 1 February this year. So many of us were touched by their capacity to forgive the driver so soon after the accident. They were able to understand that he would be dealt with by the legal system. They were not going to hold a grudge against him. They were able to forgive him, despite their grief, through prayer and through their strong faith. To look to people who have been so incredibly wronged yet who are able to forgive and leave the punishment to the legal system is a huge inspiration to many of us who can hold grievances for minor things.

The Abdallah and Sakr families will never forget but they are able to forgive. That is an incredible legacy of the awful experience that they have been through. Another legacy is what we are debating today. It is incredibly important that we all support these changes to the road transport legislation so we make sure that in future people who drive under the influence of alcohol are dealt with appropriately because they are a danger to the entire community. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:24): I speak in debate on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Drink and Drug Driving Offence) Bill 2021. A year ago this last month, four angels touched our hearts. The lives of Antony, Angelina and Sienna Abdallah, and their cousin Veronique Sakr were tragically cut short by a driver who was under the effect of both alcohol and drugs. As the Minister for Transport and Roads said in his second reading speech, this bill is for them and will forever be known as the Four Angels Law. The intention of the bill is to ensure that we deter drivers from putting themselves and others around them at risk. The bill introduces a new combined offence for drivers with prescribed concentrations of alcohol combined with the presence of a prescribed illicit drug. Research shows that alcohol and drugs separately increase the risk of crashing and together they amplify that risk. Trauma data tell us that the use of alcohol and the use of illicit drugs both appear in the top four factors involved in fatal crashes in this State.

As part of the Road Safety Plan 2021, New South Wales introduced reforms that strengthened penalties and enforcement of both drink and drug driving separately. This included ensuring that penalties including licence suspension and fines were consistently and swiftly applied to low-level first offences concerning prescribed concentrations of alcohol and the presence of drugs. It also expanded the mandatory Alcohol Interlock Program to include more offences, introduced vehicle sanctions for certain repeat drink-driving offences and provided that drink and drug drivers may be required to complete an education course.

The impact on the road toll of the drink and drive reforms and other measures in the Road Safety Plan is positive. There were 297 fatalities on New South Wales roads during 2020. This is still too many but it is 56, or 16 per cent, fewer deaths than in the same period in the previous year. It is the lowest end-of-year road toll since 1923. Though this may be in part due to reduced traffic volume due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I have no doubt that the initiatives we introduced through the Road Safety Plan have also played a role. Over a five-year reporting period between 2014 and 2018, five people were killed and 210 were seriously injured on roads in my community.

I know we focus on fatalities when we are talking about road safety; however, it is worth noting that serious injuries have also decreased. At the end of last year the Government published the data on serious injuries up to 30 June 2020. It showed that, for the previous year, there were 14 per cent fewer serious injuries than in the previous 12 months and over 1,500 fewer hospitalisations. While that is an improvement, still too many people are dying or being injured on our roads. For the three years from 2017 to 2019, alcohol was involved in 17 per cent of fatal crashes and illicit drugs were involved in 21 per cent. That is 60 lives lost where alcohol was involved. Seventy-eight people died in crashes involving illicit drugs. Put simply, that is far too many avoidable deaths due to irresponsible behaviour. We need to do better.

Of the 210 serious injuries in the North Shore electorate between 2014 and 2018, 43 per cent of serious casualties were 30 to 49 years of age, with males comprising 64 per cent of serious casualties. Motorcycle riders were 34 per cent of serious casualties, pedestrians 24 per cent and bicycle riders 18 per cent. Speeding was a factor in just 10 per cent of the serious injuries, fatigue was a factor in 6 per cent of serious injuries and alcohol was a factor in 3 per cent of serious injuries. The Government is committed to reducing fatalities and serious injuries on New South Wales roads. The Road Safety Plan 2021 features targeted and proven initiatives that are moving us toward our road safety goals by addressing key trends, trauma risks and the types of crashes that are occurring.

The Road Safety Plan adopts the Safe System Approach to road safety and aims to reduce road fatalities by at least 30 per cent from 2008 to 2010 levels by 2021. The plan also supports the longer-term vision set by the Future Transport Strategy 2056 plan, which is zero road trauma by 2056. I hope my fellow members have seen the *Road Safety Progress* report released in December that outlines how the Community Road Safety Fund, which was established by this Government, was expended in 2018 and 2019 in support of the delivery of the Road Safety Plan 2021. I will highlight some of the achievements of the plan. New South Wales was the first jurisdiction in the world to introduce a mobile phone detection camera program to enable camera-based technology to detect illegal mobile phone use by drivers.

The program will progressively expand to perform 135 million vehicle checks annually by 2023. Independent modelling estimates that the program will contribute to a reduction of approximately 100 crashes causing fatal and serious injury over a five-year period. We are already seeing improved compliance with the law, with one in every 450 drivers being detected illegally using their phone compared with one in every 82 drivers during the pilot phase. Two-thirds of all fatalities occur on country roads and the Road Safety Plan 2021 focuses on tackling the road toll on country roads by ramping up the rollout of road safety infrastructure. We committed to a record investment of \$822 million over five years in road safety infrastructure under the NSW Safer Roads Program. It provides essential infrastructure to make roads safer through the Saving Lives on Country Roads program and Liveable and Safe Urban Communities initiatives.

In 2019-20 the NSW Safer Roads Program delivered 199 projects by investing \$168.2 million into life-saving infrastructure upgrades. The Saving Lives on Country Roads education program raises awareness of road trauma in country areas. It encourages country drivers to rethink the common excuses used to justify unsafe behaviour on the road and make safe, positive choices to reduce risk. The speed camera program continues to deliver high road safety benefits. At locations with fixed speed cameras, fatalities have fallen by 80 per cent and injuries have fallen by more than a third when compared with the five-year period before installation.

To build on the work done so far under the Road Safety Plan 2021, the saving lives accelerated package was announced in November. In addition to the new combined drink- and drug-driving offence, it includes further infrastructure improvement to reduce risk on country roads as well as enhancement of our mobile speed camera program, bringing it into alignment with other Australian jurisdictions and better practice. Independent modelling conducted by Monash University indicates that between 34 and 43 lives will be saved and 600 serious injuries will be prevented each year in New South Wales as a result. Transport for NSW has also led the development of

the internationally recognised Motorcycle Clothing Assessment Program, or MotoCAP, which helps motorcycle riders to select the safest clothing and encourages manufacturers to produce effective protective clothing.

We also continue to prioritise community education about using roads safely. This includes a mandatory focus on road safety in the school curriculum and a range of social media campaigns about key behavioural road safety issues. The NSW Road Safety Facebook page reaches an average of 1.2 million people per week. The Cudal testing and research facility was launched in September 2019 and is capable of testing advanced vehicle and infrastructure safety technologies. Examples include autonomous emergency braking and lane-keeping assistance. It is currently being used to assist with providing vehicles with Australasian New Car Assessment Program [ANCAP] ratings and in future could be used to test emerging technologies such as vehicle-to-infrastructure and vehicle-to-vehicle communication systems.

The New South Wales Government's fleet of vehicles is being made safer as a result of the updated policy for the purchasing of light vehicles, which are now required to have, in addition to the five-star ANCAP safety rating, automatic emergency braking, lane-keeping assistance and reversing cameras or sensors. This will also improve the safety of used cars in New South Wales in future years. We are also expanding the average speed camera network in metropolitan areas to address risks associated with greater truck movements. Despite these improvements, we still can and need to do more to reduce fatalities on our roads. The Government is working on the next road safety action plan, which is due to be released later this year. This will involve setting new targets that point to the Future Transport zero road trauma target by 2056 and determining the most effective countermeasures to target roads with the highest risk.

The focus is on measures that will most reduce serious injuries and fatalities. Stakeholder consultation is proposed to be undertaken as part of the process. In introducing this bill, the Minister spoke quite emotionally about the impact of the loss of these four angels' lives, and it is important for us to recognise that tragedy of just over a year ago. We can never prevent all accidents on our roads, we can never ensure that all drivers will follow the rules, we can never ensure that people will not take illicit substances, and particularly that they will not mix those substances with alcohol and get behind the wheel of a car. What we can do is focus on a deterrence mechanism that ensures people understand the impact on them individually, and the risks to their ability to continue to drive on our roads if they do not follow the law. [*Extension of time*]

It is particularly distressing when we see children affected by people making poor decisions when they get behind the wheel. The way the Abdallah and Sakr families have dealt with tragedy—their focus on forgiveness and their launch of i4Give Day—shows the great human charity that comes from within. I think most of us would struggle to have that kind of empathy, kindness, compassion and forgiveness if we were to lose our own children. But there are many small things that we can continue to do in our communities, and I want to reflect on some of the changes we have introduced in my community recently to try to protect children, in particular. One of those is introducing new school crossing supervisors at our local schools.

My office on Yeo Street in Neutral Bay is just across and down the road a bit from Neutral Bay Public School. It is essentially a rat run for commuters into the city every day. It is a narrow street with one lane each way, and is used by buses. There is a school crossing but it often feels quite risky, even for an adult. We recently installed another school crossing supervisor at the crossing. There are two other school crossing supervisors for the school. Ben Boyd Road—another busy road, particularly with commuters using it as a rat run into the city—has a school crossing supervisor. On Bydown Street, where we have always had a crossing supervisor, there was a very tragic accident just two years ago when a parent and a child were struck by a vehicle. That individual was not under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time, but it shows that even when one is walking on what is the safest of those three streets—right outside the school, with a crossing supervisor—one's life can be at risk.

We need to always acknowledge that driving a vehicle is putting what is potentially a very dangerous weapon in our own hands, and we must take responsibility for our behaviour while behind the wheel and as pedestrians. I know that the nature of impacts on pedestrians is also something that is considered quite broadly in my electorate. We often have very slow traffic speeds but we have a lot of cars, and that can create a risk of clash points with pedestrians. One of my constituents is Harold Scruby from the Pedestrian Council—whom many in this place would know—who is a lifelong advocate for pedestrians' interests and needs. When we see increasing levels of traffic on our roads and increasing risk because of that traffic, we need to make sure that we are focusing on pedestrians. When it comes to the risks associated with children and pedestrians, as I mentioned earlier, we need to focus on schools.

That is why we also introduced a new school crossing supervisor at St Aloysius junior school in Milsons Point and at Redlands in Cremorne. The Murdoch Street side of Redlands is another rat run into the city, so we see incredibly dense traffic volumes coming along Murdoch Street to Bannerman Street, particularly in the morning. While traffic can be very slow, people can often be impatient to get through it. There can be queuing across intersections, people not paying attention to the crossings, and sometimes people trying to push ahead just

to get to work. As we know, during COVID we are seeing more people getting into their cars and off public transport in order to make sure they can get to work and feel safe about their commute. If we do not focus on safety in a very real, practical sense in our own backyard, we create a lot of risk for our community, and particularly for young people.

We have made a number of changes over time that have brought us to the position reflected in this bill, but we have also been heavily influenced by last year's incident that resulted in the loss of the four angels, Antony, Angelina and Sienna Abdallah, and Veronique Sakr. We must continue as a government to show leadership in tackling unnecessary and tragic deaths on our roads. That is why I am pleased to support this new combined offence that targets drivers who put themselves and other road users at significant risk by driving with a combination of alcohol and illicit drugs in their system. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (16:39): I address the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Drink and Drug Driving Offence) Bill 2021. I have listened to the contributions today and it is moving to see all members focusing on respecting, acknowledging and having a sense of solidarity with the families who have suffered such a tragic and unthinkable loss. I am a relatively new father with a two-year-old child, and I could not imagine how shocking it would be to have her life taken in that way. Of course, it demonstrates the responsibility that vehicle drivers have and how dangerous cars can be. I often speak in this House about cyclists. Cyclists might make a bad choice that endangers them, but a driver makes a bad choice and it can kill other people. I think it is important to acknowledge from the outset that, if nothing else, this bill has started a very thoughtful and wide-ranging discussion about the importance of road safety and protecting pedestrians, and preventing unnecessary and tragic deaths like those that occurred as a result of an incident that one cannot really describe in words.

It is important to drive people to make safe and positive choices, and we have heard from many members about ways we can do that. Of course, it is not impossible for us to address the behaviour of drivers, the quality of vehicles on the road, the importance of training and education, improving our road surfaces, improving blackspots—all of those things contribute. I do not propose to go through and re-emphasise all the issues that have been raised. We know there is very strong evidence that drivers are significantly impaired when they use legal or illegal drugs, and we want to make sure that we do everything we can to protect people in our community. But I want to take a few minutes while addressing that issue to address the other road toll. The other road toll is one that has too little focus, and that is air quality and the deaths we know are the result of the air quality in Australia.

I note that in 2019—it seems like a long time ago, given that 2020 was such a terrible year—the Melbourne University Energy Institute collated a range of international and domestic data and identified that, in that year, 1,224 Australians lost their lives due to vehicle accidents, but 1,715 died as a result of vehicle pollution. So it shows that a very significant proportion of people—almost as many as those who had their lives tragically cut short by vehicle accidents—died as a result of vehicle pollution. I draw the House's attention to the estimate of deaths published in the journal *Environmental Research*, which showed the significant impact on mortality of the burning of fossil fuels, and a major report by *The Lancet*—a highly respected health journal—in 2019 that found around 4.2 million annual deaths from air pollution came from dust, wildfire smoke and fossil fuel combustion.

The Electric Vehicle Council and Asthma Australia produced an important report that found emissions from internal combustion engines in the Sydney-Newcastle-Wollongong area created \$3 billion in health costs per year. Those worst affected were unborn babies, children and the elderly. There was a very interesting article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* of 29 June 2019 and also an opinion piece by the Electric Vehicle Council on 31 January 2019 that outlined why it is important we deal with the often unspoken road toll associated with poor air quality.

Official data from a New South Wales and Federal Government report estimates that air pollution from vehicle emissions caused the deaths of 1,715 Australians in 2015, including 650 in New South Wales. That is 60 per cent higher than the number of deaths from motor vehicle crashes in New South Wales that were caused by speeding, alcohol or other factors during that period. Those issues are always complex, but the issue of air quality is particularly important. We know that the road toll, like other State road tolls, is a "measure of the effectiveness of government policy at keeping people safe on New South Wales roads". I agree with many in the community, including Asthma Australia and advocates for electric vehicles, that deaths due to vehicle emissions should also be included in the road toll.

Members can address and deal with that quantifiable issue in a very positive way by supporting electric vehicles, improving fuel standards, improving air quality and decreasing the average age of the vehicle fleet in Australia. It is also important to minimise the use of diesel and improve the efficiency of vehicles. All of those factors must also be discussed as they are important matters. If the Government is concerned about addressing the road toll, we must address the issues that members have been debating today, and that includes air quality. There is a great deal of concern in my community about the exhaust stacks that will take unfiltered pollution from

thousands of vehicles and emit them in one particular location. But that is not why I am talking about the issue today; I am raising it because issues that members have spoken about passionately today have been very positive.

We must take it to the next level and recognise the clear evidence that deaths occur from air pollution. Members must acknowledge those deaths as well, and then we can work to reduce the impact of emissions and we can maximise the opportunities for people to live in a healthy and positive way. I draw to the attention of the House those studies in particular and those issues that were raised in those journals. I encourage the Parliament to consolidate the efforts that it is already making and to address the issue of air quality in a way that is reasonable and practical and that will make a significant difference. That means focusing on electric vehicles and minimising the amount of pollution that we see in our streets. A lot of people are talking about electric vehicles. We must address that as a State and as a country, not just because of the greenhouse benefits but also to reduce the impact of poor air quality. We should all support that.

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (16:47): I support the Road Transport Legislation (Drink and Drug Driving Offence) Bill 2021. I thank the Minister for Transport and Roads, Andrew Constance, for introducing the bill to the House. It is important to acknowledge the reason why the Minister has introduced the bill to the House: This legislation, which is also known as the Four Angels Law, is a response to the horrific and tragic deaths of four young children. This time last year Antony, Angelina and Sienna Abdallah and their cousin Veronique Sakr, lost their lives in a crash in Oatlands. The purpose of the bill is to introduce amendments to the Road Transport Act 2013 and, in particular, to introduce a combined alcohol and drug-driving offence for drivers with prescribed concentrations of alcohol in combination with the presence of a prescribed illicit drug. The bill also proposes a new range of tougher and higher penalties in an effort to better deter this dangerous type of behaviour and to avoid road trauma that stems from the number of crashes that are happening on our roads.

Today I support the 67 families from the electorate of Cootamundra who lost loved ones on our roads between 2015 and 2019. I also support the families of the seven people who died on our roads in the first nine months of 2020. I also acknowledge the tragic losses that we have seen at the start of 2021, including that of a 17-year-old boy who consumed more than 20 schooners before getting behind the wheel. Each and every one of those losses is a tragedy, and many could have been prevented. Cootamundra is the electorate of small communities. Our largest town has around 10,000 people. Everyone knows everyone, and every loss reverberates through an entire community. Our road toll is four times higher than the State average. Families in the communities that I represent are four times more likely to get that devastating phone call or knock at the door. These are people, our people.

We cannot bring back those who have been lost, but we can do our part to ensure that no more names are added to the list. Of those 67 daughters, sons, sisters, mothers, brothers, fathers and friends who lost their lives on our roads, alcohol was a factor for 13 of those deaths, or 19 per cent. A further 13 people lost their lives in crashes involving a driver or rider with the presence of an illicit drug in their system. It has been known for years that alcohol and illicit drugs separately increase the risk of road accidents. Successive governments have invested millions in raising awareness of the dangers of drink driving and asking people to have a plan B to get home. However, people still engage in that risky and at times deadly behaviour. Slower reaction times, risk-taking, impaired vision, loss of concentration and coordination—that is just the alcohol. Together, alcohol and illicit drugs amplify the risk of a fatal crash by 23 times—and the message is still not getting through to some people.

We must increase the deterrence for people who combine alcohol and illicit drugs and then make the reckless decision to get behind the wheel. Clearly they are not listening to the awareness campaigns and they are putting the lives of people on our roads at risk. The New South Wales Government, the emergency services and the wider community must work together to reduce road crashes and improve safety for all motorists in New South Wales. The bill seeks to do just that, and the new offence is an example of the commitment that the Government is making. The bill is a response to the newly announced saving lives accelerated package, which introduced several measures to reduce problems on the roads that are persistent and dangerous. One of those problems is drink and drug driving. The driver who killed those four children in February last year was three times over the alcohol limit and was also affected by illicit drugs. That fatal crash touched the lives of everyone in Australia, and it simply should not have happened.

The bill seeks to prevent more families from going through such a tragic and terrible loss. We are all part of the greater responsibility to obey the rules and save lives on our roads. The New South Wales Government's Road Safety Plan 2021 featured targeted and proven initiatives to address specific areas of trauma and types of crashes on our roads, including those that involve drink and drug driving. As part of that plan, penalties for drink driving have been increased considerably. Transport for NSW is also developing a drink- and drug-driving education strategy for offenders, and the NSW Police Force has increased random breath and drug testing on our roads. While all of those strategies have proven successful, more work must be done to address the trauma that stems from road accidents and crashes. The bill is the first step to addressing that. The current approach to

decreasing dangerous and high-risk behaviour is through deterrence. The certainty, severity and swiftness of punishment must be addressed to maximise deterrence and to stop offenders from engaging in such behaviour. The bill seeks to strengthen those three points in an effort to toughen the deterrence methods.

The New South Wales Government has committed to fund the NSW Police Force to conduct an extra 200,000 yearly mobile drug tests. Under the bill, if a driver tests positive to mid- or high-range alcohol levels at a roadside breath test, they will then have to undergo a drug test. That is due to the increased crash risk that occurs when a driver is under the influence of alcohol at a mid to high level. If a driver tests positive to a low-range alcohol level at a roadside breath test, they too will have to undergo a subsequent drug test. That is to combat repeat offenders.

The New South Wales Government is utilising resources for the most at-risk drivers, to ensure that the number of crashes are reduced. The bill's proposals introduce tougher penalties for offences. Maximum fines and minimum automatic licence disqualification periods are increased. Penalties for second and subsequent offences have been increased to around double that of first-time combined offenders. The New South Wales Government is ensuring that the swiftness of the penalty is also increased. Under the bill a driver licence will be suspended immediately, as that is shown to be a more effective deterrent. The bill proposes that the drug test will test for the presence of illicit drugs that have been proven to significantly impair driving: tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, from cannabis, methylenedioxymethamphetamine, or MDMA—methamphetamine, also known as ice—and cocaine.

If a driver tests positive to the presence of an illicit substance during the roadside drug test, they will not be charged with the combined offence until results are received from the laboratory. Regardless of the results, the driver will be charged with driving under the influence of alcohol. In the event that the driver's laboratory results test positive to the presence of illicit drugs, they will then be charged with the combined offence, and the original offence of driving under the influence of alcohol will be withdrawn. The driver's licence will be immediately suspended until the court date, to ensure that they do not repeat offend during this period.

The intention is clear: to increase deterrence and ensure that drivers are not putting others at risk by driving under the combined influence of alcohol and drugs. That is further shown through the bill's proposed increased, tougher penalties. They are designed to be much more severe. The penalty framework includes fines, licence disqualification, alcohol interlocks, vehicle sanctions, imprisonment and the requirement to attend an education and behaviour change program. Whilst all of those penalties exist for current separate offences, the maximum penalties will be much higher for the combined offence. That directly reflects the higher risk of driving under the influence of both alcohol and drugs. [*Extension of time*]

The current maximum fine for a first-time mid-range drink-driving offence is \$2,200; however, the maximum fine for a first-time mid-range combined offence is \$3,300. The minimum licence disqualification period for a combined offence will be 12 months, in comparison to six months for committing a drink-driving offence. The penalties are significantly higher for second time or subsequent offenders, acknowledging the seriousness of the offence and the issue of repeat offenders. As a community we cannot continue to see tragic and fatal crashes on our roads as a result of careless and reckless behaviour.

In closing, I return to the road fatality figures for the Cootamundra electorate. Twenty-six people lost their lives in accidents where alcohol and/or illicit drugs were present, which is one more than the entire student enrolment at Eurongilly Public School last year. One death is one too many. In the five years between 2015 and 2019, 413 people were seriously injured in road accidents in the Cootamundra electorate. In the reporting period just prior to 2015, my mother was one of those people. Some of those serious injuries have left survivors with lifelong challenges and changed their lives irrevocably.

Combined with fatalities, more than 480 people have been killed and seriously injured on our roads. Those people are overwhelmingly under the age of 26. We are not just losing lives on our roads; we are losing our future. The cost to our communities is vast. Those accidents come with a price tag of \$725 million for our communities. There are no figures for the emotional toll they take on families, friends, loved ones and communities. We must create deterrence for those who choose to mix illicit drugs and alcohol and then get on our roads. We must have a combined alcohol and drug-driving offence. We must have offending drivers go through driver education courses before they get back on the road and we must work towards zero fatalities on our roads. The bill is a step in the right direction and I commend it to the House.

Debate interrupted.

Public Interest Debate

SKILLS TRAINING

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (16:59): I move:

That this House acknowledges the Government's commitment to education in this State, in particular its commitment to building skills for the future.

I update the House on how the Government is building skills for the future for the people of New South Wales. COVID-19 has had an enormous impact on communities across our State and skilling up is more important than ever. Our economy has undergone major changes. Businesses have had to innovate to survive and others have grown by taking advantage of the new opportunities that have opened up during COVID. Businesses have pivoted their operations in ways we could never have imagined—a great example is businesses that pivoted to provide vital personal protective equipment to our hospitals during COVID when supply lines were disrupted. Our world-beating approach to COVID has made us a safe and open place to invest. New South Wales is now an even more attractive place for new businesses seeking skills to set up.

The Government backed that in with its \$250 million Jobs Plus Program, which will help support up to 25,000 jobs to 30 June 2022. Businesses that want to expand their footprint in New South Wales will get payroll tax relief for a period of up to four years for every new job where there are at least 30 net new jobs created. The Government will have training programs for specialised skills to support those new jobs into the future. Against that backdrop, earlier this year the Premier launched the *Turning ideas into jobs: Accelerating research and development in NSW Action Plan*. New South Wales has more great universities than any other jurisdiction, more startups and more great ideas. Looking back, we can see that Google Maps, pacemakers and the beginnings of wi-fi were invented here in New South Wales.

The plan sets out how we can turn more of our great ideas to the skills we will need in this State, to make sure that we have new jobs and new industries. There are five priority actions that come from that plan. Some of those actions are directly relevant to the work that the Government is focused on in building the skills for the future. In consultations that I led with the public, startups told us that they need more skills in business and entrepreneurship. They wanted digital skills, cyber skills and skills in advanced manufacturing to grow their businesses. To make the action plan come to life, \$2 million has been awarded for a matchmaking platform, which will make visible the places in New South Wales where startups can find those skills. The \$24 million funded towards the small business innovation and research program will drive demand for people with skills for our future industries.

Those skills will support priority innovation precincts—Western Sydney Aerotropolis, Westmead and Tech Central—and special activation precincts across regional New South Wales. In fact, the Government is setting up a vocational training centre in the heart of the aerotropolis, focusing on advanced manufacturing. The Government's strong commitment to building skills for the future is tangible. It is going to maximise some amazing opportunities for New South Wales through the programs and announcements it has made. Unlike Labor, the Government supports a dynamic, competitive skills training market, with TAFE NSW as the comprehensive public provider.

The 2020-21 budget demonstrates that commitment with a record investment of \$2.7 billion into recurrent funding, \$28 million into capex and \$100 million into maintenance and new equipment for TAFE NSW facilities. That means there are more than 140 TAFE NSW campuses across the State that will get funding for plant, teaching equipment and maintenance. In December last year the member for Blue Mountains, who is not in the Chamber, described the \$100 million as a pitiful recovery fund. Can you believe it? The member for Blue Mountains should hang her head in shame. She is not in the Chamber because she is so ashamed of trying to portray a big investment in skills training in her electorate as anything else but that. She should be thanking this Government for the strong result in her local community, and she should be celebrating that investment.

This Government's commitment to building skills for the future in regional New South Wales is also rock-solid. This year's budget included \$20 million of State and Commonwealth funding to deliver new connected learning spaces for at least 26 TAFE NSW campuses, including Albury, Dubbo and Griffith. Those digitally equipped spaces will include specialist teaching spaces, such as workshops and kitchens, and they will be located within existing campuses to extend the reach of training delivery to all parts of our State. Regional New South Wales will have eight Connected Learning Centres [CLCs]. In fact, the West Wyalong CLC opened last month. I know the member for Cootamundra, who is in the House, has seen firsthand the incredible impact of those facilities in her regional community and beyond.

Of course, we are getting on with the construction of the TAFE NSW Digital Technology Centre of Excellence and the Multi-trades Hub at Meadowbank in the electorate of the member for Ryde, who is affectionately known as the "Minister for data". That TAFE facility is part of the Meadowbank Education and Employment Precinct that is going to bring education, employment and industry together in a way it never has been in this State. It will equip the young people of this State for the future. We also have the \$80 million Construction Centre of Excellence at TAFE NSW Kingswood.

I notice the member for Londonderry has not championed that either. She should be thankful to the New South Wales Government for what is a historic investment in her electorate in skills for the future. We are simply getting on with things. Today the Government announced 20 new virtual vocational and educational training courses that will be offered to every government high school by 2022, equipping our school students with the skills for the future. Unlike Labor members, who will not even listen to what I am saying about our strong commitment, on this side of the House we have a strong and continuing commitment to building the skills for the future.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (17:06): The Opposition proposes an amendment to the motion. I move:

That the motion be amended by adding the words 'and calls on the Government to rule out any further privatisation of TAFE or the sale of TAFE campuses.'

After listening to the member for Vacluse champion TAFE NSW, I would imagine the Government would support the amendment. I do not want to pull anything out of the bag yet. I dare say the Government may vote against it. That would be quite funny because I am sure I heard the member for Vacluse talk about how wonderful TAFE is and how much the Government values it. My challenge to members opposite is to support the amendment that calls for the Government to rule out any sales of TAFE campuses.

Today when the member referred to 140-odd campuses, I called out, "Today!" because in a couple of weeks Scone campus will come off that list. Scone TAFE campus is located in the heartland of "horse Australia". Scone TAFE was built to be an equine excellence centre. What does this Government propose to do? It will sell it off for less than the replacement cost. Why will it do that? Because it does not care about TAFE or skills. Government members talk about skills—anyone can deliver a great speech, cut a ribbon and take a photo—but when it comes to commitment, let us see the commitment in half an hour's time when we ask them to vote to rule out any potential sales.

New South Wales schools across all sectors have 1.2 million students. Every one of those students deserves the opportunity to have the best possible future. Some will go to university, some will go straight into a job and some will go to TAFE. We have to ensure that they have every possible opportunity. Obviously today's announcement is about ensuring opportunity. We will never disagree with opportunity but, as with many ideas from this Government, this idea has no substance behind it. Let us look at the Government's track record. For 10 years it has gone about the absolute ideological destruction of TAFE: 5,500 teachers gone, casual and temporary staff appointed, and over 100,000 fewer students. This Government talks the talk but cannot follow it up. In certain parts of New South Wales youth unemployment is up to 20 per cent. In the regions, one in five young people cannot get a job and cannot get into TAFE. Why would the Government be closing or selling TAFE campuses? Why would it reduce courses?

Enough about that. Let us return to the motion before the House. It sounds great in theory but I remind members opposite of things they may have forgotten. Once upon a time I was a school principal. We used to run pre-apprenticeship courses with TAFE—a great opportunity for young kids who may have been struggling at school to do a couple of days at TAFE to complete a pre-apprenticeship course, continue on to get a certificate II or III, and then move into an apprenticeship. What did the Government do? It did what it loves to do: It cut the public education provider. What else did it do? It was going to offer vocational education and training courses, but where is the teacher training? Where is the support? Why is it so hard to get a school-based traineeship or apprenticeship? It is simply because so much paperwork is involved.

The Government can make an announcement about what it will do—today I was excited because I thought it would be next semester. No, it will be next year because this Government is so good at making announcements but falls down in following them through. We have seen that again. Let's make it clear: Not every peg will fit into a round hole so we on this side want an education system that is inclusive, provides an opportunity for everyone and gives them the best chance. Those opposite say, "We will offer only these courses and that is the end of it." What is the Government doing to cut youth unemployment and to provide courses? What is the Government doing to ensure that kids who cannot do their HSC at school can get to a TAFE? What if someone wants to do tiling on the far North Coast—where do they go? Why does the Government continue to cut courses in areas of massive skills shortage?

We know there is a skills shortage. Responsibility for that rests squarely at the feet of this Government. It seems to have woken up. This is not a plan; it is a rectification of what the Government has done wrong. It is a rectification after 10 years of abuse of the TAFE system—a rectification after the Government runs down a public education provider and then sees the error of its ways. This Government is all about spin. We want to see fewer people talking about how well they will do. We want to see the proof of the pudding. The Government has not shown it to us yet.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:12): I thank the member for Vaucluse for introducing this public interest debate. She has put her money where her mouth is when it comes to investing in skills for our nation and for New South Wales. Recently she announced an action plan accelerating research and development [R&D] in this State. The member worked with some of the State's most eminent minds in research and development to shape an innovation action plan for the future. In moving the motion, the member acknowledges this Government's investment in building skills for the future right across the spectrum—from the vocational education and training sector through TAFE, high schools, primary schools, even our early learning centres, all the way through to our universities, and to learning and skills innovation on the job. We need to create that ecosystem in New South Wales to ensure that we continue to innovate.

As the member said, Australia is known for a wide range of outstanding innovations and inventions. For instance, members may know that wi-fi was invented across the bridge at Marsfield in northern Sydney—great, world-changing things are not invented only in the CBD. In this nation we can harness the skills in our population and give people the capacity to make these innovations. I acknowledge what the member for Vaucluse has done and continues to do in this space. This debate is about how we are skilling the workforce for the jobs of the future. In recent years our State has faced unprecedented challenges. Drought has affected almost the entire State and has had significant impacts on agricultural production, our workforce and our broader regional economies. Then we had the devastating bushfires that, as everyone knows, tore apart communities in many areas of New South Wales. That had an ongoing effect on regional tourism and forestry sectors overnight.

Now we all face the damaging economic impacts of COVID-19, with businesses and workers across the State feeling the effects of the necessary health measures we have put in place to keep people safe. In response to COVID-19 we introduced a range of fee-free short TAFE courses. Some 21 of those courses are in place in areas such as health, business and IT, coding, cybersecurity and different elements of leadership, which gave people whose employment was impacted—people who lost their jobs, had their hours reduced or had been stood down—the ability to upskill or re-skill. I am pleased to report that over 115,000 people had enrolled in those courses by the end of July 2020. The New South Wales Government has also offered fee-free courses to bushfire-affected communities to empower local communities to rebuild or retrain.

To date over 2,500 people have enrolled in free bushfire courses, including chainsawing, environmental work, fencing, tree felling and white cards. The Government has also offered drought-affected communities multiple fee-free training opportunities to help people upskill and re-skill. On each occasion the Government has risen to the challenge of skilling our workers to manage the immediate impacts, as well as ensuring that as a State we are best positioned to take advantage of the opportunities to come. Whether you are getting your first job, a new job or a better job, now is the time to upskill. The Government is providing opportunities across the State, with many thousands of fee-free courses available. The 2020-21 skills budget demonstrates the Government's commitment to helping our communities recover. It has \$2.7 billion in recurrent funding, which is a 17.6 per cent increase on last year and includes \$318.6 million over two years for JobTrainer.

The New South Wales Government will match the almost \$160 million provided by the Commonwealth Government. We are delivering over 100,000 free training places under the package, which is a key component of the Premier's COVID-19 recovery plan. To date, we have delivered more than 15,000 places, with many to come. The package is about supporting job seekers and people who have lost their jobs as a result of COVID-19. It is also helping school leavers transition to further education or work. I encourage anyone who is thinking about upskilling or re-skilling to take up the great opportunities offered by JobTrainer. In addition to those great opportunities, this morning members in this place heard the Government's announcement of 20 new virtual Vocational Education and Training courses that will be made available to every New South Wales Government high school by 2022.

In addition to the existing face-to-face VET, year 11 and 12 students will have the opportunity to study teacher-led, digitally-enabled virtual TAFE NSW courses that will give them in-demand skills for the workplace while also contributing to their HSC and ATAR. Those courses will help students build skills across emerging industries such as advanced manufacturing, technology and engineering. They are real jobs with real futures for the people of New South Wales to thrive in a post-pandemic economy; they are the skills of the future.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:17:2): This public interest debate is about the future of our nation. Under a Federal Liberal Government and a State Liberal Government in New South Wales, we have seen disastrous education results on a global scale, with massive drops in our Programme for International Student Assessment [PISA] results, TAFE land sold, course hours crushed, online pop-up TAFEs replacing face-to-face teaching and a whole bunch more privatisation. The Scone TAFE campus is about to be shut down. I have asked the Minister to commit to not selling our TAFE land on the Central Coast. We will see what happens when we vote on that today. Under Labor, TAFE NSW was respected as an institution to educate our community and upskill our workforce. Under the Liberal Government, we are hearing cries of skills shortages but, at the same time, there

is privatisation across the State and more than 5,700 staff have been sacked. Central Coast students have seen their local staff numbers cut, courses slashed and class hours shortened—not just in our community but across the State.

Today I thank TAFE teachers, who have not been happy at all because they have had to force their courses into the shorter periods that they have to teach. Youth unemployment on the Central Coast under the Liberal Government has always been double figures. I thank my chambers of commerce, which have been coming to me crying out about skills shortages. We are seeing further and further reduction of what is being taught in TAFE. It is horrible that we have had to import people from overseas to fill our skills gap because we do not have the people in our community. It has been 10 years of this Government and it is a sad state of affairs. The World Economic Forum has identified the top 10 skills of increasing value to future workplaces as creativity, emotional intelligence, complex problem solving, judgement and decision-making, cognitive flexibility, critical thinking, people management, coordinating with others, service orientation and negotiation.

Those are all skills for the future but, at the same time, under State and Federal governments, we have seen our PISA results plummet compared with other OECD countries. We are now below average in maths and we tumbled down global rankings in reading and science. Over the past three years our scientific literacy has declined, particularly in New South Wales, with more low performers and fewer high performers in what is the biggest drop since testing began. I also point out that overall our most disadvantaged students were three years behind the most advantaged ones. Despite the celebration in Federal Parliament of the apology, the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students continues to widen. Surely this should be a wake-up call for the Liberal State and Federal governments because historically we have been above average. That means our kids are not getting the skills they need to cope in a globalised world.

I encourage the education Minister to drop in and visit teachers across New South Wales to gain a good understanding of what happens. She should do that not on the posh day when she is cutting ribbons and getting the photo but on a real day when the teachers are in the classroom, run off their feet with all sorts of paperwork, personal planning profiles, individual student profiles, recording the supports provided to kids with diverse needs, managing behaviour, managing family crises, writing up behaviour records and rewriting programs—which will be obsolete next year when we get a new curriculum—completing daybooks, following up assessments and N awards.

Mr Jihad Dib: They must be tired.

Ms LIESL TESCH: I know! Seriously, I know that they come home without really having the time they need to prepare the detailed lesson plans that our individual students need. In New South Wales a number of teachers are teaching out of area in those future subjects. We do not have engineers in our classrooms teaching engineering studies, nor do we have software designers or multimedia specialists. We are about to be thrown another 20 new courses, where some teacher somewhere has to learn the course, write the curriculum, write the programs, organise the excursions and organise the contacts with the other places as well. We must listen to our teachers in the classroom about what their needs are and how they are managing to deliver the best that our kids need.

This debate is about skills for the future but the Government has promised 100 schools that have not yet been delivered. It is alright to talk about skills for the future but we do not even have a school in a whole bunch of these communities. Gregory Hills, Marsden Park, Edmondson Park and South Nowra do not have the schools they were promised. It has been eight years and we soon might be getting a hole in the ground in Wyong for a school. Realistically, I encourage the education minister and the Minister responsible for TAFE to go and visit schools—on the ground, grassroots—to see what is going on in our classrooms to help deliver the skills for the future that our kids need today and our workplaces needed yesterday.

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:22:2): I update the House on how the Government is providing access to the skills of the future for people in regional and rural New South Wales. One major way that we are delivering on this commitment is through the TAFE Connected Learning Centres [CLCs], which are state-of-the-art, digitally-equipped campuses that utilise technology to expand access to training in the regions. TAFE NSW has already opened CLCs in many locations across New South Wales, including Quirindi, Glen Innes, Tenterfield, Coonabarabran, Bega, Narrandera, Deniliquin, Corowa, Bourke, Grenfell, Singleton, Yamba, Murwillumbah, Scone and, most recently, West Wyalong in my electorate. We have seven more underway in Nambucca Heads, Byron Bay, Hay, Jindabyne, Batemans Bay and Cobar.

TAFE is one of the most dynamic education providers in the country, focusing on producing graduates with the skills to be workforce-ready. As a TAFE graduate I can attest to this: I have a diploma in floristry, which I had to work hard for. Those educational hubs enable students to study courses never before offered at their local TAFEs. They utilise remote learning, practical training, technology and state-of-the-art study spaces to enhance

the educational opportunities available at a local level. They are not shopfronts, as they have been called at times by those opposite. I encourage them to have a look at what a CLC delivers for people in small communities such as Grenfell with a population of 2,200 people, or West Wyalong with a population of less than 4,000, or Narrandera with a population of 5,500 people.

I reject any criticism of CLCs. That criticism can only come from people who do not understand what it is like to live in a rural area and try hard to access the education that you would like to pursue, ideally without leaving home to do so. The truth is that they are game-changing facilities for communities otherwise impacted by the tyranny of distance. You only have to visit to see how much they lift our remote communities. They are state-of-the-art educational facilities that help keep our towns alive. TAFE has long delivered education in regional New South Wales. However, the traditional facilities have been restricted by geography when offering courses to a spread out and diverse population. CLCs solve this problem. They eradicate the inequity of accessibility experienced by regional and remote communities. They have opened up opportunities in the small communities of the Cootamundra electorate. I cannot say how much they are valued in our communities.

In Narrandera we opened our CLC in August 2018. The \$4.76 million facility offers courses in drone essentials, certificate IV in commercial cookery and a diploma in business administration. Before the CLC was opened people had to travel 200 kilometres round trip to Wagga Wagga to access those courses. The \$4 million CLC at Grenfell has 20 new courses this year, including agriculture, business, early childhood education, care and tourism, which are all vital educational courses to set up our people and our towns for the future. Just this month, as I mentioned, we opened alongside the Minister the \$6.6 million investment at West Wyalong. I committed to that project at the last election and I am proud that we have delivered it.

At that opening I had the opportunity to do a floristry demonstration for a class of 10 people who had signed up to do floristry in West Wyalong. It was wonderful to do that because when I did my diploma I had to travel from Young to Sydney, week in, week out for almost two years. It was very difficult on me, my family and my business. To think that floristry could be offered in a small place such as West Wyalong and beyond is fantastic. I encourage those opposite to come out to a small community and see the difference that the CLCs are making and the opportunities that they open up. It is about setting up our communities for the future.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (17:27): I find it the ultimate act of hypocrisy for the member for Vacluse to stand up here, beat her chest and do a victory lap around this Parliament on the Government's TAFE reforms and education in this State. It is appalling and obscene that the member even has the cheek to stand here and talk about it. I go back a hundred years or so, back to the 1830s actually when TAFE was founded in 1833. The Sydney Mechanics School of Arts was at the forefront of the New South Wales TAFE system, offering a mechanical drawing class. Then we skip down to 1883 and there were skill shortages, which were dealt with in an appropriate way. It was driven by the union movement, which is something that I did know, but I did not know to what extent. It was the union movement throughout the early 1900s that ensured that we had a TAFE system to fill those shortages in New South Wales.

It is obvious to me now why those opposite do not like TAFE, like they do not like universal healthcare; it kind of goes hand in hand. Whenever those opposite see anything that is run by a government, they immediately say, 'We must privatise this, quick. We cannot have the Government running this; it is too hard.' Skip to 2016, five years after the Government came into power. That is when we started to see the destruction of TAFE in New South Wales. Those opposite had a vision—and boy, did they have a vision! I have only got to look at my own TAFE at Dapto, once a thriving TAFE with almost 1,000 students, over 100 teachers, in the middle of Dapto CBD, close to a train station, running all sort of courses for people within the Illawarra and surrounds.

What did those opposite do? They gutted it. They chopped its head off and gutted it like a blue fin tuna—just gone. No more TAFE—gone. Instead, what did we get? We got a little shopfront down the road that does not even have a toilet—no bathroom. Just a little shopfront, a little computer and a couple of little pamphlets: That is what it has been reduced to. For those opposite to preach to us about TAFE and skill shortages is an absolute joke.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I want to hear the member for Shellharbour.

Ms ANNA WATSON: We have seen what the Government has done recently at Scone. Those opposite have sold off that state-of-the-art TAFE campus for less than what it is worth. That tells you everything about what those opposite think about TAFE in New South Wales. Only about 2,400 school-based apprenticeships are on offer in New South Wales and those opposite think that is okay. In my electorate, families cannot afford to go to TAFE. The fees are too high, even if there is a HECS debt.

Mr Jihad Dib: It's the same in western Sydney.

Ms ANNA WATSON: It is the same across New South Wales, particularly in western Sydney, where people are really struggling. I will give an example. A couple of years ago a family came to my office. Their son

wanted to do an assistant in nursing course. The cost of that course over three years was \$26,000. I do not know too many families that have a spare \$26,000 lying around to do a TAFE course. But that is okay in those opposite's eyes; it is progress. It is absolutely obscene. Those opposite talk about the chronic skill shortages after the damage they have done. They say that the CLCs and changes to the TAFE system are okay. Then there were all those dodgy providers. Remember that? We privatised everything and we had all these dodgy training providers. Families lost all their money and came out with no training certificates and no online learning. It was a scam. What did we hear from those opposite? It was crickets—not a thing. What the New South Wales Liberal Government has done is generational theft and I ask the Premier: Are you proud of that, Premier? [*Time expired.*]

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (17:32): I thank the member for Vacluse for her motion and the member for Lakemba for his amendment. This is a very important topic. It goes to the heart of the future of our regions. We are facing a significant skills shortage in our regions and we have an education sector that seems to have lost its way. Reforms to the higher education sector over the past decade have seen a large increase in the number of school leavers going to university. Has that been the best outcome? It seems to have devalued our vocational education sector. It seems to have created a mindset in our schools that values and encourages a university pathway away from our communities.

The rush to university might be good for university enrolment, but it is not necessarily good for the vocational skills that we need in our communities. A recent survey in my region by Regional Development Australia-Riverina has identified that more than three-quarters of the companies surveyed face real skills shortages. Among those are agriculture, forestry, fishing, manufacturing, accommodation and food services, health care, professional and technical services, rental, hiring and real estate. Those are the skills that we are missing but are those skills being provided? There is a real risk that they will not be.

I am concerned that at a time when we are experiencing real gaps in our workforce that are constraining our growth we are encouraging young people to study irrelevant degrees at university away from regional and rural communities. That is why TAFE and the VET sector is so critical to our future. For decades TAFE has been recognised as a leader when it comes to vocational education in New South Wales, particularly in regional and rural communities, where it has maintained a real presence despite market forces. Apprenticeships and education in regional and rural areas provide a future for our young people and we must offer young people in regional and rural areas education and work opportunities. Without those opportunities young people are forced to travel to the cities for their careers.

That is vocational education and TAFE, but I do not want to restrict my comments just to that because I believe the university sector has a role to play here as well. Institutions like Charles Sturt University were set up to create opportunities for young people to study in regional areas. They are perfectly positioned to offer opportunities to students in regional heartlands and to forge links to their home communities. But in our market-based approach now and with the pressures on universities and the opening up of caps, the focus seems to be away from the regions; the focus seems to be on an outcome related purely to profit rather than to the benefit of our communities. It is true that the COVID pandemic has affected universities and of course Charles Sturt University is no different—it is faced with cost-cutting measures that include rationalisation and staff cutbacks—but we need to ensure that those rationalisations do not come at a cost to future would-be students and a cost to our regional and rural communities. The key is the link to our local communities.

Before I conclude I refer to a recent report of the upper House Portfolio Committee No. 3 into the future of tertiary education, which made an interesting recommendation that I would like the Government to look at. The committee recommended that the New South Wales Government develop a model of precinct or industry cluster planning to maximise the potential of its education, health, transport and regional development investments that are linked to universities, TAFE and private tertiary providers. This is a real opportunity for our regional communities. In my electorate, for example, there are two such opportunities. One is a health and knowledge precinct that the local council has formed around our health providers but which has brought together the University of New South Wales, the University of Notre Dame, Charles Sturt University and TAFE. The idea is that by linking them in a precinct with health providers we can map out a career that goes from school, through vocational education and university, to skill people who will continue to work in our communities and for our communities.

In the special activation precinct in our region there is another opportunity for TAFE and Charles Sturt University to cooperate and I encourage them to continue to work together, co-locate, link to the special activation precinct and team up so that we have that pathway from schools, through vocational education, to jobs in our community. The key to this is a joined-up system—a pathway for our young people so that education is in place to provide the right skills for our communities and the right future for our young people.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vacluse) (17:37): In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of North Shore, Cootamundra, Lakemba, Gosford and Shellharbour and the very thoughtful member

for Wagga Wagga—as he is present in this Chamber—who said the only sensible things that were said on the opposite side of the House. What we heard today is just typical Labor. We heard the hyperbole. What did the member for Lakemba say? He said there had been 10 years of abuse to TAFE.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I want to hear the member for Vacluse. I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the first time. I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the second time.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: The biggest contribution to this debate from the member for Lakemba was that there had been 10 years of abuse to TAFE. The member for Lakemba says that it is all about the spin. The member for Shellharbour says that it is appalling. That type of hyperbole is not borne out by the facts—Labor likes to use that kind of rhetoric.

Ms Anna Watson: Don't you like the truth?

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: No, it is rhetoric, and it is not borne out by the facts. What you guys have got to realise—sorry—is that your rhetoric does not match the facts. You have not understood the investment into your local communities. Take the member for Gosford.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Gosford to order for the first time. The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Vacluse will resume her seat. Last week I had the member for Shellharbour removed from the Chamber—I thank her for owning up.

Ms Anna Watson: I'm so nice.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: You are, yes. If the member for Shellharbour, the member for Gosford or the member for Lakemba keep interjecting, it will happen again.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Wagga Wagga is sitting in silence. Members should learn from the member for Wagga Wagga. Does the member for Lakemba have a point of order?

Mr Jihad Dib: Yes, it is to that point. The member opposite—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: What is the standing order?

Mr Jihad Dib: —incites people on this side of the Chamber. We have been quite respectful and fairly quiet, but then the member for Vacluse decided to throw barbs and make it personal and I think it is understandable that people respond. As for the member for North Shore, no-one really asked for her opinion on this, given that members were not talking—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I thank the member for Lakemba. I have heard enough. With one minute and 30 seconds left for debate, the member for Vacluse will continue.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: To make this personal, let us look at what has gone into the electorate of Gosford. A share of \$100 million has gone into Gosford. The fact is that there is a commitment to the campus there. That \$100 million was shared between Gosford, Ourimbah and Wyong. I can tell those opposite what that went to. I have a note here that tells me that at Gosford it went to two industrial gearboxes, nail chairs, large trolleys, a kitchen refurbishment, a commercial oven and so it goes on. That is the reality of the Coalition's investment into TAFE in New South Wales.

In my remaining minute I want to talk about the skills for the future, which is what the member for Wagga Wagga spoke about. It is about joined up skills. It is about some of the things we spoke about. It is about the announcement we made today where kids in schools will be given the opportunity to learn skills for the future at HSC level and get credit for it. It is about university students being able to get the opportunity to gain TAFE qualifications while they are studying at university, to make that training real, and to make them readily employable. This is about the innovation that the member for Wagga Wagga spoke about, and it is about the work that this Government is doing. We are strongly supporting TAFE with \$100 million in this year's budget and we are creating new ways to respond to some of the challenges that are on the table, which I spoke about in my opening remarks. The member for Wagga Wagga has met with the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education and I understand his particular concerns are being addressed by the Minister.

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

The House divided.

Ayes40
Noes45
Majority.....5

AYES

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

NOES

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

PAIRS

Lalich, N	Berejiklian, G
Mihailuk, T	Lee, G

Amendment negatived.

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

Motion agreed to.*Private Members' Statements***WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS**

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (17:52): One of my favourite days of the year is Australia Day: 26 January. It was in 1949 that the Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948 came into effect, creating a new status of Australian citizen. I was in Wingecarribee this year for Australia Day. I have two council areas in my electorate of Wollondilly: Wollondilly Shire Council and Wingecarribee Shire Council. On that date 20 people originating from the great United Kingdom, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, India—they were quite happy because they had just won the test series—Ireland, Cambodia, Switzerland, Iran and Wales were welcomed as citizens of this great country.

One of the great things I also love about Australia Day are those who get nominated as Citizen of the Year. Some great citizens were up for nomination this year. The first was Catherine Constable, OAM. Catherine has retired from the board of the Wingecarribee Adult Day Care Centres, which basically provides company and entertainment for those senior citizens who may be lonely in life. They can go to the day centre. It has activities and is a great community service. The next was Ms Jill Dyson, who has worked tirelessly for the food and wine

community over the past 10 years. There are over 130 producers and restaurateurs in the Southern Highlands. It was great that she got some recognition and exposure for some of the great work she has done in those industries.

Another nominee was our Placido Domingo, Richard Lane, who is a magnificent opera singer. He trained as an opera singer and performed around Australia and the United Kingdom. Richard is a big believer in the community. One of the great things he has done is start up the Wingecarribee Local Master, which encourages young people to sing and perform. A lot of the young kids may have mental health issues and this gives them great confidence to get up and sing. Some of those singers are pretty good—they are up there with the former member for Epping. I will not be singing today in the Chamber, as I have done on a couple of occasions. Richard Lane is a great community member.

Craig Madsen, the general manager of the Mittagong RSL, is an absolute champion. During the fires the club was making 400 meals a day for the RFS. My electorate of Wollondilly has 26 RFS brigades. In the whole of the Southern Highlands area, which I share with the member for Goulburn, there are about 52 brigades and Mr Madsen was feeding those people. Mittagong RSL was used as an evacuation centre during the fires and regularly accommodated hundreds of people. It was like a scene out of Noah's Ark. There were dogs, cats, rabbits and many different companion animals in cages in the auditorium. One of the scariest nights was in the new year when the fires hit Wingello and Bundanoon—which is outside of my electorate—when we had to move a lot of those people from the Moss Vale evacuation centre back to Mittagong. It was getting close to midnight when about 759 people had to go to that evacuation centre when the fires hit the Southern Highlands.

Adam Stokeld, the station manager at Highland FM, has repositioned and built up community radio within the Southern Highlands. He does a magnificent job of serving the community. But the winner for the Citizen of the Year was Catherine Constable, OAM. From this lower House of Parliament, I thank her for everything that she does. Not only do we have a great Citizen of the Year but we also have a great Young Citizen of the Year: a young lady by the name of Charlotte Gillespie. She is a magnificent volunteer and is extremely humble. Since starting in year 7 at Chevalier College in 2016, she has become an active member of the school and wider community. She regularly goes to HarbisonCare and Abbey House to deliver communion under the Catholic faith to the people in those homes who cannot get to church. It is great to see a young student like her doing this work for the community. When those people come up, I think we have to put their names up in lights and show them how much we appreciate them. I congratulate all of the citizens who were nominated and I look forward to next Australia Day in the Wollondilly shire.

TEMPE PUBLIC SCHOOL OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (17:57): I urgently raise the issue of the new provider selected to run out of school hours [OOSH] care at Tempe Public School. Last year the Department of Education put Tempe's OOSH services to tender. Applicants included incumbent provider Tempe OOSH, run by the Pentecosts of Tempe, and the largest OOSH provider in the country, Camp Australia, owned by global equity firm Bain Capital. Tempe Public School parents became concerned that their established, respected and well-liked community provider would be replaced by a large commercial provider. Too often the tenders are won not by those best placed to deliver services but by large for-profit organisations experienced at writing cut-price tender applications.

At the time I wrote to the department urging it to take into genuine consideration the views of the Tempe Public School community, which had conducted a formal survey of more than 100 families at the school. The P&C advised me at the time:

It is abundantly clear ... the parents of Tempe Public School want our existing local and family-run service to continue to provide before and after school care and vacation care to our children.

I provided this information to the department in correspondence dated 26 October 2020—less than two weeks after the tender was advertised. Earlier this month the incumbent provider was notified that it had been unsuccessful in its application and that the new provider, Camp Australia, had won the tender. What happened was the exact thing that Tempe parents feared.

The first thing the parents did was google "Camp Australia". They were horrified. In 2016 Camp Australia had been prohibited by New South Wales Government regulations from tendering for or renewing any OOSH contracts at public schools. Those regulations disqualified a provider from tendering if it had been prosecuted in the past three years or was the subject of any regulatory complaints in Australia. Unbelievably, those tender prerequisites survived less than 12 months and were abolished by the New South Wales Government in October 2017—just a few months after Camp Australia had been acquired by Bain Capital.

Camp Australia had been screened out of tender processes because it failed to provide an acceptable quality of care, with a number of breaches at its facilities. They included an incident in December 2016 when a seven-year-old Perth boy with complex needs was allowed to wander out of his facility, across a busy road and

into a stranger's home. That is just one of a litany of regulatory breaches, with State governments pursuing numerous breaches of Australian child care national laws and regulations across Australia. In Queensland, Camp Australia faced 48 charges for breaches of those rules in 2018 alone. In 2018 it was fined \$350,000 in just three hearings and in 2014 it was ordered by the Fair Work Ombudsman to repay staff \$2.6 million in unpaid wages.

Quality at those facilities has failed to improve, with fines continuing to be issued for breaches of quality standards since the acquisition. Fury is now building in the Tempe community because the trusted, quality local service has been taken away from them at the stroke of a bureaucratic pen. The Pentecost family has lost its business and its livelihood. The pleadings of hundreds of Tempe families have been ignored by a government that only understands price, not value. This is the problem with long-term governments: They become arrogant and prideful, and lose sensitivity to the genuine need of local communities.

There is a reason that successful education Ministers like Adrian Piccoli or Rob Stokes have come from the Legislative Assembly. They understand the importance of schools in local communities and know how to resist being captured by imperious bureaucracies. Schools are central to the life of any community and there is no community more devoted to or centred around its local schools than Tempe. It is a model for how schools can successfully integrate themselves into the lives of parents and students. The Tempe P&C is a vibrant, dynamic and engaged organisation. Taking away the OOSH provider they so dearly loved is a slap in the face for this proud community. I urge the New South Wales Government to urgently reconsider its decision.

MYALL CREEK MASSACRE

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (18:02): For 180 years the Myall Creek massacre has acted as a solemn reminder of the brutality and loss caused by early colonial expansion into the frontier of New South Wales. On Sunday 10 June 1838 a group of 11 white stockmen rode onto Myall Creek Station, near the town of Bingara, and massacred close to 30 Aboriginal men, women and children in an attempt to remove them from what had become pastoral land. While this is only one of many heinous acts committed during this period of Australia's history, it is notable because it was the first time the perpetrators were brought to justice, with seven men executed following a trial. Fast-forward to 1999 and a memorial that included a walkway, storyboards and a memorial rock was established on the site to recognise the historical significance of that event and of the Myall Creek area.

Twenty-two years later, on Saturday 6 February 2021, before a small gathering of community leaders, supporters and the descendants of those whose lives were taken on that day in 1838, stage two of the project was officially opened. Using a \$1.06 million grant from the State Government's Regional Cultural Fund, the Friends of Myall Creek have created an interactive precinct to encourage greater community engagement with the site. Myall Creek receives hundreds of visitors a year, but until recently the length of their stay had been restricted due to the lack of amenities. Now a bush garden with an amenities block will enable visitors, especially school groups, to spend a whole day learning about the history of frontier conflicts in New South Wales and experiencing local Aboriginal culture.

The inclusion of a sandstone outdoor performance space, yarning circle, shade pavilion and parking bays has improved the functionality and public access to the memorial site. While the development will unlock opportunities for education, it is the potential for significant steps towards reconciliation that makes the project so important. The performance space and yarning circle will enable Aboriginal youth to meet with Elders, connect with culture and celebrate that through traditional and contemporary music, dance and storytelling. Local Aboriginal dancers Marc Sutherland from the popular Gomerioi Dance and Zac Munro from the Tingha Dancers have already expressed interest in using the performance space, and now there is an opportunity for regular cultural dance and music performances. With those new amenities the Friends of Myall Creek Memorial also plan to actively promote guided tours of the memorial to interested groups.

Two prominent Aboriginal leaders, the late Lyall Munro Senior and his grandson Keith Munro, said that the Myall Creek area, which was once a no-go for Aboriginal people, has been reclaimed as a place for healing and peace through the recognition of their people's dispossession and suffering over many generations. The tragedy and pain of the massacre is still raw for many local Aboriginal people, but through the efforts of the Friends of Myall Creek Memorial the cultural precinct is assisting the wider community to understand the importance of the site in our nation's history. I recognise the tireless efforts of the members of that organisation: foundation and life member of the Friends of Myall Creek Memorial Auntie Sue Blacklock, AM; co-chairs Keith Munro and Ivan Roberts; members Ann Daly, Jo Millar, Graeme Cordiner, Cecilia Blackwell, Kelvin Brown, Roger Knox, Janelle Speed, Jolea Isaacs, Colin Isaacs, Adele Chapman-Burgess, Brian Donnelly; and life member Ted Stubbins. It is through their leadership that transition and development has occurred.

Not only has the project seen a great coming together of culture and ideas, but it has also provided employment opportunities for Aboriginal people. The major contractor, NPM Indigenous, provides meaningful

employment and economic opportunities for Aboriginal people, and the Indigenous bush garden was established by the amazingly talented and experienced David Carr from Armidale-based Stringybark Ecological. David worked with the Friends of Myall Creek Memorial and local Elders to identify appropriate local plants. Gwydir Shire Council was heavily involved in the project. I commend the deputy mayor of Gwydir Shire Council, Catherine Egan, and staff: Jamie Wilson, John Bendeich and Carmen Southwell for their commitment to the project. Carmen in particular put in an amazing effort.

As we look towards a unified future, the third and final stage of the Myall Creek cultural precinct will involve the construction of a culture and education centre that acknowledges the painful history of the area through the process of truth-telling. It will also enable the opportunity for healing through our shared history. I congratulate the Friends of Myall Creek Memorial on their wonderful achievements to date.

SOUTHERN BORDER CLOSURE

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (18:07): The sudden closure of Victoria's border to New South Wales from 11.59 p.m. on 1 January 2021 had immediate and significant economic ramifications along the southern border. I was greatly concerned by the mental and economic distress that caused business operators—and let us not forget their staff who have been put through hell—again. Of course, people fled in droves. Hotels and caravan parks went from "house full" signs to virtually empty. Restaurants were deserted, supermarkets and clubs had to dispose of supplies that were nearing their use-by dates and work shifts were cancelled. That happened overnight—on New Year's Eve. Three weeks later the Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional New South Wales was in Albury for an announcement on jobs. That was on point for my community and for all who live and work on the New South Wales side of the border.

I thank the Deputy Premier for his ongoing support for regional New South Wales and for the electorate of Albury. We visited the NEXUS Industrial Precinct for an announcement of the first of four regional jobs precincts to help build the recovery in New South Wales, drive investment to our regions, create new jobs and help our State to thrive again. From my perspective, 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 NEXUS precinct and beyond. But that was not the end of the day's work. In Albury I worked with the Deputy Premier to provide a feedback session at a major hotel so that the Deputy Premier could meet and listen to border hospitality businesses as they shared stories of their situation.

Restaurant, hotel and caravan park owners as well as club managers had travelled from Holbrook, Deniliquin, Cobram, Moama and Mulwala to Albury for the meeting. In that revealing discussion people of goodwill looked for positive directions together and shared their experiences of the border closure. The number one problem facing our business operators along the Murray is this: How can consumer confidence be restored? No amount of tourism marketing will be sufficient along the border to allay fears of another panicked border closure and a punitive citizen recall. Mass holiday and tourist cancellations have taken place. People have been burnt and they are wary of making further bookings. Indeed, they are wary of making any plans involving travel out of Victoria. Recent research into tourism operators, which was carried out by Murray Regional Tourism in conjunction with Albury City Council, reveals the depth of the impact on business: a 72 per cent reduction in turnover, cancellations running at 70 per cent, reductions in bookings of 60 per cent and a 51 per cent reduction in staff hours.

Compared with this time last year, forward bookings for the next three months have fallen across the board, and 39 per cent of respondents reported a staggering collapse in bookings of between 61 per cent and 99 per cent. What can be done to help those border businesses recover? Suggestions on the day included getting the Dine & Discover NSW vouchers out soon—preferably before the summer season ends; doubling the value of vouchers for use in regional New South Wales; and tailoring job programs to ensure they hit the mark for border businesses. I would like to see an appropriate proportion of the value of those programs quarantined for regional communities where the impact of COVID and destructive border restrictions have been disproportionate to the size of the population. We must also realise right now that some border businesses that thought they were eligible for generous New South Wales infrastructure funding are unable to meet co-contribution conditions.

Their savings are gone, deposits have had to be repaid and turnover has been devastated over and over again by the restrictions that have played out on the border. Those businesses are unable to borrow funds to meet a co-contribution. Our rules for accessing benefits and support must be realistic or they will neuter the support programs. Demand is rising for almost all types of goods and services—be they rental properties, housing blocks, dining, accommodation or holidays. Now is the time to build more motel rooms and caravan park facilities and also to expand services. Border businesses are reeling: their savings are spent, concession loans are unattainable, and permanent and casual staff have left the hospitality industry due to ongoing uncertainties, reduced hours and redundancies. I will continue to represent border businesses to see that this message is heard. I will continue to

ensure that support programs and funding reach their targets, and I will continue to ensure that those initiatives are realistically accessible for businesses along the southern border where those unique barriers must be overcome.

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:12): In my capacity as the member for Shellharbour I have worked with a lot of good people for a number years in the area of family and domestic violence. I have seen how hard they have to fight for every scrap of funding, and it galls me when funding is diverted to areas that support the perpetrators of violence and not to the victims of violence. The New South Wales Government has invested \$6.9 million in a program called ReINVEST, which is run by the Kirby Institute. In that program violent offenders are given antidepressants or a placebo during a trial period to reduce their violent behaviour. It is reported that some 80 per cent of all participants in the violent offender clinical trial are domestic violence offenders.

While we all support initiatives to prevent violence of any form, countless women's organisations out there are underfunded, and they are crying out for money to combat and ameliorate the results of domestic violence. In an article written by Hayley Gleeson, Illawarra psychiatrist Dr Karen Williams was quoted as saying:

How do we justify the huge amounts of money involved in a study like this when domestic violence victims often get put on months-long waiting lists to see counsellors, cannot get into crisis accommodation, and almost always have to pay for any therapeutic intervention themselves?

Sally Stevenson, the general manager of the Illawarra Women's Health Centre, put it like this:

We support the need for perpetrator programs - stopping domestic and family abuse takes a multi-pronged public health approach - but this study has so many methodological and ethical questions to answer it is disturbing. Not the least of these is the complete absence of the victims/survivor voices and their experiences. Why are they not heard, why are victims not asked whether the perpetrator is continuing to abuse? Why are victims experiences considered 'less rigorous' than the voice of perpetrator whose self-interested self-reporting is deemed reliable? Was there a risk assessment done for the victim and any children?

What's not factored into the trial is that 99 percent of intimate partner homicide is characterised by the abuser's use of abusive coercive control behaviour, as evidenced in the NSW Domestic Violence Review Team reports findings. If we only look at it as an impulsive act (The Violence) and not as ongoing abusive controlling behaviour, then we see only the tip of the "Iceberg". Not to mention neglecting to fund the fall out of such behaviour.

I worked with the Illawarra Women's Health Centre for 18 months to lobby both State and Federal governments for funding to establish a domestic and family violence trauma recovery centre in the Illawarra. I am delighted to say that I played a role in securing \$50,000 to support the development of a business case for its proposal to establish a trauma recovery centre in Shellharbour. When viewed in the light of the \$6.9 million for the ReINVEST trial, that pales into insignificance.

At least \$6 million has been given to two male researchers at the University of New South Wales who have no psychiatric qualifications to prescribe medication or treat psychiatric illnesses. They have no experience in working with the survivors of domestic violence. They have no clinical experience in a field that they have been given huge amounts of money to investigate. That is against a backdrop of family violence support agencies that do not have enough safe housing, money or staff to manage women and children escaping violence.

The progress of the men in the trial is based on self-report. Perpetrators of crime with criminal histories who are on parole or bail are very unlikely to admit to ongoing violence. The researchers have not asked for any verification of the self-reporting. They did not think it relevant to ask the victims of the men if the violence towards them had reduced or stopped. The New South Wales Government needs to explain why funding is being given to people who do not have expertise or qualifications in family violence or prescribing medications, when the things that we know work and are needed are not being funded.

PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (18:16): I speak about an issue that affects members on both sides of the Chamber: Parkinson's disease. Also called Lewy body disease, Parkinson's is a common neurodegenerative disease of ageing. That means the disease causes gradual brain damage. For reasons not fully understood, it occurs when there is an abnormal build-up of a protein called alpha-synuclein in brain cells. The abnormalities occur in specific areas of the brain, causing changes in movement, thinking and behaviour. Parkinson's disease was named in 1817 when James Parkinson described a group of people with similar problems. He wrote about the physical signs that those people exhibited—commonly referred to as motor signs—but stated that they did not appear to have any mental impairment. How wrong he was.

In recent times I was pleased to welcome Ms Rebecca Manners as our new Parkinson's specialist nurse for the Tweed Byron health network. Rebecca is trained and experienced in the care of people with the neurodegenerative condition. Based in Ballina, Rebecca will be able to support people living with Parkinson's, and their families and caregivers who reside in the Tweed, Byron and Ballina communities. Parkinson's disease is a progressive nervous system disorder that affects movement. Symptoms start gradually, sometimes starting

with a barely noticeable tremor in one hand. Tremors are common, but the disorder also causes stiffness or slowing of movement. Parkinson's disease impacts people in different ways. Not everyone will experience all the symptoms of Parkinson's; if they do, they will not necessarily experience them in the same order or at the same intensity.

There are typical patterns of progression in Parkinson's disease, which are defined in stages. In the early stages of Parkinson's disease, your face may show little or no expression. Your arms may not swing when you walk. Your speech may become soft or slurred. Parkinson's disease symptoms worsen as the condition progresses. Although Parkinson's disease cannot be cured, medications may significantly improve symptoms. Occasionally doctors may suggest surgery to regulate certain regions of the brain and improve symptoms. That is why it is extremely important to have someone like Rebecca offering support to outpatient clinics by personally visiting people in their homes and in hospitals, and offering support to the two Parkinson's support groups in the region.

Marie Bakker and Julie Murray are part of the Tweed Parkinson's support group and have been passionately campaigning for a specialist nurse to be appointed. In partnership with local health districts in New South Wales, Parkinson's NSW funds neurological nurses in four regions: Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie, Shoalhaven and the Tweed. A fifth position is under recruitment for the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital in Sydney. Parkinson's NSW is well represented by Jo-Anne Reeves and David Veness, whom I have met on many occasions over the years. Their knowledge and understanding about what is needed on the North Coast is outstanding. After meeting Rebecca recently, I am delighted that those suffering with Parkinson's and their families will have the support of such a kind and caring soul.

All members know people with Parkinson's disease. I give a big shout-out to the carers, partners, husbands and wives—caring for people is a 24/7 job. People with Parkinson's have their good days and their not so good days; the carers are there every day. They deserve a great salute because the people with Parkinson's often do not realise the impact they are having on their partners and carers. All we can do is make their lives easier. More importantly, I am a big advocate for putting dollars into research to slow the build-up of disease in the brain. That will affect quality of life. Unfortunately, life expectancy once fully diagnosed is around 10 to 20 years; sometimes it can be a lot quicker than that. It is a terrible thing to see productive people who have worked hard all their lives, led a great life and contributed to the community suffer this debilitating disease. Knowing some of those people personally, it is very emotional. I fully support what Parkinson's NSW does and support greater money for research into the disease.

BAULKHAM HILLS ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (18:22):

I advise the House of the grassroots infrastructure investment the New South Wales Government is making in my electorate of Baulkham Hills, including more than \$10.2 million in capital assistance funding to upgrade facilities across the electorate under the 2020-21 Building Grants Assistance Scheme. As part of the \$10.2 million funding package Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School was awarded \$2.2 million for the demolition of obsolete areas; the construction of three general learning areas, six withdrawal spaces, student amenities and walkways; and the refurbishment of existing classrooms and walkways.

St Gabriel's School was awarded \$3 million for the construction of a multipurpose school hall area. Gilroy Catholic College was awarded \$5 million for the demolition of obsolete areas and the construction of new general and specialised learning areas, including science laboratories, technology workshops, student amenities and walkways. I am sure constituents in my electorate will be delighted to know that the New South Wales Government has also committed \$299,911 in funding to deliver eight projects under the 2020 Community Building Partnership Program. I congratulate the following organisations that were successful in their applications. Positive Vibes Foundation was awarded \$17,000 to build a community garden with a shed and pergola, and to install air conditioning in its main meeting rooms.

Muirfield High School P&C association was awarded \$45,299 to install lighting and camera equipment in the school hall, including a motorised screen, lighting truss and ceiling-mounted projector. Crestwood High School P&C association was awarded \$50,000 for motorised whirlybird extractor fans and replacement louvres to cool the school; a multipurpose space for all students, including a support unit; and community use agreements. Hills Community Aid and Information Service was awarded \$15,000 to complete office renovation, including re-carpeting, repainting, the addition of storage shelves and space, and improving privacy of internal offices.

Crestwood Public School P&C Association was awarded \$28,000 for an adventure playground with two zones to cater for active exploration needs of students from kindergarten to year 6. Baulkham Hills North Public School P&C Association was awarded \$50,000 for the construction of a fitness playground that will feature a range of equipment options for students to utilise, such as climbing walls and Roman rings. Norwest Anglican Church was awarded \$50,000 for a weatherproof shade sail over the entry plaza and welcoming area off the main

building, and the Catholic Parish of St Michael's Baulkham Hills was awarded \$44,000 to refurbish the church hall as part of Our Lady of Lourdes Church, including carpet and parquet repairs and wall painting.

I am confident that those projects will make a difference for families and community groups across my electorate of Baulkham Hills. I take the opportunity to update the House on the New South Wales Government's \$17 million for a new community sports and recreational complex at Kellyville as part of its \$75 million Accelerated Infrastructure Fund [AIF]. The funding will go to the Hills Shire Council to deliver a major new sporting facility, Balmoral Road Reserve, while helping steer the State out of the COVID-19 crisis. The new facility will include four multipurpose sporting fields—which could be used also as two cricket ovals, six new tennis courts, a playground and a picnic area. The park will also include well-lit shared pedestrian and cycle paths linking into the local trails network, ensuring that people can ride and exercise safely. That is just one of 14 projects that will be built in the Hills and Blacktown areas through the AIF, which delivers local infrastructure projects faster and boosts jobs.

CENTRAL COAST COUNCIL

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:25): When the New South Wales State Government undertook the process of council amalgamations we were promised huge benefits by then Liberal Premier Mike Baird. The reality has been vastly different, particularly on the Central Coast where Wyong Shire Council and Gosford City Council were amalgamated under this policy in 2016. A recent study by LSI Consulting of the performance of all 128 New South Wales councils found that eight of the 10 worst-performing councils were merged councils, including Central Coast Council. Collectively, the 20 merged councils have lost over \$1 billion in three years, and as a result ratepayers are facing rate hikes and cuts in services.

In dealing with those challenges, councils in the Sydney metropolitan region are proposing rate increases of up to 40 per cent. The Central Coast Council is not alone in seeking a rate increase to deal with the results of the State Government's poorly executed amalgamation policy, but it has in place an administrator while other councils do not. In October 2020 the local government Minister appointed the administrator to the council. Several times the administrator has said that our council's problems have little to do with the merger of Gosford City and Wyong Shire councils. However, his own report says that a \$50 million net cost associated with upgrading information technology systems and infrastructure is "directly related to the amalgamation". His report notes the additional cost of \$25.3 million for combining two separate payrolls into one, with \$3.2 million recurrent.

Those huge costs would not have eventuated except for the merger. The State Government provided only \$10 million towards the amalgamation. The rest was to be covered by the community. The State Government's Stronger Communities Fund was intended to support councils affected by mergers by issuing grants for community projects. That fund is now under investigation by the Auditor-General and the subject of a parliamentary inquiry over claims that the \$250 million grants round was used as a pork-barrelling tool during the 2019 State election, instead of supporting merged councils. I note that the Central Coast Council received no direct support from the fund.

The Central Coast Council then embarked on an ambitious capital works program, adding \$69 million to its costs. It funded that spending from legally restricted money that it held. To be fair to the elected councillors, I note that the accounts presented to them never showed that council's increased spending was coming from those restricted funds. The merged Central Coast Council began life with a debt of about \$300 million. All the extra costs associated with amalgamation and new spending have created a debt of over \$500 million. The administrator has applied to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART], seeking to increase rates by up to 15 per cent. He says that a rate rise is necessary to help pay down the debt.

In my submission to IPART, I point out that because of a 30 per cent rate increase granted to Wyong Shire Council in 2013, residents of the former Wyong shire already pay higher rates than residents of Gosford city. I have suggested that the fairest way to resolve the issue is for the rates paid by residents in the former Gosford city area to be increased to the same level as those currently paid by former Wyong shire residents. No-one should be paying more than the sum currently being paid by former Wyong shire residents. I note that residents of the Central Coast have one of the lowest household incomes of the group of seven councils into which Central Coast Council is grouped by the NSW Office of Local Government. If the full 15 per cent increase is granted, Central Coast residents will be paying some of the highest rates in the group of seven councils.

I have also suggested that the administrator's ambitious debt reduction strategy, by which a large part of council's debt will be repaid in 10 years, be paid over a longer period. That will reduce the need for seeking the 15 per cent increase. Labor members did not support the amalgamation. I noted at the time that the two councils already shared key services and equipment, including our water supply—which we own—that was jointly controlled and delivers water to our community at a lower cost than residents pay under Sydney Water or Hunter Water.

Central Coast Labor members have called for three things: a full, independent inquiry into the amalgamation of Wyong and Gosford councils; a referendum question to be placed before the residents at elections due to be held in September asking whether they approve of amalgamation and whether they would like a demerger; and more support from the State Government to cover the cost associated with its failed policy of council amalgamation. Where was the Government's representative on the coast during all of this? He spent most of his time criticising council, rather than supporting it. I have asked the Minister for funding support. Where is the Government's representative on the Central Coast, the member for Terrigal? He is nowhere to be seen.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:30): It is great to be seen. Obviously I am in this Chamber on a regular basis. I thank the member for The Entrance for his private member's statement. The member failed to mention that the administrator, Dick Persson, gave a report "in layman's terms" to the entire community—they were the words the administrator used—explaining why council had found itself in this situation. One of the clearest points made by Administrator Persson from the get-go was that the amalgamation of the councils was not responsible for the council's financial situation. The administrator made it very clear that the problem was caused by poor oversight by the elected body and the senior executive. That was laid out in layman's terms. The member for Swansea is trying the same old thing.

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

Mr ADAM CROUCH: The member does not consider the fact that a Labor mayor was running the council and that no-one was watching the bus as it drove over the cliff. The member for Newcastle continues to interject because he hates hearing the truth. The administrator's 30-day report identifies exactly who is responsible for the situation of the Central Coast Council. Again, I thank the member for The Entrance, but the facts are on the table and the administrator has made them perfectly clear.

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

TRIBUTE TO DAVID HAZLETT

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (18:32): I express my deep respect and admiration for one of my constituents who has recently passed away—David Hazlett. David was no ordinary constituent. He was very much a part of the Camden community and a strong supporter of the south-west Sydney community in which he lived and worked. In 1968 David founded the Cameron Brae Group, a south-west Sydney property company, where he worked tirelessly to create a company with a culture that reflected his loyalty, generosity of spirit and integrity. He was the CEO and chairman of the board. The Cameron Brae Group is engaged in commercial, industrial and rental property investment and development, both directly and through its subsidiaries.

Despite his significant achievements, David was a humble man who always focused on the outcomes of those achievements, rather than on his personal glory. His contribution to south-west Sydney included serving as a member of the board of the Ingham Institute and sponsoring its work in applied medical research; sponsoring Lifeline Macarthur and western Sydney; serving as a member of the board and sponsoring the work of Liverpool Rotary Club; serving as president of Ingleburn Business Chamber; supporting the Biennale of Sydney; sponsoring the Campbelltown City Council mayor's gala ball; and contributing as a member of the Foundation Council of Western Sydney University. Since 2018 he has been a major donor in support of undergraduate and postgraduate scholarships. He also attended the inaugural fundraising dinner to help establish the university's School of Medicine. His leadership through philanthropy at Western Sydney University will have a significant impact by changing lives through providing access to education for the people of Macarthur.

David will be much missed by his friends and colleagues at Western Sydney University. He also contributed to Kids of Macarthur gala ball sponsorship; Say NO 2 DV breakfasts; Illuminate Festival sponsorship; Thirlmere Festival of Steam sponsorship; Ghosts Cricket Club sponsorship; Eschol Park Football Club sponsorship; Campbelltown Council Jubilee Awards, which recognise individuals who have lived and served in the city for 50 years or more, and which David presented on 18 July 2018; and he had an association with the Urban Development Institute of Australia and Urban Taskforce. This is a mark of not only one great businessman but also a genuine and caring man. David was both of those. He passed on his success to three younger members of the Hazlett family, who are now involved in the business. "We see ourselves as custodians for future generations", they said.

David left us on Saturday 2 January 2021 aged 75 years, surrounded by friends and family. I offer my condolences to his family and beloved partner, Victoria. He was a much-loved father and father-in-law to Andrew, Sarah, Rebekah, Drew, Georgina and Chris, and an adored hupa to his 12 grandchildren: Jackson, Couba, Olivia, Thomas, Zachary, Samuel, Charlotte, Archer, Mathilda, Jemima, Camille and Cameron. He was a wonderful, giving and supportive man. I share with his family in their loss and I will forever be grateful for having David as

a part of the Camden and south-west Sydney community. I had the good fortune of knowing David, and the lessons that I learned from the way that he conducted himself will never be forgotten.

HUNTER CLEAN ENERGY

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (18:36): Newcastle is a city that was built on dirty work. Almost everyone has a story of a family member, or even themselves, returning from a shift at BHP soaked with sweat and a face blackened by blast furnace grime. For those who lived downwind of the plant, it was not uncommon to bring the washing in dirtier than it started, and clean curtains were the stuff dreams were made of. While BHP may be long gone, it is still common to drag a finger across a Newcastle windowsill and carve a path not through dirt but coal dust, the result of the daily wagon pilgrimage from the Upper Hunter mines to the Port of Newcastle. We are proud of our history, but we are not silly. We know that this is not our future, and it seems the rest of the country is cottoning on. To see the Hunter recently chosen by National Energy Resources Australia as one of 13 hubs in the new Regional Hydrogen Technology Clusters Program, and the only site in New South Wales, only reinforces our emergence as a burgeoning clean technology superpower.

The development of hydrogen energy solutions is already underway at the Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources, where a technique pioneered by the University of Newcastle's Professor Behdad Moghtaderi sees solar energy and water harvested from air combined to manufacture a low-cost green hydrogen fuel that does not produce any emissions. It is technology that has already attracted the interest of an international car manufacturer, as the transport industry begins its transition away from petroleum-based fuels. Not a one-trick pony though, several other hydrogen-based projects are also underway at the university. Dr Igor Chaves is leading research into the durability and risk of hydrogen infrastructure, looking at corrosion mitigation technologies and the development of novel materials that can contain uncontrolled hydrogen combustion via combined flame attenuation and controlled energy absorption. The thermal management of hydrogen fuel cells is being examined by a team led by Associate Professor Thomas Fiedler.

Part of the research focuses on developing different technology for heat removal to improve efficiency, with a novel air-cooled fuel cell stack design and metal foam heat exchangers. This could generate a 50 per cent saving in material costs and 20 per cent less fuel consumption. Meanwhile, Dr Dylan Cuskelly is spearheading research into photocatalytic hydrogen generation, seeking to improve the efficiency that uses energy from sunlight to split water. The Hunter has also previously been identified by the NSW Chief Scientist as a potential location for a hydrogen export hub, due to its existing transport infrastructure such as the freight rail network and the Port of Newcastle, its current industry gas users and the availability of greenfield sites. Additionally, the region has the skills and the desire to rebuild its manufacturing workforce to support the hydrogen industry. All of those initiatives can only be bolstered by the regional clusters program, which locally will see the University of Newcastle partner with TAFE, HunterNet, the Hunter Business Chamber, the Australian Industry Group and the Hunter Hydrogen Taskforce, among others.

It also cements the Hunter's place in the bigger renewable energy picture as the region looks to the future, and the economic and environmental benefits derived from diverse sources of energy generation and export opportunities. This year two large battery projects have been announced for the region. The first, at the Eraring Power Station, will see a 700 megawatt battery installed on site by Origin Energy. At the time of the announcement it was billed as Australia's largest project of its kind. Fast-forward to February and an even larger installation has been slated for the Hunter Economic Zone, with a 30-year lease agreement secured by CEP.Energy for a 1,200 megawatt grid battery, while last year AGL announced its plans to build a 500 megawatt battery storage system at Liddell Power Station in Muswellbrook. These follow last year's announcement that, in a partnership between Enova Community Energy and the university, a one megawatt community battery will be installed near Kurri Kurri for a peer-to-peer solar energy trading project. The locals see it; the energy companies see it; and now governments are starting to see it. The Hunter is on its way to a clean energy future.

SUTHERLAND HOSPITAL

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (18:41): Sutherland Hospital has carried the motto "Endeavour to Serve" since its inception in 1958. Nowadays it is a major metropolitan and teaching hospital, each year admitting around 28,000 patients and caring for more than 50,000 people in its emergency department. Hospitals, of course, are not just bricks and mortar. We are fortunate in New South Wales to have highly trained and dedicated frontline healthcare workers, who have shone over the last extraordinarily difficult year. In addition, Sutherland Hospital has a team of passionate and charitable volunteers, some of whom have served there for several decades.

This month I was pleased to welcome the intern doctors who will be launching a new phase in their careers at Sutherland Hospital. Great hospitals need great doctors—and plenty of them. Sutherland Hospital's 18 new recruits are among 1,041 intern doctors commencing across New South Wales this year. That figure represents

the largest intake of any State or Territory in Australia and is a 35 per cent increase on 2011. The New South Wales Government is investing \$2.8 billion over four years in a record workforce boost of 8,300 frontline hospital staff, including 5,000 nurses and midwives. That investment will expand service capacity while relieving pressure on our hardworking frontline staff.

The Government recognises the need to future-proof the State's healthcare system and, importantly, is putting its money where its mouth is on the bricks and mortar. In 2018 the \$63 million Sutherland Hospital redevelopment stage one was officially opened. The project included a new and expanded emergency department, a new general medical unit, a new general surgical inpatient unit and an expanded critical care unit. This followed the 2014 construction of a \$9 million multistorey car park, which provided an extra 300 car spaces. The current \$88 million stage two redevelopment of Sutherland Hospital features eight new operating theatres, two endoscopy suites, a new surgical short stay unit and recovery, new staff amenities and workspaces, facilities for admission and discharge, and a new central sterilising services department.

Significantly, the project includes \$7 million for construction of an MRI suite, with a new MRI machine. That will mean that Sutherland shire residents will no longer need to travel to St George Hospital for public hospital MRI services. The operating theatre upgrade project provides an opportunity to revitalise the Sutherland Hospital campus through modern landscaping design. Landscape architects are working collaboratively with health planners to finalise a concept that creates a welcoming and engaging environment that is conducive to wellbeing. Moreover, I understand the project's arts and culture strategy draws upon the rich Indigenous heritage of the Sutherland shire in its emphasis on connection to country.

Engagement with artistic works has demonstrable health benefits. The aesthetic of the indoor and outdoor spaces is therefore being carefully planned to complement health service delivery by cultivating a soothing and reflective atmosphere. With our increasing ageing population, the demand for hospital services grows and becomes more complex. By providing record investment in health care, the New South Wales Government is supporting Sutherland Hospital to live up to its motto and provide comprehensive, world-class health services to shire residents.

SEACLIFF COASTERS

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (18:45): I inform the House of the Seacliff Coasters trail-running club, which is currently based in both my electorate and that of the member for Heathcote. My friend Llewellyn Gartrell introduced me to the group, which does trail running along our beautiful Illawarra escarpment. It is a fantastic group of several hundred members. Not only do its members run but also the group is concerned with conservation and protecting this beautiful part of the Illawarra region. At the moment, I am working with the group to try to free up some of the land to ensure that there is a continuous trail-running track right across the escarpment.

Recently I did a run with the group—probably only four or five kilometres, compared with the hundred or more kilometres some of them do—along the lower escarpment trail of the Illawarra escarpment. I was trying to get a sense of where they are running and how the escarpment could become a network of running trails. Such a network would be both an opportunity to increase tourism and also, just as importantly, an opportunity for locals to enjoy the beautiful natural environment we have particularly in the northern suburbs of the Illawarra. For some time the Seacliff Coasters group has been advocating to develop this network of running trails. It is something that I am certainly advocating that the environment Minister look at. It will involve having discussions with private landholders including Wollongong Coal, which recently made an application for mining to be carried out in the area. However, I believe it can be done and that we need to go at it with that attitude.

For some time I have been advocating to advance ecotourism opportunities along the Illawarra escarpment. My experiences in this State, interstate and around the world show that one of the best things we can do with very sensitive environmental areas is to open up and activate them in order for them to be managed effectively. There is probably no better example of this than in Tasmania, a State where I have done a number of beautiful walks and other recreational activities. That State manages some of the most pristine World Heritage areas by activating them and ensuring people can access them. This is an important change that we need make in New South Wales. I will continue to advocate for this with the New South Wales environment Minister, the water Minister and the local council to ensure that we have a continuous running trail.

It will be an opportunity for people to run or walk the entire length of the escarpment, perhaps over several days, while stopping and enjoying our beautiful coastal communities and spending money in our local villages. It would really activate that space. It is good in terms of conserving and protecting the escarpment as well activating that space from economic and social perspectives. We in the Illawarra know we are very fortunate to live between the mountains and the sea. Certainly I will continue to look at ways that we can activate our natural areas in a managed, sensitive and sensible way. Doing so will mean that we can protect them, enable people to enjoy them and ensure people have an understanding of their history—particularly that of our First Peoples and our Indigenous

brothers and sisters—while also making sure there is an economic benefit to our region from the activation of these areas. It is a reason why I have been a strong advocate for mountain biking in our community and one of the reasons I will also be a strong advocate for the trail running community. I assure members that the Seacliff Coasters do an outstanding job.

ST IVES LIONS CLUB YOUTH OF THE YEAR QUEST

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (18:50): On Monday 8 February I was once again honoured to attend part of the annual St Ives Lions Club Youth of the Year Quest at Checkers at Terrey Hills. The Lions Youth of the Year Quest provides an exciting opportunity for young people who aspire to future leadership roles in their careers or community to address an audience and espouse their thoughts and ideas. Through doing so they develop leadership and public speaking skills. The judges for the competition were Dennice Perry, Dominic Sgro and Nick Harding, while Michael Chan ably assisted as timekeeper and Peter Harding served as master of ceremonies.

In the current difficult and unpredictable COVID environment this year's competition addressed some interesting perspectives on both leadership and the perceived effects of the pandemic. In particular, during the first part of the public speaking component of the competition, contestants were asked to respond to two questions: first, what makes a good leader; and, secondly, what they thought were the most positive and beneficial things to come out of COVID-19. Responses to the very topical second question included increased resilience and determination, enhanced environmental awareness and recovery, improved hygiene practices, and more technological innovation and adoption, as well as a greater appreciation of community support, care and connection. The four contestants also delivered a set speech they had prepared earlier. Flora Tucker from Brigidine College spoke about art and its value, Kirsty Frykberg from St Ives High School discussed perspectives on the future, Annika Shankar from Loreto Normanhurst addressed the importance of understanding and Chloe Oates from Roseville College spoke about being an influencer.

I share with the House a few more details about these four outstanding young ladies. Flora Tucker is college captain, junior art captain and social justice captain at Brigidine College. She is involved in the social justice club and the debating team, and took part in the regional final of Legacy Public Speaking. Kristy Frykberg is vice-captain of St Ives High School. She is involved in the student representative council and the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, and participates in various sports, including at State level. Annika Shankar is a member of the student alliance at Loreto Normanhurst, the justice, peace and integrity creation group, the student council and the buddy program. She also participates strongly in a range of sporting activities. Finally, Chloe Oates from Roseville College is a student council representative who took part in a school fundraiser and the senior vocal ensemble in 2020. She also has a range of sporting interests. In addition, she is a leader of the kids' part of her church.

I congratulate these four ladies and everyone who contributed to the event's success, particularly organiser Anne Perry and Lions Club members led by president Paul Doman, as well as the judges. I was pleased to present certificates to the four contestants, including Annika Shankar, who won the public speaking component. The overall winner was largely determined by prior interviews, and was announced on the evening as Flora Tucker. I wish Flora every success as she progresses to the next round, and hopefully beyond. The regional final will be held on 10 March at Asquith Golf Club. In conclusion, I can say that I am always impressed by the aspirations of today's youth, including their commitment to developing themselves and improving the world around them.

STAMP DUTY

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (18:54:4): I will discuss the implications of replacing stamp duty with a land tax as proposed by the New South Wales Treasurer, who argues that the one-off stamp duty is an out-of-date tax and not reflective of the modern property market. The average home in New South Wales attracts approximately \$34,000 in stamp duty. The argument is that the total purchase price of the property, including legal fees and State charges will make houses more affordable, if stamp duty is removed.

We all know you don't get something for nothing. The Treasurer has indicated that the stamp duty would be set to be spread across approximately 12 years, so arguably the average annual land tax \$3,000. The Treasurer says that this is an affordable tax and that stamp duty makes purchasing a property prohibitive for the first homebuyer. But it is an intergenerational perpetual land tax that does not expire after 12 years or even when the property is sold: Once chosen, the tax stays forever. We all acknowledge the difficulty of stamp duty and the challenges it poses to property purchasers. But when swapping the taxes we need to look at the overall effect and whether people will be better off. Commonsense economics would dictate that if you have more in your pocket because of the elimination of stamp duty, temptation would be too great to not use the spare money to bid up property prices.

Last week the member for Macquarie Fields cited a 2020 study by the Australian National University and the University of Canberra modelling the impact of the Australian Capital Territory's stamp duty reform to land

tax that clearly showed house prices rising by 9 per cent and sales volume decreasing, while new home owners used the illusory stamp duty savings to bid up property prices. The Treasurer does not care how the average person will fare from the tax, but how will this Government be better off? Currently, some \$11 billion of annual Government funding is from stamp duty and at the whim of the property cycles. During high turnover years, stamp duty produces rivers of gold and during low turnover years, as we saw in the early phase of COVID when property sales dropped, the Government budget was in trouble.

The Government will replace property-cycle stamp duty revenue with a new river of gold—steady land tax that is indexed with rises in property prices. This is a perpetual intergenerational indexed tax. Why would this Government need steady growth in income? Because its asset recycling has resulted in profitable government businesses being sold off and turned into assets that need to be heavily subsidised. Therefore, with the health sector grossly underfunded compared to the needs of the community, infrastructure not matching the population growth and particularly in western Sydney, the Government needs a new cash cow. Other administrative problems include: How will conveyancers know whether the property is an intergenerational land tax or a stamp duty property?

Land tax to the property investor is a tax deduction, which arguably means the investor will pay less Commonwealth tax. The New South Wales Treasurer has succeeded in transferring funds from the Commonwealth to the State of New South Wales. Unfortunately, the Commonwealth probably will have to raise taxes or reduce local council grants or other funding to community groups to recover the losses due to the New South Wales State Government's policy. Regardless of what happens the home owner, particularly those in lower socio-economic areas or and the working class areas, will be worse off with cuts in services or higher taxes. The property investor will want to maintain their rate of return, so they will increase the rent to cover the land tax, making it harder for tenants to save for their home purchase or pay for their cost of living expenses.

Developers and/or property flippers also will benefit due to their short-term investment cycle. They will elect for the long-term property tax rather than the one-off stamp duty, therefore increasing their profits when the properties are sold. Property developers will commit first home buyers and owner-occupiers to an intergenerational tax. How will retired people be able to pay this annual perpetual tax? Almost a decade ago, when the Government reduced the section 94 contributions, which are now called 7 (11), did the developer reduce the sales prices of those properties? The answer is an emphatic no. Much more can be said about this tax. As the member for Macquarie Fields said, we have a snake-oil salesman spruiking political ideas as the panacea for all our ills. I pass on the baton to the next person to continue this debate.

COFFS HARBOUR ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:59:5): The 2021 Australia Day Honours List recognised 844 Australians from all parts of our great nation. The recipients have served the community in every conceivable way. Recipients have not put their hand up to be recognised. Most would consider the achievements that they are being recognised for to be ordinary or just what they do. Therein lies the great strength of our system—recipients in the Order of Australia have been nominated by their peers, considered by an independent process and, on Australia Day, were recognised by the nation. The Coffs Harbour electorate has had five local people represented in this year's honours. Sally Bryant has been awarded a Public Service Medal for her outstanding work with Legal Aid over the last 24 years, and particularly for her leadership during the bushfires.

When the region was hit by devastating bushfires 18 months ago, Ms Bryant undertook an incredible feat—mobilising a disaster response in legal service in record time and at an unprecedented level. Under her leadership they delivered over 1,000 legal assistance services, attended 68 community recovery meetings, and reached over 2,500 residents across New South Wales. Ms Bryant first joined the public service in 1996 and since that time she has served in the civil law division, managing five teams along the east coast. She also worked tirelessly with the team to roster volunteers from across Legal Aid NSW, working with services like Justice Connect and the Red Cross to deliver urgent legal services, and also provided a critical link with councils during this period.

Richard Kelloway has been appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for his significant service to Air Force organisations and services to veterans advocacy. Mr Kelloway has several titles to his name. Among these, he has been the vice-president of Air Force Association [AFA] advocacy since 2011 and was a council member of the AFA New South Wales divisional council previously. He founded the Veterans Centre Mid North Coast and is currently the observer of the Department of Veterans Affairs Ex-Service Organisation Round Table. Mr Kelloway served as the president of the RAAF Association's Coffs Harbour and District Branch and was a serving officer in the RAAF for 26 years. Among his contributions to community groups, Mr Kelloway has been a member of Lifeline Coffs Harbour, the Coffs Harbour Regional Conservatorium and the Coffs Harbour Future Development Committee.

Graeme "Phil" Crofts has been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for his services to the community, which includes being a soup kitchen volunteer for over 14 years at the Coffs Harbour Uniting Church's soup kitchen. But that is just the tip of the iceberg of Phil Crofts' contribution to the Coffs Harbour community. He has had a significant presence in the local sporting community, chairing the Coffs Harbour Sports Advisory Council from 2001 to 2015, organising Kanga Cricket for 20 years, and volunteering with the North Coast Special Olympics Group. As a schoolteacher, Mr Crofts has volunteered with Aussie Helpers Volunteers for Isolated Students Education since 2007. Rounding out his incredible resume, Mr Crofts was also a patrol member of the Coffs Harbour Surf Club for 15 years, was a manager with nippers, and has volunteered as a mentor for Lions Club Youth of the Year. Phil Crofts was also named Coffs Harbour Citizen of the Year in 2017.

Dr Anandhan Naidoo has been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to paediatric medicine. Coming from South Africa to Australia as a young doctor in the 1970s, Dr Naidoo has worked tirelessly to save the lives of many Coffs Coast children. He has had a private practice in Coffs Harbour for many years and has been a paediatrician at the Coffs Harbour hospital since 1984. On top of this, he has been a fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians since 1984 and a member of the Australian Paediatric Society. Finally, the fifth recipient is the late Dr Amarjit Singh More—a person I have known my whole life and someone who has made a significant contribution to the Woolgoolga community in many ways. Dr Amarjit Singh More has been posthumously awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to medicine and to the local community of Woolgoolga. Dr More passed away last year on Anzac Day and his funeral a week later under strict COVID conditions was very moving. Unable to attend the funeral, thousands of Woolgoolga residents lined the streets to say their farewells.

Dr More founded the Woolgoolga Medical Centre where he worked for nearly 40 years. He was a founding member of the Lions Club of Woolgoolga, and a supporter of the Woolgoolga RSL Sub-branch. One of Dr More's proudest accomplishments was the completion of the new Sikh Temple on Hastings Street for which he played a pivotal role in fundraising and its construction. Congratulations to all the recipients. His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley, AC, DSC (Retd), said about the awards, "All people that receive awards have been nominated by their peers. This means that it doesn't matter who you are, where you are from or whether you're known to millions or just a few. If you have constantly put others ahead of yourself, served tirelessly and made a difference, you can be nominated and recognised by a grateful nation."

BOAT TRAILERS

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (19:05): I take this opportunity to speak about boat trailer legislation, which is an important issue affecting the constituents of my electorate. I have spoken about this matter on numerous occasions in this Chamber, with general managers, mayors and, more importantly, with my constituents. In 2016, with the assistance of the then roads Minister, the Hon. Duncan Gay, the Impounding Act was amended to allow for a pilot trial where councils affected by abandoned boat trailers could opt into a scheme that would assist in moving on trailers. The City of Canada Bay Council in my electorate was one of those councils that agreed to participate in the trial in the hope that it would curb the number and frequency of boats being left on local streets.

Under the new legislation, once the boat trailer is marked by council it need not move for 28 days. At the conclusion of this period council issues a letter to the owner of the boat trailer providing a minimum of 15 days' notice before the boat is impounded. This gives the owner of the boat trailer time to find an alternative location. The idea is to ensure peninsula suburbs such as ours are not littered with boat trailers that are often left in dangerous positions obstructing clear view of traffic and pedestrians or taking up valued parking spots in high-density areas. Many of these boat trailers were not even seaworthy. In theory, the legislation works well. It provides a fine balance between punitive measures and fairness. However, in reality and in a practical sense, this has not solved the problem of abandoned boat trailers.

It is partly a legislative issue and partly an enforcement issue. Many of my constituents hold the view that the council has not been proactive enough in marking boat trailers and enforcing the legislation. I tend to disagree, they are doing the best they can under the circumstances with cost issues associated with monitoring the boats. While councils across the Sydney metropolitan area have been able to opt into the trial and get on top of the issue, Canada Bay Council seems to still be having problems. I have seen examples such as in the northern beaches, where the council has erected signs that read "No Parking—Motor Vehicles Excepted" in streets and areas where boat trailers are commonly left abandoned.

Other councils dedicate time each day to mark boat trailers. At Canada Bay Council, rangers would only mark a trailer if it was reported by another resident. However, I understand that this changed recently when a council motion was passed last year requiring council to be more proactive in hotspot areas. I am very glad of that outcome. I acknowledge that the legislation has some areas that need greater clarity. This is because after the council has commenced the process to move a boat trailer on, the owner could technically move the trailer back

to the same street, or even into the same spot, so long as it can be proven that the boat trailer has passed an intersection before being parked again. And so the musical chair cycle begins: A boat trailer is marked, after 28 days the council issues a letter to the owner, the owner then has 15 days to move the trailer, sometimes back into the same spot, and the process begins once more. In essence, the boat is stationed for 43 days in the same spot.

I understand that street parking is a convenient choice for boat trailer owners. However, it is not always a practical arrangement. There are instances where boat trailers have obstructed driveways; reduced clear sight of other vehicles and pedestrians; impacted the visual amenity of local streets, schools and parks; and attracted litter. There are serious safety ramifications on streets where boat trailers are lined up by the dozen. There should be no penalty for owners who park their boat trailer outside of their home. It is a simple system where the boat is registered to a particular address and it is allowed to park there. There should, however, be provisions to safely and efficiently move or even impound boat trailers that are impacting safety. There should also be a disincentive for those who live outside the area to park their boats for days, weeks, months, even years on end in the area.

Some 28 per cent of boat trailers that are parked in the City of Canada Bay do not belong in the electorate. My electorate should not become a parking lot for those trailers. I recently met with the mayor of the City of Canada Bay and I look forward to working closely with him, the general manager and the residents to get an outcome to this problem that is crippling the electorate.

LISMORE ELECTORATE JOBS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (19:10): I speak tonight about jobs in and for the Lismore electorate. As a local member, that is one of the really important contributions that we can make to our local areas: We can make sure that we have an environment that creates, maintains and sustains jobs. With the assistance of and working with local organisations such as the chambers of commerce, community sector groups, charitable groups and trade union organisations within the electorate I have advocated for that in this place through a series of motions of which I have given notice, questions on notice to Ministers and direct representations to Ministers. One thing that disturbs me is that at the government level we should not do anything that takes jobs away from the regions. I have taken up the issue of procurement and procurement policies that have favoured whole-of-government approaches and big corporations, but it is still not resolved so I take it up again tonight.

Large operators have secured the contracts to remove waste from the TAFE and caravan parks on Crown reserves and they have squeezed out small- and medium-sized Australian-owned regional companies. There was an expression of interest process, which effectively made redundant the Government's own published statement that it adheres to its small and medium enterprise, and regional procurement policy that speaks about regions being involved. Running parallel to that is the expression of interest and the whole-of-government approach that squeezes out these operators in the electorate of Lismore.

It affected one company in particular that has for many years successfully, effectively and efficiently removed waste throughout the health system from the TAFE and the caravan parks on Crown reserves. It was disappointing to see that happen. I brought it up in this place by way of a motion of which I gave notice last year, I have put questions on notice and I have advocated to various Ministers. I have been surprised that the National Party in Government has not dealt with this issue. If it affects my electorate it is clearly affecting other electorates across rural and regional New South Wales, yet I have not heard a peep out of the National Party as to this particular issue. That surprises me.

There are other areas where there is not so much clarity or transparency. I have talked about a regional jobs plan for my region and special activation precincts, which is a policy of the Government. It has what are called "local activation precincts". I saw recently that the Deputy Premier was in the regions and announced some sort of jobs precinct. It is never clear where, why or how people apply, who applies for what, how they gain favour and how they are picked. There is nothing wrong with the programs themselves but finding out about them is quite difficult. It is important to ensure that all regions receive a share of the pie with regard to special local activation precincts.

WAGGA WAGGA ELECTORATE TRANSGRID INFRASTRUCTURE

Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (19:15): Pam and Rick Martin have worked for decades to make their Kyeamba Valley property a model of environmental sustainability. Their 30-year labour of love to restore the land and environment has been researched and documented by the Australian National University. The property has received national and international awards. So you can imagine that they might be worried about 65-metre TransGrid transmission lines coming through their haven. Despite this, when TransGrid suggested that its environmental scientist was in the region and was interested in visiting the property, they agreed. The Martins had an extensive display of environmental records and photographs ready.

Yet on the day in question no environmental scientist arrived. Instead, there were two cars with engineers and managers. There was little interest in their environmental material. Instead, they said a manager handed them a map of their property and asked which of two lines they preferred. The Martins said the two proposed lines were in areas of high water table, recharge areas, contour banks and tree corridors. It seemed that TransGrid had taken no notice of the extensive environmental information they had supplied. The premise of this meeting, they felt, could be viewed as deceitful.

Tonight I update the House on community consultation around the TransGrid electricity lines in my electorate and reinforce the ongoing need for respectful consultation, clear justification for routes chosen and modern, adequate compensation. I raised this issue in Parliament last year. Minister Kean responded to my concerns by stating that he had said to TransGrid that his expectations were:

Every issue of concern to every member of the local community is important and must be respected and every effort ... made to ensure appropriate action is taken.

The Minister also said, "My clear message to TransGrid today is that no concern is too small." TransGrid has done work with respect to the route through the Yaven Creek Valley and Adjungbilly to Batlow. There appears to be genuine consideration of alternative routes. I recognise and acknowledge this. I particularly acknowledge the work of Graeme Wedderburn, who has kept me informed about this. But the situation remains poor for those such as Pam and Rick Martin, who live in the Kyeamba Valley.

I met with landowners there last Saturday. They say the consultation by TransGrid is not adequate. As Melody McMeekin told *The Daily Advertiser* last month, "We feel like we're fighting an uphill battle just trying to get people to talk to us." From the meeting last Saturday, it is clear that many landowners do not trust the consultation process. They are seeking respect. They also want to know that alternative routes have been considered and why particular routes are chosen. They do not want to be just given a route and told that is it, as though it is the cheapest and more straightforward route. They expect work to be done on the options.

Last week, along with the other Independents in Parliament, I wrote to Ministers Kean and Stokes asking that there be consideration of putting TransGrid transmission infrastructure for the Snowy Hydro underground. The National Parks Association has proposed an alternative route to connect to the Lower Tumut power station. This option also opens up opportunities to shorten and rationalise the proposed HumeLink project, significantly reducing its impacts on local communities and landholders over hundreds of kilometres. The point is that there should be genuine consideration of alternatives and a clear justification for choosing a route based not just on lowest cost, but taking into account community and environmental concerns.

Landowners also want modern compensation that includes more than the one-off payments for easements that families have encountered previously. They say this does not take into account the ongoing impact that transmission towers and lines will have not only on their land values but also on the way in which they live, farm and protect their homes. People understand we need to tackle climate change and that Snowy Hydro is a reality. They know the importance of the transmission to our future, but they also want fair treatment and respect. This goes not just for HumeLink but for Project EnergyConnect and for all the projects throughout the State. It is an issue that will be repeated throughout the State as infrastructure is upgraded. It is an issue for landowners throughout New South Wales. The Government needs to get it right now.

GLORIA HANSEN, OAM

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (19:20): I am a born and bred true local East Hills resident who grew up in my electorate and went to local primary and high schools in the area. When you go from a local primary school to the local high school, you transition into the new, scary high school world with many of your primary school friends, being largely the friends that you cling to in this new, uncertain world. Over time, some students from other primary schools in your classes you get to know very well, some you do not really know at all and other students you might have a joke with and a chat every now and then over the six years that you spend with them in high school.

Mary-Anne Hansen was one of those students whom I did not go through primary school with, but we shared classes during our high school years and we would have the odd chat and a laugh. I did not really know too much about her family. Years later in my role as P&C president of Padstow Park Public School I was at an event with other P&C representatives and heard the name "Gloria Hansen". I looked up to see a lady who had to be a relation of Mary-Anne's, as there was a distinct family resemblance. When the opportunity arose to talk to her later during the event, I introduced myself and asked whether she was a relative of Mary-Anne's. She answered that she was and that Mary-Anne was her daughter.

Gloria has provided many years of service with the P & C associations of both Revesby Public School and Picnic Point High School, serving as president and treasurer, and is still involved with Revesby Public School P&C

to this day. In recognition of this service and to the Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales, Gloria was awarded life membership of the federation. I was thrilled to hear that, as part of this year's Australia Day 2021 Honours List, Gloria was awarded the Order of Australia Medal. Gloria was presented with this award for service to the community, not only due to her work with the P&C but also because of her youth work through her association with Blue Light Discos and her contribution to society as a foster carer.

Gloria was a founding member of the Revesby Blue Light Disco in 1988 and served in a number of roles, including treasurer until 2013. For her service, Gloria was made a life member of the board. Blue Light Discos provided safe, non-threatening social events free from alcohol, drugs and antisocial behaviour, and were conducive to young people being able to interact in a positive way with members of the NSW Police Force. The Revesby Blue Light Disco was one of the most successful organisations of this type in New South Wales. It operated from the YMCA on The River Road in Revesby and would often attract over 700 youths. I often dropped my younger sister Narelle and her friends off to it, and they always seemed to have a great time. The Blue Light Disco successfully promoted respect for the police and for the law to generations of youth in my local area.

Additionally, the Revesby Blue Light Disco ran regular discos for the physically and mentally disabled children who were students of Caroline Chisholm Special School. Over the years, the profits made by the Revesby Blue Light Disco were given back to the community through local schools. These funds were used to deliver programs dealing with cyberbullying, road safety, bike education, the safe use of public transport and other crime prevention activities. As if her work with the Blue Light Discos and P&C associations was not enough, perhaps Gloria's most significant and inspiring contribution has been her role as a foster carer. Gloria has provided foster care for 23 children, which has made a difference to a countless number of lives.

The nomination for the Medal of the Order of Australia was launched by her good friend Joe Kaplun and supported by the Federal member for Banks, David Coleman, MP, and the former member for East Hills, Glenn Brookes. Following Australia Day, the Federal member for Banks held an afternoon tea to recognise her achievements, and I was happy to attend along with the former member for East Hills. I asked Gloria if she had gotten over the shock yet and she said that she had not. I think it might take a while for her to get over the shock.

The Medal of the Order of Australia is not the first award Gloria has received. She was recognised as the East Hills Local Woman of the Year in 2012 as part of New South Wales Women's Week awards; received an award from the Minister for Volunteering, recognising her work with the Blue Light Disco; and received a New South Wales Premier's award. Gloria was made a Life Member of the New South Wales Blue Light State Board in 2008. Our community is indebted to Gloria. My sincerest congratulations go to her for her Medal of the Order of Australia. Well done.

AUBURN ELECTORATE TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (19:25): Tonight I speak about an ongoing and ever-increasing problem in the Auburn electorate: traffic congestion. A lot of the traffic congestion can be sheeted home to the current Coalition Government, which has decided to put tolls back onto the M4—a public road that has already been paid for twice. In fact, when the Government did its strategic business case for the M4 widening, the report said that traffic on the surface network along Parramatta Road was predicted to increase due to traffic growth generally and the introduction of a toll on the widened M4. My electorate is the second-biggest electorate in the State and anyone who has seen the wall-to-wall high-rise that is going into the electorate, with another 6,500 residences, will know what impact the introduction of the toll and the widened M4 is having. In relation to the Government's congestion relief on the road network—or, as we call it, no congestion relief on the road network—the report noted:

There are sections on the network, however, that will share the growth in traffic numbers over time.

The biggest increase will be on the surface network at Parramatta Road at Auburn, with a whopping percentage increase of 19 per cent—19 per cent more traffic on Parramatta Road every single day at that point. This Government bangs on a lot about jobs, but its own report on the strategic business case noted:

Figure 2.18 notably does not show strong vehicle movements to the Sydney CBD. Rather, it shows that there is significant demand to travel to the industrial, freight and other "non-major centre" areas ... that support jobs and industry.

Those areas include, particularly, Silverwater, Auburn and Sydney Olympic Park—the very areas that are now so congested by the increases in traffic that people cannot move. This is having an absolute flow-on effect across my electorate, and the streets that this has the biggest effect on—because there are only certain ways to get into and out of Auburn and Granville—are Wellington Road and Mona Street. A petition was started three years ago, which indicated how bad the conditions were. I will read some of the comments. Bronwyn said:

I live on Auburn Rd and it can take me 45 minutes extra to get home these days because of the ridiculous amount of traffic on Wellington Rd, where I live. It is also difficult to leave Auburn during peak hour, often taking me nearly an hour to get from Wellington Rd to Homebush Bay.

Ahmed said:

It's pathetic it's shocking. Not only it's congested everywhere within that vicinity [sic] it's congested everywhere else. It's really frustrating and something needs to be done about it. Enough is enough Sydney is growing by the second and soon enough people will be forced to relocate elsewhere.

Sousan said:

We get stuck for an hour on the rd.

Serkan said:

Traffic is congested every day after 2:30 till 6 needs to be fixed.

Rhonda said:

I get caught in this traffic twice a day dropping my kids off and picking them up from school. It takes me 40 minutes from Guildford ...

Shinead said:

My family live on Wellington Rd. can barely get in or out of our driveway because of the traffic congestion ... quite apart from the number of traffic incidents caused at the same time. Something needs to be done.

Nahla said:

I live near Wellington Rd and the traffic is horrendous trying to come in and out of my driveway.

Susan said:

I live in Granville and it is a nightmare going to Auburn. There should be another bridge or even 2 crossing Duck River.

That is exactly what should be happening. These are only one-lane bridges. Cumberland council had on its works a plan to investigate options for bridges over Wellington Road, but, unfortunately, that project has now been discontinued—an important project that is the only way to fix this congestion. I might have some sympathy for Cumberland council because of the forced amalgamations—when this Government took away all of its ratepayers and businesses and gave them to Parramatta—if the Cumberland mayor currently was not spending so much on full-page advertisements in papers and opening up offices for himself and putting his photo on them.

A bit less money should be spent on the mayor's ego and a bit more on investigations of options to get across Wellington Road and Mona Street. This Government has to come to the party and provide the funds. Anywhere else in Sydney, roadworks and bike lanes are being built to accommodate WestConnex. The only places that do not get that are in western Sydney, and Auburn—the gateway to western Sydney—is taking the biggest increases and has the biggest problems. There is \$5.4 billion turnover for Sydney Olympic Park and Silverwater—bigger than the Parramatta CBD—but Auburn gets nothing.

GOULBURN ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (19:30): Today I wish to reflect on and acknowledge the many Australia Day award recipients, particularly those from the Goulburn electorate, those whom I am exceptionally proud to represent in this place. The Goulburn electorate had many award winners for their outstanding commitment to public service, with two Order of Australia medals also being awarded. First, we had Lisa Gardner of Goulburn, who was awarded a Public Service Medal due to her role in the management and training of over 21,000 police recruits during her time at the Police Academy in Goulburn, including overseeing more than 60 attestation parades.

Secondly, Mr Peter Crisp of Bowning received a Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to the creative arts, particularly as a glass sculptor. His commitment to the arts is commendable, specifically his role in many exhibitions both locally and overseas. Ms Marlene Skipper of Marulan also received an OAM for her ongoing commitment to service for the Marulan community, including her roles in the Marulan Progress Association, Marulan Youth Club, the Marulan Hall committee, Clean Up Australia Day activities and many more. Well done, Marlene.

With five local government areas that encompass the Goulburn electorate, unfortunately I could not attend all of the Australia Day activities. Lots of people received local awards and it is these people who make our communities what they are. They are the heart and soul of our regional communities and I recognise each of them here today. In the Southern Highlands, Mrs Catherine Constable, OAM, was awarded Wingecarribee Shire's 2021 Australia Day Citizen of the Year for her support and advocacy for senior citizens, including more than 17 years on the board of the Wingecarribee Adult Day Centre. Ms Charlotte Gillespie was awarded the Young Citizen Of the Year for her community and volunteer work, and for also assisting the elderly at both HarbisonCare and the Abbey Nursing Home. Well done to them both.

Moving on to Goulburn Mulwaree, the 2021 Citizen of the Year is Mr Kevin Muffet, who was recognised for his efforts with the Rural Fire Service and also as a community first responder. With the tumultuous time we have had over the past 12 months, Mr Muffet has been a critical player in the safety of the Windellama community; I know how much he is valued there. Also in Goulburn, Ms Charlotte Hargan is the 2021 Young Citizen of the Year, nominated for her work as Mayor of the Goulburn Youth Council, her efforts in raising awareness for youth mental health and the empowerment of students as young leaders. I have met Charlotte and she certainly is an outstanding and impressive young woman. She has big things to come for the community, I am sure.

In the Upper Lachlan, the annual Taralga rodeo was unfortunately cancelled, but we look forward to it coming back bigger and better than ever next year. For the Upper Lachlan Shire region, the Australia Day Award recipients included: Shire Citizen of the Year, Mr Robert (Bob) Anderson of Crookwell; Crookwell Citizen of the Year, Ellen Seaman; Gunning Citizen of the Year, Rosemary Spiller; Taralga Citizen of the Year, Glenn Elliott; Young Citizen of the Year, Oscar Rose; Sportsperson of the Year, Kayla Gann; and Young Sportsperson of the Year, Mr Isaac McGregor.

In Hilltops, in my hometown of Boorowa there were several award recipients, each recognised for their contributions to the community, including Gary Harton, Maureen Beere, Robyn Shean, Stephen Meere, Sharee Darmody and Peter Sykes. The Len and Joan Oxley Memorial Award was awarded to Peg Merriman in recognition of a lifetime of service, support and promotion of Boorowa and district. Boorowa's Citizen of the Year plaque was awarded to our hardworking Garrett Robinson, who has been recognised not only for his regular work with the Boorowa Ex-Services & Citizens Club, but also for the extra time and enthusiasm he has brought to providing services to the wider community, such as the Boorowa Business Chamber, bowls and fishing clubs and the car club. Again, well done to each of these very valued local treasures.

Finally, I had the pleasure of attending the locality of Yass on the day. I congratulate Citizen of the Year Peter Firth, Senior Citizen of the Year Michael Newling, Young Citizen of the Year Holly Fleming, Community Group of the Year Yass FM, Individual Community Service Award recipient Murrumbateman Christmas Carols Committee and Individual Community Service Award recipients Francis and Stuart Atkins. I also say a big well done to the local government areas for the magnificent celebrations that they held for Australia Day in a very COVID-safe manner. Well done to everyone.

WESTERN SYDNEY PALLIATIVE CARE SERVICES

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (19:34): Palliative care is an important issue in our healthcare system. Sadly our community is consistently let down by the Government. In the electorate of Prospect there are 15 aged care homes. However, the access to palliative care for those elderly residents is hugely constrained due to a lack of government resourcing. As a community New South Wales is not doing enough for palliative care, especially at a time when we have an ageing population. Palliative care needs to be given more priority by the State Government. We naturally do not like to reflect on that topic. Contemplating the passing of our loved ones or, indeed, even ourselves is difficult. However, we have a responsibility to ensure that we care for our sick and elderly until their last breath with the appropriate palliative care. To not do so is a betrayal of who we are in New South Wales: a compassionate, caring society that values the sanctity of human life. The Government continues to fail the families in the electorate of Prospect, and western Sydney generally, in that regard.

The Westmead Hospital complex is the biggest health precinct in the Southern Hemisphere and the medical and research jewel in the crown of NSW Health. However, presently the hospital has no dedicated palliative care ward, despite being the major hospital catchment for a large part of western Sydney. Just seven beds are dedicated in the oncology ward for palliative care at Westmead Hospital, the largest hospital in the Southern Hemisphere with the biggest population in Australia, which is western Sydney. If a patient requires palliative care and those seven beds are needed by the oncology ward, they are moved to another ward of the hospital where the nurses and medical professionals are not specifically trained for palliative care. That causes extreme distress for the patients and their families, who are already going through an incredibly difficult time.

Throughout western Sydney it is a similar story. There are no dedicated palliative care wards at Auburn, Fairfield, Blacktown, Campbelltown or Nepean hospitals. Although those hospitals have access to some palliative care beds, patients are frequently transferred either between wards or to other hospitals to cater to their often complex needs. Shuffling patients at the end of their lives around ward to ward and hospital to hospital is a shame upon our current system. Currently NSW Health has outsourced its palliative care responsibilities in western Sydney to a private provider, Silver Chain, which provides for the clients to die at home. Thus, all care and responsibility lies with the family of the loved ones rather than support from palliative care professionals. It is often a stressful and harrowing experience for the family.

The best efforts of Silver Chain in the service of its clients can never replace the results of a full-time palliative care ward with professional healthcare staff available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Frankly, we

must do better for our community members at the end of their lives. The New South Wales Government investment into palliative care each year for patients is inadequate. It is more than just looking out for community members until they die; it is about improving the quality of life in the last days for our sick and elderly. It will ensure that everyone gets the opportunity to be well cared for and to die with dignity. It will also provide crucial support for our families.

I have spoken to representatives and families about the challenges and difficulties they have had with palliative care of their loved ones. I have also met with representatives from the Westmead Push for Palliative Care community, which feels ignored by the Government. I know from those families and healthcare professionals that they want to make a better system so that future families do not have to endure the same hardship and pain. For a population as large as New South Wales and when palliative care provides such an important role, the current funding provided by the Government is just not enough to service the community. I call on the Government to commit to providing a dedicated palliative care ward at Westmead Hospital precinct, as well as making a commitment to consider a significant funding increase in investment in palliative care across the State.

Western Sydney cannot afford to be left further behind in this space, with an ageing population across the region. It needs to be done to protect the quality of life for New South Wales residents and would help families when they are going through some of their most challenging days at a loved one's end of life.

WESTERN PARKLAND CITY

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (19:39): In March 2018 the New South Wales Government adopted the Greater Sydney Region Plan – A Metropolis of Three Cities. The plan presented a vision of Sydney as three cities. My local community in western Sydney was identified as the Western Parkland City. The Western Parkland City will be established on the strength of the new international western Sydney airport and Badgerys Creek aerotropolis. It will be a polycentric city capitalising on the established centres of Liverpool, greater Penrith and Campbelltown-Macarthur. New city-shaping transport and the airport will make the city the most connected place in Australia. It is truly an exciting time for the residents of western Sydney. A Western Economic Corridor will attract globally significant defence and aerospace activities and contribute to a strong trade, freight, logistics, advanced manufacturing, health, education and science economy. It will produce knowledge-intensive jobs close to areas of high population growth and drive the development of the corridor and the metropolitan cluster.

The Greater Sydney Green Grid will be a core element of the amenity of the Western Parkland City. To achieve a parkland city we need parks, open space, green space, and walking and bicycling tracks. That vision is admirable and even desirable for our current and future community as it will provide a balance and breathing space for the intensification of development that is sprouting up across western Sydney. In the month that the New South Wales Government adopted the metropolis of three cities plan, it also announced that it was purchasing Fernhill in Mulgoa, a 420-odd hectare site with significant cultural heritage and landmark features as a part of the green space and breathing space that western Sydney needs. However, recently local constituents have contacted me to unfortunately express great disbelief that their land has been earmarked for this green space and that it has been identified without fair and reasonable financial contribution from the New South Wales Government.

I will share a couple of examples. Luddenham residents Rob and Deb Heffernan say that more than three hectares of their 10-hectare home would be left valueless by the proposals after maps revealed a third of their property would be considered riparian parkland, meaning that neither local council or State Government would be required to purchase it. The rest of their land has been zoned for enterprise. They contacted me and said that their family has always accepted the fact that an airport will come. It has been over their heads for more than 40 years and, because of the unknown decision for an airport, over those four decades they were unable to subdivide or develop. They believe it is a great future development for the western suburbs but not at their personal expense.

A few kilometres down the road from the Heffernans, Michael and Jenny Schweers live on a 30-acre block that they say has been in the family ownership for more than 75 years. They built the house on the site three years ago only to see it designated as a green space last year. Michael has said that the development is devastating. He says that what he thinks might be his kids future is gone because of a piece of paper. Joe Musico and his family said that up to 30 per cent of their 45.7-hectare property at Luddenham in the shadow of the incoming airport is earmarked as green space and includes swathes of proposed urban parkland and riparian park under plans currently open for feedback. The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, Rob Stokes, said that the State Government's vision for the aerotropolis was for a parkland city. I quote:

Almost every major public infrastructure project that has helped build Sydney has required the acquisition of private property to make the vision a reality. I agree with the Minister when he says "has required the acquisition of private property". However, landowners in a situation like that of the Heffernans and the Schweers would get no compensation as their zoning would come under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. There is no requirement for compensation under that Act. The situation as it currently stands is unethical, unjust and un-Australian. I call upon the New South Wales Government to engage with affected residents and

offer them full compensation if it is determined to deliver its vision using their land. It is simply not right that the Government should expect those local residents to give up parts of their property for free just to fulfil its vision. Full and frank compensation must be offered to the residents for their land.

HUNTER COALMINING INDUSTRY

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (19:44): I speak again on the issue of coal, the environment, climate change and jobs. If members care about the environment they should want the last pieces of thermal coal burned on earth to come from the Hunter Valley. I ask members to put down their swords for a second and hear me out. The reality is that the coal that comes out of the Hunter Valley is some of the purest and most efficient coal on planet Earth. That means one consequently needs to burn less of it to get the energy output required. If one wants to generate electricity for the community through a coal-fired power station, and if one cares about the environment, then one would want to burn the least possible amount of coal. That would be better for the environment than burning lots of dirty coal, which would be worse for the environment than burning clean coal.

If the Hunter's coal is some of the cleanest, purest and most efficient and if there are countries currently building brand-new coal-fired power stations that will have a lifespan of some 30 or 40 years, then one would hope they would engage the best-quality coal for those power stations. That coal comes from the Hunter. Putting aside people's views about whether coal should have stopped yesterday or whether it will continue for a thousand years—and, in part, putting aside people's ideological positions about which side of politics is most for or against coal and all of that sort of hoo-ha—the reality from an environmental perspective is that burning Hunter coal in our coal-fired power stations is the cleanest and least damaging outcome for the environment that we could hope for.

Yes, we send more than 140 million tonnes of coal out of the Port of Newcastle. Yes, there are tens of thousands of people in the Hunter who are directly employed through our coalmines. Yes, there are tens of thousands of families and businesses across the Hunter and other parts of New South Wales and Australia that rely on coal and the income it generates—but in particular in the Hunter, because the coal coming out of the ground is some of the cleanest. The great risk to careers in coal in the Hunter will come from automation more than anything else—from machines and equipment that no longer need a driver or an operator but talk to each other without human interface. That is the greatest threat facing our coalminers, coal workers and coal families across the Hunter, not the coal itself or the issue of the declining appetite for coal.

People can debate that and I do not want to get into that debate, but the reality is there will be an appetite for coal in the coming decades because there are countries building brand-new coal-fired power stations. A coal-fired power station has a lifespan of more than 30 years, so decades worth of coal is due to come out of the Hunter in the coming years. That will provide important employment, which will allow families to put food on the table and a roof over their heads, to get an education and decent lifestyle for their kids, and to make sure that they have opportunities going forward. What those opportunities are will be determined by cycles other than those that are within the power of this House. Hunter coal is the future and Hunter coal needs to be the last coal burned on planet Earth, whenever that day comes.

Community Recognition Statements

MR LES SMITH

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (19:50): I recognise Mr Les Smith, a Moree resident whose presence perpetually lights up the town. Les' 100th birthday celebrations are now long gone and he just goes about his daily routine around town, chatting to people over a cup of coffee, visiting the elderly at the retirement village and writing poetry. Les has authored several books and his take on humanity and life filters through his wonderful bush poetry. Les leads a full life and says that the highlights of his days are friendships. He says, "When you've got so many friends around you, there's no room for enemies to come in." I guess that is the reason for his always-happy face. I congratulate Les on recording so much of Moree's life through his poetry, and commend him for his positive and friendly nature.

SWR TRIPLE 9 FM RADIO

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:51): I praise the SWR Triple 9 FM radio announcers, crew, volunteers, management committee and program sponsors. They collectively provide a valuable service to the audience of Sydney's west. Located at Blacktown Showground, they provide valuable local news updates, interviews, comments from many mayors across western Sydney, police updates and other local announcements. Wayne "Busco" Buscombe is the popular morning personality, with Linden Regina bringing it home in the afternoon drive program. Weeknights and Saturdays have fabulous specialist programs, from the various music genres to education, business, local football leagues and psychics. Sundays also include multicultural and religious programs. Many of the approximately 120,000 listeners per week tune in because of the variety of music and unique programs, and to listen to the local voices and local information in the western Sydney community. I thank

chair of the board Alex Agaciak, all the members of the management committee, Joanne, and Busco for heading up sponsorship. They are a fabulous team.

MS LOUISE HILL

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (19:52): I recognise the outstanding commitment and contribution made by Ms Louise Hill in being named the Regional Educator Award winner for Goulburn and the Southern Tablelands in the 2020 Family Day Care Australia Excellence in Family Day Care Awards. It is an exceptional achievement, with Ms Hill also receiving the same award in 2018 and 2019. She has been a family day carer for almost 30 years and was nominated by the parents of the children for whom she cares. Ms Hill's humble attitude and passion for her work is demonstrated not only by her nomination and receipt of this award but also her registration with Goulburn Family Day Care, which requires her to meet the same regulations as a day care centre. Ms Hill has 15 children registered with her, the youngest being 14 months and the oldest being 12. Ms Hill's commitment to the safety, wellbeing and education of children is a pivotal role that inherently encompasses the complexities of our community today. She has not only demonstrated her ability to work well with children but also gained the respect and recognition of their parents.

MS ROSE DAVIES

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (19:53): I recognise Ms Rose Davies. Although only 21 years old, Rose Davies is already making a name for herself as a long-distance runner and even has the Olympics in her sights. At the end of January, Rose became the 2020 Australian women's 10,000 metres national champion after taking out the Zatopek 10 race in Victoria. Rose clocked a phenomenal 31 minutes 39.97 seconds in the prestigious event, shaving one minute 45.55 seconds off her personal best and placing all-time seventh in Australia for the 10,000 metres and all-time fifth in the Zatopek event. Having smashed her personal best for the second time in two months, the result is testament to Rose's hard work and shows that she has a big future ahead. I congratulate Rose and cannot wait to see what comes next.

ALBURY ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (19:54): I congratulate the following residents of Snowy Valleys, who have been recognised in this year's Australia Day Honours and Awards: John Cruise was awarded Citizen of the Year; Aaron Tuilau, Edward Smith and Arthur Smith received awards in the category of Young Citizen of the Year; Dr Tarek Sari received the Service to the Community award; Jacob Ambrose was named Sports Person of the Year; and Indiana Everingham received the Young Citizen Achievement award. Citizen Achievement awards were presented to Adrian Case, Christine Male, Dave Crooks, Dr Tarek Sari, Emma Toohey and Kerry Kelly. Those individuals have served our community through their commitment, selflessness and dedication. I thank them for their contributions. Their efforts are making a difference to our regional communities.

NATIONAL APOLOGY

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (19:55): I acknowledge in this place the thirteenth anniversary of the National Apology that came on 13 February 2008. It was a momentous act and an even more momentous day. I was privileged to be in the Federal Parliament when Prime Minister Kevin Rudd moved the motion of apology. I say thank you to Kevin Rudd for that. That great, symbolic act meant a lot to Indigenous Australians. The words of the motion were:

We apologise for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians. We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country.

There is a lot more to do, but that apology was necessary and we did it. It will probably take another Labor Government in Canberra to do more.

MAGDALENE CATHOLIC COLLEGE

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (19:56): I congratulate the students at Magdalene Catholic College on their success in the STEM-based F1 in Schools challenge. They have reached the national finals, which will be held in Melbourne in March. The team, named Imperium Racing, includes students Keanen Cachia, Charlie Roberts, Grant Spinks, Tara Small and Alexander Cooper. The F1 in Schools program is an interactive competition that focuses on innovation, teamwork, integrity, enthusiasm and commitment. In the program students create miniature Formula 1 cars, which are then shot down a 20-metre track using CO₂ canisters. The team has had to win regional and State finals in order to progress to the national finals. I wish Imperium Racing the best of luck at nationals.

ILLAWARRA MENUS FACEBOOK PAGE

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (19:57): Inspiration can strike at any time, and that was the case for Toria Kotamanidis when she thought of the Illawarra Menus Facebook page concept. In the early days of COVID, Toria came up with the idea of having a one-stop shop for menus in the Illawarra that she thought might help a few small businesses to survive and certainly help a few people to explore a range of menu options. Within five days the Illawarra Menus page had 18,000 members, and its membership now stands at around 40,000. The Illawarra Menus page allows local eateries to let people know about their food services and any specials they are offering. Small businesses post their menus alongside Wollongong's top restaurants, and people respond by using the page to access information, to find more options and to try new places. Many local cafes and restaurants that signed up to the page credit it with helping to save their business.

The Illawarra Menus page galvanised a community to support its local eateries and the Illawarra's hospitality sector, and it all started with someone who did not work in the sector but wanted to help out. I thank Toria on behalf of every business that Illawarra Menus has helped and every customer who has had a new experience.

MAMA-EMPOWER APP

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (19:58): A short walk from my electorate office, researchers are working to make a difference to the lives of local Aboriginal women. The State Government's Investing in Women program allocated \$50,000 to Associate Professor Gillian Gould and her all-women team of Aboriginal and non-Indigenous researchers and experts for their collaborative effort in designing the MAMA-EMPOWER app for a healthy Indigenous pregnancy. In consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, the University of Newcastle team has co-designed a mobile app to address the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal women during pre-conception or during pregnancy. I applaud Allison Hart, Associate Professor Gillian Gould, Dr Nicole Ryan, Gina La Hera Fuentes, Rachel Hatfield and Nicola Mercer. I also acknowledge the work and dedication of Dr Marilyn Clarke.

MS SIENNA HUTTON

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (19:59): I acknowledge Ms Sienna Hutton, who represented the electorate of The Entrance at the NSW Children's Parliament 2020, where participants were invited to prepare a one-minute speech on an issue they are passionate about that affects children and young people in New South Wales. Ms Hutton chose to speak about adolescent vaping. She delivered a succinct and informative speech that perceptively addressed the adverse effects of vaping on users and those around them. Ms Hutton expressed that more needs to be done to stop the increase in young people taking up vaping, and I agree with her wholeheartedly. Well done to Ms Hutton on a well thought out and competently delivered speech. I will be asking her for some pointers. I thank Ms Hutton on behalf of the electorate of The Entrance and the wider Central Coast.

HOLY SPIRIT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (19:59): I congratulate Holy Spirit Primary School in St Clair on receiving \$25,000 as part of the 2019 Community Building Partnership grants program. Along with school principal Frances Garzaniti and a few of her students, I was pleased to see the brand-new flooring laid in the school's multipurpose area and the positive impact that it has had on the life of everyday school activities. Prior to the provision of funding, the school had been managing with worn and damaged carpets that made it difficult for students, parents and teachers to enjoy the space. Through the Community Building Partnership program the space has been transformed into a safer and more inviting environment for the school community to hold assemblies, presentations and other school events. Congratulations to Holy Spirit Primary School on this fantastic upgrade. I also thank the school for the invitation to attend the end-of-year presentation and assembly last year. I could only visit four schools due to COVID, and Holy Spirit Primary School was one of those schools. I had a fantastic time. I hope that I can visit all of the schools in my electorate this year.

STEPHEN CLARK, OAM

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (20:01): I acknowledge Stephen Clark from Wyong, who has been named the Australian Champion of Champions Town Crier five times and who has now been honoured with a Medal of the Order of Australia in the Australia Day Honours List. He has been recognised for his service to the Central Coast through a range of community roles. When VIPs arrive it is Stephens's job to sound a fanfare on the bugle, ring the bell and read a proclamation of welcome. Stephen also leads street parades and citizenship ceremonies, and hosts and emcees special events. He is a member of the Ancient and Honourable Guild of Australian Town Criers and currently holds the role of membership officer. Stephen was chaplain from 2003 to 2005 and president from 2007 to 2010, and again from 2013 to 2016. Stephen was also named Champion of Champions Crier in the Australian National Town Criers Championships in 2012, 2013, 2016, 2018 and 2019. In 2005 Stephen took third

place in the World Invitational Town Crier Tournament Championships. Stephen is also a member of the St Philip's Christian College Foundation Board of Governors. Congratulations to Stephen on his dedication to the community.

IMOGEN GARDINER

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (20:02): I congratulate Imogen Gardiner, who has accepted a track and field scholarship at Stanford University in California. The Pymble Ladies' College [PLC] Class of 2020 student has had a stellar season on the track. Imogen won the 1,500-metre distance race at the Australian and Oceania under-18 championships and, while representing Pymble, her team won the 2017 World Schools Championship in athletics. Last year Imogen received the PLC Sports Girl of the Year award and also received an impressive ATAR of 99.8. Imogen said that sport has taught her "how to translate difficulties into opportunities", which she has applied to all of life's challenges. Imogen aspires to be a doctor, but hopes to end up in a career that allows her to continue to train and compete in athletics. There is no doubt that Ku-ring-gai is home to some extraordinary sporting talent. Good luck to Imogen at Stanford.

AFRICAN SUB-SAHARA INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (20:03): I congratulate the African Sub-Sahara International Development Agency on its fantastic Australia Day event on 26 January at the Auburn Town Hall, which I was privileged to attend. The African Sub-Sahara International Development Agency assists with settlement in Australia and also provides assistance to people with disabilities in the Congo. The Australia Day event was wonderful, as were the artists who attended, including Vasco Official in particular. If anyone is looking for an Australian artist to invite along to their next party, I suggest they invite Vasco Official. Lots of dance groups attended, including the Neon Stars, as well as many other people from the South Sudanese community. I say thank you to Theophile Elongo and the African Sub-Sahara International Development Agency for the Australia Day celebrations and for all of the work they do for the African community in Australia, and particularly for those from the Congo.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH COWRA

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:04): I recognise the newly established Neighbourhood Watch Cowra following its inaugural meeting last month. It was a great success and I commend coordinator Nikki Kiss for pulling the initiative together for her community. I note Cowra Lions Club President Graham Apthorpe, Cowra Mayor Bill West and the officer in charge of Cowra police, Inspector Adam Beard. They spoke on the night to show their support. It is fantastic that Neighbourhood Watch Cowra will have the support of Neighbourhood Watch NSW to guide it forward, with State secretary David Watmore present on the night to answer questions about the formation of the group. Mr Watmore was quoted as saying:

Neighbourhood Watch is more than just crime prevention, it is about neighbours helping neighbours.

I know how important that concept is to small-town life and I look forward to hearing more as Neighbourhood Watch gets underway in Cowra.

LIZ MESSIH

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (20:05): Liz Messih commenced at the Canterbury City Community Centre, also known as the 4cs, as one of two part-time staff facilitating social groups for locals over 65. Today after 22 years of service to the community she is the outgoing CEO, presiding over a staff of 50. She has built the organisation's well-deserved reputation for equity, inclusivity and accountability. Liz had a vision of working in a community where she could help foster an inclusive and safe working environment. The wonderful culture that exists within the 4cs staff and volunteer team is very much a testament to Liz's leadership.

Liz's team describes her as a leader guided by a strong sense of social justice and ethics. She is incredibly organised and treats everyone equally and with respect. Liz has always been one of Lakemba's biggest supporters, citing it as a privilege to work among what she considers to be one of the most diverse, generous, resilient, hardworking and harmonious communities in Australia, if not the world. Liz is loved and respected by staff, volunteers and members of the local community. She has become known for her sense of humour and the catchcry "Don't get me started" when talking politics. On behalf of the Lakemba community, I wish Liz all the very best and thank her for everything she has done.

COMETS BASEBALL CLUB

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (20:06): I acknowledge Comets Baseball Club for its dedication to baseball in the shire. Founded in 1981, Comets Baseball Club is widely recognised for its high level of achievement as well as setting a recognised standard of excellence. A sense of community has always been at the core of the club, with the wonderful members rallying together to raise funds to build a new clubhouse and canteen

after the devastating 1994 bushfires destroyed most of the club's facilities. I am pleased to announce that Comets Baseball Club has received a one-off \$9,500 grant from the Premier to continue to upgrade facilities by constructing a metal awning on the western side of the clubhouse. It will provide protection from the elements so that players and supporters can make the most of the space. I acknowledge the hardworking committee behind the fantastic club, including Trevor Geldenhuis, Michael Sant, Scott Collins, Dan Spooner, Steve Nash and Frank Bishopp. I thank all at Comets Baseball Club for nurturing a love of baseball in our local community and for bringing the importance of the project to my attention.

DR DENISE FLEMING, AM

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:07): I congratulate Dr Denise Fleming of Pearl Beach and commend her for her recognition as a Member of the Order of Australia. Denise has been honoured for her significant service to women in business through a range of roles over the past 35 years. Dr Fleming describes herself as a great believer in equality, particularly in the areas of education and leadership, and maintains that we still do not have equality in power, government, corporations or universities. Dr Fleming has said that more women should be celebrated for their contributions to society, and I could not agree more. I thank Denise for her contribution not just to our community but to women past, present and future in forging a path forward to an equal society.

MORTDALE PROBUS CLUB

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (20:07): At the end of last year I had the privilege of attending the 2020 annual Christmas luncheon for the Probus Club of Mortdale. It was a fantastic event and a great opportunity to meet with members to discuss the many highlights and challenges of 2020. I thank president Jeanette Baker, secretary Colin Bishop and all the wonderful members of the Probus Club of Mortdale for hosting me on the day. The team gathers at 10.30 a.m. on the third Wednesday of every month at the Mortdale RSL. I sincerely encourage anyone who is considering joining to do so. With the help of the committee, Jeanette, Colin and the entire executive have helped build the organisation over many years to make the Probus Club of Mortdale one of the best in Sydney. I wish everyone from the club all the best for another fantastic year ahead.

PETER CROWE, OAM

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (20:09): I offer my congratulations to Peter Crowe, who was awarded an Order of Australia medal as part of the Australia Day awards for his years of advocacy on behalf of the forestry industry. Peter has worked in the forestry industry since 1959, when he joined the then NSW Forestry Commission. He worked for the commission until 2006. He has been involved in community engagement and industry advocacy as chair of the Softwood Working Group and a board member of Regional Development Australia Murray. As director of the Radiata Pine Breeding Company, Peter's work to improve the quality of seedlings continues to pay dividends. In the summer of 2019-20 the fires around Tumut and Tumbarumba did incredible damage to the plantations that were part of Peter's life's work. Over 60 years Peter has contributed to the forestry industries and his contribution will last for decades to come. I have appreciated Peter's willingness to provide me with an education on the forestry sector since I was appointed shadow Minister for Natural Resources. I thank him for his contribution to the sector and to the people and communities it supports.

BOAMBEE EAST COMMUNITY CENTRE

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (20:10): Youth engagement and participation is the focus of a \$50,000 State Government grant to Boambee East Community Centre. The funds come from the \$1.5 million Youth Opportunities program, which opens up avenues for young people to be active and engaged members of the community. The Boambee East Community Centre will deliver a series of pop-up art, cultural and music workshops across the Coffs Harbour local government area, culminating in a showcase event for young people. The Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, the Hon. Gareth Ward, saw firsthand the important work of the centre during our recent visit to congratulate all involved. The centre is well served by its wonderful volunteers and the strong leadership team comprising manager Sue Butler, community development officer Anthea Flowers, management committee president Grant Geytenbeek, treasurer Rachel Kay, office administrator Ann Pierlot and committee member Margaret Bridgman.

13 THE MUSICAL

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (20:11): I was pleased to join my colleague Emma McBride, Federal member for Dobell, in attending Jopuka Productions' *13 the Musical*, staged at the new Red Tree Theatre in Tuggerah on 5 February 2021. The show was well presented, with universal themes of growing up, acceptance and true friendship, to which young and old can relate. I congratulate the young cast on a fantastic production. I also congratulate director and designer Joshua Maxwell, musical director Quinn Carter, choreographer Marlee Carter and vocal coach Jayne Johnston. Jopuka Productions is a brilliant arts company helping young

actors and performers create a pathway into the industry. I have attended many of its productions and been continually entertained by the stories and the very talented cast.

COWRA YOUTH COUNCIL

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:11): I am pleased to congratulate Cowra's 2021 Youth Council. Fifteen members were appointed this year, including six new faces. Congratulations to Ethan Austin, Stassi Austin, Daniel Barlow, Jade Blinman, Ilyssa Charnock, Emma Clements, Louis Gough, Ruby Gough, Cohan Howden, Zachary Olbourne, Destiny Pepper, Ashleigh Saunders, Raziq Shii, Alex Shaw and Joel Stendell. It is brilliant that they have put themselves forward to represent themselves, their friends and their peers. Cowra Youth Council is a fantastic example of youth councils. It presents a great opportunity for youths to learn more about civic duty, event organisation and public speaking—amongst so much more. I thank the members for putting themselves forward and I am very excited to hear more about what they have planned for this year.

PATONGA PUBLIC HALL

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:12): I acknowledge the New South Wales Government for granting \$19,250 to Patonga Public Hall through the Crown Reserves Improvement Fund. On Monday 25 January it was my pleasure to visit Patonga Public Hall and meet with John Quigg, who lives nearby and works hard to keep the hall in tiptop condition. The \$19,250 granted to Patonga Public Hall will be spent on painting work. The facility is already in fantastic condition thanks to the work of John Quigg. The funding is part of a larger package of \$270,000 for improvements to Crown land reserves and community facilities across the Central Coast. It is an annual funding boost that will upgrade, improve and maintain local reserves, facilities and infrastructure. It will support the local economy by creating more opportunities for recreation and tourism businesses, and it will help to further improve the condition of Patonga Public Hall. I congratulate all the locations on the Central Coast that are receiving Crown land funding from the New South Wales Government.

BURMESE ROHINGYAN COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (20:13:53): I am pleased to acknowledge the work of the Burmese Rohingya community volunteers, who recently received a grant from the Centre for Volunteering to assist with their volunteer program. COVID-19 has left a huge economic impact on many of our citizens. It is through grants like these that community groups can continue their work. More often than not the hard work of these heroes goes unseen and unacknowledged. It is really important that this group helps its community to thrive by supporting the elderly, and providing activities to develop and support the youth. So today I commend and thank Jawat Kabir and his team, who lead the Rohingya volunteers in our community, for their dedication and commitment to those in need. The grant assisted the volunteers to deliver food hampers to the most disadvantaged and to provide young people with the most basic things, like socks and other equipment for their sports programs. I understand the difficulties that community groups face when their own resources are often stretched to the limits. The Government must continue supporting these community groups because grassroots organisations and support systems are so important for refugee and recent migrant communities.

DAVIDSON ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (20:14:59): I recognise all recipients of the Medal of the Order of Australia, particularly in my electorate of Davidson. The recipients include Bruce Carfrae of Castle Cove for his public service and commitment to the community through a range of roles, including Rotary, Northbridge Men's Shed and Lindfield Rollers Bowling Club; Mark Ginsburg of Lindfield for his commitment to the Jewish community and to music; Stephen Judd of Roseville for his service to older people with dementia through his roles at HammondCare, Aged and Community Services Australia, and other organisations; Wendy Carver of St Ives for her commitment to community mental health; and Roger Reddel of St Ives for his dedication to biomedical research in the field of adult and childhood cancer and genetics, as well as to tertiary education. I commend and congratulate all award recipients on their outstanding service to people and communities. They are an inspiration to us all.

SUE BOOTH

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (20:15:53): Dooralong resident Sue Booth received the environmental award at the Australia Day awards. Sue initiates programs and processes to protect native wildlife and is the wildlife champion of the valleys west of Wyong. Her passion for animal welfare inspires her to protect, treat, rescue and rehabilitate native animals in the areas bordering the Watagan Mountains. For the past five years Sue has been active in the Dooralong Valley and the Yarralong Valley to eliminate mange in the wombat population, along with other issues. Sue has taken on this time-consuming process with the aim of eliminating the disease in the valleys. I congratulate Sue on her compassion and dedication to the environment and on protecting the local area.

1ST WEARNE BAY SEA SCOUTS

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (20:16:35): I congratulate the incredible 1st Wearne Bay Sea Scouts, who are the successful recipients of \$30,000 from the New South Wales Government's 2020 Community Building Partnership program. Currently home to 98 members, the 1st Wearne Bay Sea Scouts take part in numerous activities from outdoor skills to abseiling, rafting and hiking. The young members also have the opportunity to participate in leadership development, community service, environmental projects and the performing arts. I am delighted that this funding will provide an upgrade to the 1st Wearne Bay Sea Scouts' hall located in Illawong and deliver improved amenities and new outdoor lighting for added safety for our local youth. Of course none of this is possible without the hardworking group of volunteers behind the organisation. I acknowledge Simon Thomas, Bill Murray, Benjamin Bray, Victoria McGloin, Glenn White, Wendy Marsh, Susan Smith, Mark Thorogood, Kyle Burgess, Melissa Jones and Daniel Murray. I commend the 1st Wearne Bay Sea Scouts and wish all members well as they embark on another year of adventuring.

FRANK "JUNIOR" JOHNSON

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:17:34): Communities across New South Wales are fuelled by the energy and efforts of crucial individuals and groups who go above and beyond to care for their local area. This evening I acknowledge the efforts of one such person, Frank "Junior" Johnson of the Peninsula. For over 10 years Junior has bought and distributed Christmas presents to coast kids and has been heavily involved with local sporting organisations. He has even been coined the "Mayor of Umina". Whenever there is a community effort to raise funds for a good cause, Junior is there helping out. Even throughout the challenges of 2020 he continued in any way he could. Thank you to Junior for all his efforts to support our community. We appreciate him and his family enormously, and look forward to seeing what 2021 has to offer. Junior, you are a local legend.

F'COFFEE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (20:18:22): From long blacks to flat whites to cappuccinos, I am incredibly proud to announce that F'Coffee in Mortdale has won the Best New Business Award as part of the 2020 St George Local Business Awards. The competition came down to 21 finalists from throughout the St George region, but of course there could only be one winner. I could not think of a more deserving recipient. Despite all the global and domestic challenges that we experienced during 2020, John, Fiona and the entire team have done a simply incredible job. They are two of the hardest-working individuals I have ever met. The shop was even open on Christmas Day last year. I must boast that F'Coffee is one of my local coffee shops. John makes a terrific coffee and is always happy to have a conversation. I commend John and Fiona for their outstanding achievement. I have no doubt that they will carry out many more great years of service into the future.

COFFS HARBOUR ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (20:19): The Coffs Harbour community is built on the hard work, dedication and passion of the people who are proud to call the Coffs Coast home. This year at our Australia Day awards, hosted at the North Coast Regional Botanic Garden, five local legends were recognised for their achievements and community spirit. The ceremony is also a special occasion for our newest Australian citizens, and it allows us to reflect on what it is to be Australian. The Citizen of the Year award went to Captain John Lardner from the Nana Glen Rural Fire Service. I also acknowledge the other nominees, Michael Bourne and Julie Ferguson. Young Citizen of the Year was awarded to Taryn McCarthy. Sportsperson of the Year was Rosie Smart. Volunteer of the Year was John Higgins, and the Social Inclusion award went to Beth Rogers. The event was a great way to welcome new Australians and to congratulate those who achieved great things in the previous year.

ALFRED BRITTON, OAM

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:20): I commend and congratulate Mr Alfred Britton of Narara on being acknowledged with a Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to conservation and the environment. Alfred has been recognised for his multiple animal-care volunteer roles, his contribution to research assignments, his time as an ecology supervisor and his continual involvement with conservation community groups. One of his most notable contributions is co-founding the Friends of Strickland State Forest with Geoff Curtis in 1998. The group helps to protect the habitat and vegetation in the forest, ensuring that we can all enjoy Strickland for many years to come. On behalf of our community, I thank Alfred for his considerable contributions to our local environment.

*Community Recognition Notices***ANTHONY RODRIQUEZ**

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—I pay tribute to Anthony Rodriquez, a man of great heart, compassion and generosity, who sadly passed away on 9 January 2021. Through his Sylvania BMW dealership, Mr Rodriquez supported numerous charities and organisations including Sydney Children's Hospital, the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Unit, Cook Classic and Sutherland Shire Water Polo Association. The Sydney Kids Committee honoured Mr Rodriquez, "who so generously supported the Sydney Children's Hospital Randwick for many years through the Christopher Robin Committee, Sydney Children's Hospital Network Foundation, Ronald McDonald House and more recently Sydney Kids Committee". Anthony Rodriquez was adored and admired by many people in the Sutherland Shire community and beyond. He will be sorely missed. My thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Simone, and their children, Felicita, Angelica and Dominic.

COUNCILLOR CAROL PROVAN

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—I congratulate Councillor Carol Provan, who was recently recognised by Local Government with an Outstanding Service Award. A much-admired Shire identity, Councillor Provan has dedicated more than 20 years of service to Sutherland Shire Council. She has served in the mayoralty twice, in 1987-1988 and 2011-2012. Councillor Provan has been instrumental in advocating for and delivering a number of major projects, including the Cronulla Town Centre upgrade, Bate Bay Coastal Management Program and Silver Beach shared pathway. She works tirelessly on behalf of her constituents to preserve and improve the amenity the area, to support local business and to promote sustainable tourism. I warmly congratulate Councillor Provan on her award and thank her for her ongoing service to the community.

HALLIDAYS POINT CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—Speaker, I rise to recognise Hallidays Point local Diane Emms who was recently named Hallidays Point Citizen of the year. The acknowledgement came as a surprise to the humble Diane who true to her selfless nature said there were many people in the community who she believed were much worthier. Diane has served the Myall Lakes community for decades running the MidCoast Libraries Hallidays Point Branch for thirteen years after almost two decades at the Great Lakes Library in Forster. She always filled these roles with great enthusiasm, wisdom and creativity. Diane also served the community as a teacher at Coolongolook Public school before establishing the Forster Christian Community school where she worked as a teacher librarian. She has also aided the community as a justice of the peace. I again commend Diane for all that she has done for Myall Lakes communities and congratulate her on being named Hallidays Point citizen of the year.

TAREE RSL SUB-BRANCH COMMUNITY GROUP OF THE YEAR

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—Speaker, I rise to commend the Taree RSL Sub Branch, after the group was named community group of the year at the annual Taree Australia Day awards. The sub branch has been an institution in Taree for more than 100 years, each year organising Anzac day and other significant remembrance services for the Taree Community. The volunteer members are all assets to the Manning Valley who do great work in advocating for and assisting veterans and their families - whether the veteran belongs to the sub branch or not.

LEUMEAH HOTEL

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—Pubs and clubs are much more than places where people go to have a drink and catch up with friends. They are places where like-minded people go to band together for common causes. A perfect example that occurred at Leumeah Hotel and Campbelltown Hotel recently. The venues raised \$10,000 between them which was donated to the Kids of Macarthur Foundation – one of the many great charities in Campbelltown and the wider Macarthur region. The funds were used to purchase a special wheelchair for Campbelltown Hospital's paediatric unit. Not only that, it took less than five months to raise the money. It's an incredible effort that really will make an enormous difference for many children in the local community. Kids of Macarthur chairman Bruce Hanrahan summed it up best when he said: "Because of the year we've had, our fundraising activities have been reduced to almost nil, so these types of donations are our lifeblood at the moment. Congratulations again to everyone involved in the fundraising effort – it is a wonderful achievement that really will make the world of difference to many children.

RHONDA SAMPSON

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—If you have been to Campbelltown Sports Stadium lately, there is a good chance you have stumbled on a new addition at the venue. It's not turf, a grand stand or even goal posts – it's a mural from local artist, Rhonda Sampson. The Eagle Vale artist's Aboriginal mural truly is a sight to behold. The patterns, the colours and the composition really do make for a wonderful piece. Ms Sampson, a Kamilaroi woman, titled the work Past, Present and Future. The past acknowledges the Dharawal people – the traditional owners of the land the stadium is built on. The present acknowledges the actual stadium as a venue that brings together people from far and wide for events like A-League and NRL games. And the future is represents Campbelltown and a rapidly growing and changing community. Importantly, a Welcome to Country also accompanies to piece and it clear for all to see. We are so lucky in Campbelltown to have a plethora of talented artists that call our local area home. Thank you Rhonda for such a great creation that really does a wonderful job in paying homage to Campbelltown's past, present and future.

TET FESTIVAL

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—On 13 February I was honoured to join, together with my husband Councillor Alex Kuskoff, the Vietnamese Community in Australia (VCA), New South Wales Chapter, to participate in their Vietnamese New Year Tet Celebration for the Year of the Ox at the Vietnamese Cultural Centre Hall in Bonnyrigg. As the most important cultural event for the Vietnamese community in Australia, the Tét celebrations are a wonderful opportunity to display Australia's diverse and multicultural society, as well as to recognise the contribution made by the Vietnamese community in Australia. I recognise the President of the VCA NSW Mr Paul Huy Nguyen, Vice President Ms Kate Hoang, and Vice President of External Affairs Ms Linda Dao, along with the board members of VCA for their outstanding efforts and leadership in organising such a wonderful event. I also acknowledge the Hon. Chris Bowen MP, the Hon. Jason Clare MP, Mr Chris Hayes MP, Mayor Frank Carbone of Fairfield City Council, as well as my colleagues Mr Guy Zangari MP and Mr Nick Lalich MP. I wish my community a happy Lunar New Year, in this year of the Ox.

AUSTRALIAN CHINESE BUDDHIST SOCIETY

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I would like to recognise the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society and their marking of Chinese New Year. I was had the pleasure of joining the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society for their Chinese Lunar New Year celebrations on 13 February at the Mingyue Lay Buddhist Temple in Bonnyrigg. The commencement of the Blessing Ceremony was marked by the chanting of Master Venerable Shi Ming Shang, Venerable Ahi Ban Ruo, Venerable Miao Guang, and Venerable Miao Li. The Lion Dance Group performances were a vibrant demonstration of the diverse talents in our community, and it was a pleasure being part of the festivities. I thank Chairman James Chan OAM, President Vincent Kong OAM, Vice Chairman Sen Huynh, and the board members of the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society for their kind invitation and warm hospitality. I wish everyone a happy Lunar New Year, in this Year of the Ox.

RAYNA LAMACK

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—2020 was a difficult year for school students, particularly those undergoing the HSC, in dealing with the challenges that COVID-19 threw at them. Lambton High School student Rayna Lamack rose above the challenges thrown at her last year and achieved first place in the state's most popular course, English Standard, beating 31,346 other students. In a normal year finishing first in an HSC course is an outstanding achievement, and to do so in a year like 2020, is a credit to Rayna's dedication and talent. The First in Course award recognises student's intellect, perseverance and a passion for learning that will hold them in good stead for the future. Rayna is an outstanding, highly motivated and dedicated young woman with an enquiring mind. She consistently attained excellent scholastic achievements in all areas of her schooling and achieved an ATAR of 99.1. Her parents and teachers can certainly share their pride as they look back on 13 years of schooling and how Rayna has been rewarded for her efforts. Congratulations Rayna, I look forward to seeing what you do next.

TIFFANIE TYSON

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—After six years in Wallsend, much loved local hairdresser, Tiffanie Tyson, has decided to put down the scissors for a while. Tiffanie opened her salon, Picture Perfect Hair, in Nelson Street in February 2015. During her time in Wallsend, Tiffanie has married her partner, Toby, and had two beautiful babies, Matilda and Tate. With a third baby due any time, Tiffanie has made the difficult decision to close the business and concentrate on her family. Not satisfied with just running her business, Tiffanie wanted to become more involved in the local business community. She became a Wallsend Town Business Association Board member in 2016 and was President from 2018 to 2020. Her dedication to the Association and commitment to improving the local business community, while running a business and looking after a young family, is to be commended. During her tenure with the Association, Tiffanie assisted with the organisation and running of the

Wallsend Winter Fair, the largest street event in the Newcastle Local Government Area. She will be missed by many in the town, including her many loyal customers, and we wish her and her family well in the future.

2021 TENTERFIELD SHOW

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I RECENTLY opened the 2021 Tenterfield Show, an action-packed and COVID-safe one-day event which attracted a large crowd. Tenterfield Show Society President Matt Duff and his team of volunteers staged a terrific program of events and attractions. I congratulate Miss Showgirl Josie McIntyre, runner-up Courtney Watt, and entrants Mickela Black, Emma O'Brien, Jessica Stuart and the twenty-three Miss Junior Showgirl entrants. I met up with Show Society patrons and country gentlemen Jim Landers and Mac Fraser. Tenterfield Showground Trust Land Manager Bruce Petrie then took me on a tour of projects rolling out under the NSW Government's Showground Stimulus Funding program, that I supported. New steel yards were well used and new steel chutes are being made to make rodeos safer. Tenterfield Poultry Club Treasurer Wayne Minns briefed me on how a \$10,000 Community Building Partnership Program grant will help restump their pavilion. Judge David Fowler, his son Tom and Club Secretary Jennifer Stoker joined us. Tenterfield has only missed one show in its history and that was when the showground was being used as a quarantine camp during the Spanish Flu pandemic in 1919. The old saying – the show must go on – held true in Tenterfield.

TRIBUTE TO BRETT ADLINGTON

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I wish to acknowledge the enormous contribution of Brett Adlington in his role as Director of the Lismore Regional Gallery. Brett has been Director for 11 years and has overseen major changes at the gallery, in particular the move to the new site at the Quad in Lismore. The Lismore Regional Gallery has become a must visit cultural experience for locals and visitors alike, showcasing high quality exhibitions from the local community and from abroad. Steering our Regional Art Gallery through COVID has been a great challenge. However the gallery has gone from strength to strength with the retention of the Hannah Cabinet, showcasing major exhibitions including the Archibald Prize. Throughout Brett's career he has been one of the greatest supporters of our local artists and he has our vibrant arts community on the cultural map. Brett's contribution has been expansive with his active involvement in the arts more broadly, especially through his roles as President and Vice President of Regional & Public Galleries of New South Wales. I congratulate Brett on his appointment to Chief Executive Officer of Museums & Galleries of New South Wales. I'm confident his contribution to the arts will continue to grow and inspire.

COLAN AUSTRALIA

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—Congratulations to Colan Australia on receiving a grant through the NSW Government Innovation Districts Challenges. Colan Australia is a local manufacturer based in the Electorate of Prospect, who developed, in collaboration with the CSIRO an advanced reusable face mask that is able to kill the virus that causes COVID-19. It's a fantastic example of businesses partnering with our chief scientific organisation to innovate and achieve results. It is crucial to our local economy and for local jobs that companies like Colan Australia are supported to bring new and innovative products to market. Local manufacturers are some of the most innovative companies in our country. I would like to thank Managing Director Genelle Coghlan and the entire team at Colan Australia for their work to develop important medical products to protect our community. The commitment to continued local manufacturing is good for jobs, our economic recovery and for ensuring that we can access crucial medical supplies during times of global disruption. I'm incredibly proud that Colan Australia calls the electorate of Prospect home and shows an example of some of the incredible work that occurs across the electorate.

GENISTA AGED CARE, GREYSTANES

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—The dedicated staff at Genista Aged Care, Greystanes have done an amazing job- keeping residents safe and upbeat, with a positive and friendly attitude to all of their work. I recently had the pleasure of visiting the staff and residents at Genista Aged Care. 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. I would like to thank all of the staff for their service to the community. 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 Manager, Keith Crossland for welcoming me for a COVID safe visit, and allowing me to meet some of the amazing team and residents. Keith spoke of the challenges of caring for residents and their families through this difficult period but how he was proud of how everyone had come together to look after our elderly in difficult circumstances. Thank you to the team at Genista Aged Care.

SAVE THE GREEN PARK HOTEL

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I commend the work of the 'Save the Green Park Hotel' campaign whose members advocated to retain the historic 128 year-old Green Park Hotel in Darlinghurst as a hotel, after it was announced that it was sold in late 2020. The Green Park Hotel has held community and cultural significance for over a century and has been widely recognised as a safe space and meeting hub for the LGBTQI+ community. Campaigners worked hard to oppose the sale of the heritage listed building, gaining more than 7,000 signatures on their online petition. The work of the campaigners encouraged much needed conversation in both local and state government about the importance of safeguarding pubs and significant community cultural heritage. In conjunction with Save the Green Park's community advocacy, Deputy Lord Mayor Jess Scully unanimous motion gained City of Sydney Council support for investigating measures to protect significant community built and social heritage assets. Campaigners have ensured that the sense of community that this pub has engendered for over a century will not be lost. I congratulate them on their continued efforts in what was a devastating blow to the Darlinghurst community.

WELCOME HERE

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I'd like to commend the work of ACON's Welcome Here program that helps businesses and organisations ensure they are visibly welcoming and inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) communities. While the program grew from earlier efforts focussed on providing a safe place, it is now broader and has a positive framework. Members have to demonstrate that they understand and will actively set up policies and processes to be inclusive. They receive Welcome Here rainbow stickers and charter to display in a prominent place to let everyone know that LGBTIQ diversity is welcomed and celebrated within their business. I'm proud that my office participates in these scheme along with many other shops, offices and community groups. The Welcome Here project is a great way to encourage inclusion and show it to the wider community and I commend the program and encourage others to join up with the nearly 1,700 places already registered.

MUNGO MACCALLUM

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I pay tribute to the veteran journalist and great Northern Rivers character Mungo MacCallum, who passed away in December. Few journalists covered this nation's politics as long as Mungo did, from the Sydney desk of The Australian during the Menzies years, as an anonymous and unrestrained political commentator for Oz magazine, to a Northern Rivers institution with a widely read, informative and highly entertaining weekly column in the Byron Shire Echo. Descended from a long line of wealthy colonialists and political conservatives, Mungo was a self-confessed class traitor whose politics headed increasingly left from his university days. His views were forged in the heady 60s, shaped by the Vietnam War, environmental concerns and an awareness of the injustices suffered by Indigenous Australians. He never wavered from his progressive principles. Mungo was a bon viveur who combined a larrikin spirit, razor sharp intelligence and irreverent wit; he delighted in puncturing pomposity and hypocrisy and exposing cant and dishonesty, especially in those in high office. For Byron Shire locals he was an iconic figure, his columns a must-read every press day. His deeply informed contributions to the national conversation will be sorely missed.

LUNAR NEW YEAR - YEAR OF THE OX

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—I am delighted to wish everyone in the Summer Hill electorate a very Happy Lunar New Year. 2021 is the Year of the Metal Ox. After the year we have had, I know many in our community will be adopting the characteristics of the Ox to get us through the remainder of this pandemic, including persistence, diligence, honesty, stability, perseverance, power, and excellence. The Inner West community will be celebrating the Lunar New Year with a range of events thanks to Inner West Council in collaboration with the Inner West Asian Business Association and the Australian Federation of Chinese Organisations. At Ashfield Town Hall, Lunar New Year will be celebrated with Asian and Aboriginal cultural performances as well as a live performance of the ancient Chinese instrument the Da Ruan at the Council's Music Library. Locals can trace their Chinese Australian Ancestry with Kerry Choy from the Chinese Australian Historical Society. I wish to extend my warmest wishes to all inner westies celebrating Lunar New Year. I wish you and your families the best of luck for 2021. Happy Year of the Ox.

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE - 'NALA'

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Marrickville Legal Centre is looking to the future, developing a new virtual legal assistant to better assist the most vulnerable in our community. The "New Age Legal Assistant" - or NALA - was funded through a \$250,000 grant from the Access to Justice Innovation Fund. The NALA can be best described as an AI first responder, allowing frontline legal services to triage and assess enquiries based on their level of urgency and risk, before legal issues compound into crisis. A trial of NALA was launched during

the pandemic when Marrickville Legal Centre was facing a barrage of requests for support, with many clients struggling with housing insecurity, domestic violence cases, and job losses. NALA was able to help the team at Marrickville Legal Centre assess the urgency of a client's legal issues, receive crucial information before a consultation, and ensure that the finite resources of the centre are redirected to assist complex and high need clients first. Thank you to Vasili Maroulis and all the staff at Marrickville Legal Centre for your tireless work in supporting the most vulnerable in our community. Congratulations on this exciting new project.

WELCOME ALL SCHOOL STUDENTS FOR 2021

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Speaker, with most classes having recommenced for 2021, I'd like to welcome all students back to school. From our littlest learners starting their school journey in kindergarten to our year 12s who are heading into the end of their school lives, be proud, stay calm, do your best and don't be afraid to ask for help. Students who are taking on a leadership position at school should be very honoured to have been given the responsibility to take an active role in the school community and I encourage you to work with others to achieve the best possible outcomes. I wish students, staff and school communities the very best for a happy, successful and rewarding year ahead.

MS BARBARA PENNY—BLAND SHIRE 2021 CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Speaker, I take this opportunity to congratulate Ms Barbara Penny on being awarded the Bland Shire 2021 Citizen of the Year. Barbara is an active member of the West Wyalong Cub and Scout organisation. Barbara has been a member of these clubs for the past 30 years. Barbara has taken on many different roles including Cub leader whilst being a part of these organisations. The cubs and scouts of the organisations look up to Barbara as a mentor. Without the continued support of members of the community like Barbara many of these local organisations within my electorate couldn't operate. I would again like to congratulate Barbara on being the recipient of this prestigious award and thank her for her contribution to the community.

ROSS & JOYCE CATANZARITI

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—I am pleased to recognise Ross and Joyce Catanzariti for their wonderful contribution to the Griffith community. Ross and his parents emigrated from Italy, settling on a farm in Griffith to grow vegetables. When Ross was old enough, he helped his father transport their produce by horse and cart for sale at shops and the hospital. Ross met Joyce in Canberra and shortly after they married. They recently celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary. After many years of hard-work, they opened a fruit and vegetable shop in Griffith. Despite criticism from locals at the time, Ross and Joyce went on to build their own supermarket. Facing many challenges in the early years of business, the couple's determination and hard-work has seen the business grow to what it is today, employing up to 100 locals. Although they've sold the business and are enjoying their well-earned retirement, the supermarket still trades under the name of "Rossies" and Ross's cousin remains as Manager. Congratulation Ross and Joyce on raising a family and building a successful business.

JAN HON AND MEI YU YUEN

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I acknowledge two outstanding members of the Chinese Australian Services Society, Jan Hon and Mei Yu Yuen who have been instrumental to the success of the organisation. Jan has been a part of the team for eight years and she is always there to help with the setting up of events. She was also elected as part of the Local Management Committee in 2016. Mei loves to organise the dance classes which run every Thursday at the Hurstville Senior's Centre and she has a passion for helping and assisting others in whatever way she can. Last year I had the privilege of acknowledging both of these fine women with awards as part of the 10th Anniversary of the St George Community Awards. These awards recognise the hard work of men, women and our youth across a number of categories including sporting achievements and community groups every single year. I wish Jan, Mei and the entire team at CASS all the best for the year ahead.

NIKOLA AND VALENTINA APOSTOLOVSKI

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I recognise the outstanding achievements of both Nikola and Valentina Apostolovski who have been outstanding leaders and representatives of the Macedonian community. Together, the couple has raised over \$40,000 for the Cancer Council since 2012 and they have both been actively involved on a volunteer basis at the Australian Macedonian Theatre of Sydney. In fact they were both awarded 'Best Actor' for the year of 2020 for their role in "Aleksandar the Great." To raise this much money for charity is simply outstanding and it is a testament to their community engagement and their motivation to keep giving back to the community. This money will go a long way in funding cancer research and treatment throughout Australia and their donations to the theatre will help promote the value of art and performance within the community. The couple have also both received Individual Awards as part of the 2020 St George Community Awards. These

awards recognise men and women across a range of categories who are community minded and always there to help others. Well done to both of you.

COUNCILLOR PIERRE ESBER, CITY OF PARRAMATTA COUNCIL

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—I want to acknowledge the work of Cllr Pierre Esber. Pierre and I were both elected as Councillors to the former Parramatta City Council in 1999 and served together until 2016 when the New South Wales Government sacked several Councils they wanted to amalgamate. Pierre was elected to serve on the new City of Parramatta Council. Pierre has often brought his business and construction industry knowledge to council. Finding ways to encourage rainwater tanks as well as identifying massive potential savings in our use of electrical and plumbing contractors has helped to deliver better compliance with development consents. Pierre was also instrumental in having a guardrail installed in Bettington Rd, Oatlands following the tragic crash which killed children of the Abdalla and Sakr families. His efforts ensured the guardrail was installed in record time to help improve the safety of residents. Pierre has been committed to ensuring Council takes all safety and precautionary initiatives that protect the community and in particular local children. I congratulate Pierre on 20 years of service to the community and City of Parramatta Council and wish him well for continued contribution to the community.

OUR LADY OF LEBANON – CHRISTMAS CAROLS

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—Last Christmas Our Lady of Lebanon Co-Cathedral held annual COVID-safe Christmas Carols by Candle light on Saturday, 12 December 2020. This important local event was conducted in accordance with New South Wales Government health guidelines and was a great way to celebrate Christmas after a trying year for us all. I appreciate events such as Christmas Carols can lift the spirits of the whole community by providing an opportunity to celebrate one of the most joyous religious occasions of the Christian calendar. The Co-Cathedral in Harris Park provides a beautiful setting to reunite with family and friends, crucial for the well-being of any community. After the difficult year we've all experienced, it brings me so much joy that we were able to come together and celebrate Christmas. Thank you to Our Lady of Lebanon Co-Cathedral for all your hard work in organising a COVID-safe Christmas carols. Thanks also go to Father Tony Sarkis for the kind invitation to join parishioners on this special occasion.

LYNN AND LUCY HETHERINGTON – WYDALIBA NEST BOXES

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise the initiative of Lynn and Lucy Hetherington and the Wyaliba community, along with the Glen Innes Severn Council, for their efforts to restore wildlife habitat after the devastating fires of 2019. More than 20 members of the Wyaliba community built 20 nest boxes for birds, possums, and boobooks. Mayor of Glen Innes Severn Council Carol Sparks joined the project along with Lynn and Lucy Hetherington who organised the event and supplied lunch. This project recognised that a majority of Australia's wildlife depends on hollows to survive, making the nest boxes essential for habitat restoration. I congratulate Lynn and Lucy for organising this opportunity with the support of Glen Innes Severn Council, community donations and Landcare New South Wales Natural Disaster Seed Fund. I commend the Hetheringtons and the Wyaliba community for being an example of community response to disaster.

DR BEN GELIN OAM

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—It's a pleasure to recognise the achievements of long-time Bathurst resident, Dr Ben Gelin. He received an Order of Australia Medal earlier this year for his contribution to performing arts, law and community. Dr Gelin is an active board member of a variety of community organisations, including New Horizons, Macquarie Philharmonia, Mitchell Conservatorium and the Bathurst Seymour Centre. He moved to Bathurst from Tasmania in 1984, where he served as an Associate Professor of Law at Charles Sturt University for 10 years. After many years running his own law firm in Bathurst, Dr Gelin stepped back from the role full-time a number of years ago but at 84, he continues to work as a consultant for the Dubbo-based Austen Brown Boog Solicitors. Dr Gelin is also passionate about music and while he may be nearly deaf [and a fluent Auslan speaker], he has continued to amplify his support for local artists. He has a love of music as he is adamant it plays a vital role to Bathurst's cultural sector. And with his wealth of knowledge, Dr Gelin believes that for young people, creativity is such an important escape from boredom and trouble.

REYNOLDS AND FOGARTY'S INDIGENOUS ART COMPETITION

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise the Reynolds and Fogarty's Indigenous Art Competition for bringing attention to our accomplished Indigenous artists. The theme was to relate to reconciliation and the winner's artwork would cover the new bus which will add to Moree's On Demand public transport service. I congratulate winning entrant, Lena

Smith who displayed a storyline representing the walking tracks her ancestors used to connect their homelands with neighbouring mobs and clans for trading and ceremonies. Second place was awarded to Elizabeth Duncan for Waterholes and Long Deep Springs which features seeds and branches of cane along the waterholes. George See gained third prize with his intricate depiction Man in the Moon. I commend Reynolds and Fogarty Moree for running the competition and all competitors for sharing their confidence in reconciliation through art.

ALISON STEWART

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)—Alison Stewart has been awarded the Outstanding Contribution to Innovating Arts and Culture award by Shoalhaven City Council at our community's recent Australia Day celebrations, and I am pleased to congratulate Alison for this wonderful achievement. A teacher for over six years, Alison works Nowra Christian School as their Visual Arts teacher, Year Advisor, as well as the Indigenous Education Coordinator. Her passion for the arts extend beyond the school gate, also helping within the community as a Drama teacher with Nowra Players Theatre Group and volunteering as President of the Shoalhaven Arts Society. If that wasn't enough, Alison has also volunteered her time as an Artistic Director to support local productions and community events. The South Coast simply wouldn't be the same were it not for people like Alison who work tirelessly to help bring art and culture to our community, and teach our next generation. Thank you Alison, I wish you well on your continued success.

LLOYD VALENTINE

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—Charlestown Electorate resident and former Newcastle Business Club youth award recipient Lloyd Valentine has launched the "Healthy Change Village" as a one-stop wellness portal. Lloyd told the Newcastle Herald, he believes there is a need for tailor-made online programs for people of all ages, intellectual and physical abilities, and their support networks. While there are many online health and fitness support options, Lloyd sees his Village as providing accessible, professional help across a range of areas, helping to limit confusion. The platform includes a number of Hunter-based qualified health professionals, as well as Paralympians, the Black Dog Institute and That Sugar Movement. The videos are designed to be accessible and go through a strict approval and difficulty-grading process. As Lloyd points out, the difficulties of the last year have meant that there are more vulnerable people than ever who might be going without the support they need. The disruptions of COVID-19 have compounded pre-existing problems for many. I wish Lloyd, his collaborators and the users of his platform all the best as they work to improve physical and mental health outcomes and undergo a healthy change.

MITCH GIBSON

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—I would like to pay tribute to Mitch Gibson, first-grade captain for the Southern Beaches rugby union club—one of the club's best and most loyal players—who passed away at the age of thirty. A carpenter by trade, Mitch had recently taken on the important role of youth support worker. Mitch and his family, including his parents Sharon and Greg and his brother Brad, have been part of the fabric at the community-oriented, tight-knit Southern Beaches club. He was a loving partner to Alana and a doting father to his daughter, Lilly Ann, who has only recently turned one. Beaches 2019 coach Ben Kinkade said, "I have never heard anyone say a bad word about [Mitch]. As a player he was a fierce competitor... the tougher the situation, the more he thrived." I wish to offer my condolences to his family, friends and to the entire Southern Beaches community in this most difficult time.

AMBASSADOR CHIARA PORRO

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise Castle Hill local Chiara Porro, who was recently appointed as The Australian Ambassador to The Holy See. Ambassador Porro is a former parishioner at St Bernadette's Church in Castle Hill, and has already met the Pope at her Credentials Ceremony in August last year. Ambassador Porro has prior diplomatic experience having previously served domestically in the International Division of the Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet, as well as with the Department of Foreign Affairs' Budget Branch. She has also held overseas postings in West Africa, India and New Caledonia, where she was Deputy Consul-General. The relationship between Australia and the Holy See is an important one, with high-level reciprocal visits being an important part of the relationship. I again congratulate Ambassador Porro and wish her all the best for her time in the Vatican.

ARNAV SINGH TOPS HSC AUTOMOTIVE COURSE

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise Castle Hill local Arnav Singh, who recently topped the state in the Tafe NSW run "Certificate II in Automotive Vocational Preparation" at Mt Druitt. Arnav attended Glenwood High School and was delighted to find out he had topped the state in the Automotive Course. Arnav plans to attend University next year, with a particular focus on Automation Engineering. Arnav's success is testament to the skill and dedication of Tafe NSW's employees and teachers, and

a great endorsement of the combined TAFE and Schools model, which ensures all students have the opportunity to access quality vocational education. I would like to once again congratulate Arnav, and wish him all the best for his future studies.

HELENSBURGH STANWELL PARK SLSC JUNIOR LIFESAVER OF THE YEAR AWARD 2020/21

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—On the weekend I attended the Thirroul Surf Life Saving Club (SLSC) for the 2020/21 Surf Life Saving Illawarra Branch Championships. It was a pleasure to present my constituent Codie Weber from Helensburgh-Stanwell Park SLSC with the 2020/2021 Junior Lifesaver of the Year Award. Codie prides herself on protecting the community in her role as a lifesaver. Her tenacity, leadership and achievements at Club level have earned her this highly contested accolade. As Codie has received this award, she will participate in an advanced course in SLS, joined by the other Illawarra Junior Lifesaver of the Year award recipients. Codie is extremely deserving of this award and I congratulate her on this outstanding achievement, she should be extremely proud. I also take this opportunity to thank Surf Life Saving Illawarra for inviting me to present this award.

HORNSBY WOODWORKING MEN'S SHED

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)—Today I would like to acknowledge the Hornsby Woodworking Men's Shed for the amazing year they had in 2020. They are growing in popularity with a 10% increase in membership numbers. They elected 8 new committee members in November, including the first ever female committee member. Not just for the blokes, they currently have 15 females in the group of 190 members with the youngest member 16 years old and two 93 year olds make the oldest members. They were able to conduct their AGM safely via Zoom with the voting conducted online via survey monkey. They had an excellent response with 121 online responses received. With it much safer for members to stay at home in the middle of last year the wood turners would do regular demonstrations via Zoom. This has proven so popular they have keep them going and may even continue to do so as we return to normal. I would like to thank the hardworking committee President David Tarran, Vice President Robert Plant, Secretary John Barrett, Treasurer Michael Kevin, Members' Representatives David Boyd (Toys), Tracy Knights (Publicity), Ian McKay (Wood Turning) and Kevin Wallace (Membership).

MUSLIM LEGAL NETWORK

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I recognise the Muslim Legal Network (NSW). Founded in 2009, it represents Australian Muslim legal practitioners. In 2021, as in previous years, the Network held a function for the opening of the law term in New South Wales. This year the event was held at the Lakemba Mosque. A wide range of members of the legal profession attended, including the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the President of the Court of Appeal, the Chief Judge of the District Court, and various other Judicial officers. There were also representatives of the Law Society of NSW including the current President Juliana Warner, current CEO Sonja Stewart, and previous Presidents Richard Harvey, Doug Humphreys, and Justin Dowd (who was President I think when this event was first held). The Chair of the proceedings was Zena Dabboussy-Bardouh, an Executive Member of the Network. The newly elected Network President, Miriam Makki, addressed the gathering and the keynote address was delivered by Dr Zachariah Matthews. There was also a recitation of verses from the Quran by Shaykh Mohamed Harbi. Also in attendance was the Imam of the Lakemba Mosque Shaykh Yahya Safi. This is a very good initiative and the Network should be congratulated.

ST BRIGID'S DAY

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I recognise the Prankqueans who presented Brigid 2021 at the Casula Powerhouse on 7 February this year, at an event supported by the Irish Consulate in Sydney. This was a celebration of St Brigid's Day. Brigid is a patron saint of Ireland. She was also a pre-Christian Celtic fertility goddess. St Brigid's day (La Fheile Bride) in Ireland announces the coming of spring. It was also one of the major pre-Christian celebrations known as Imbolc. The theme of this event was Brigid as healer. I want to acknowledge those performers, poets, and presenters involved in Brigid 2021: Aine de Paor; Gabrielle Carey; Rosie McDonald; Jacqui McPhee; Cliona Molins; Anne Casey; and Julie McFarland. I should acknowledge the presence at the event of the Irish Consul-General in Sydney Owen Feeney and Vice-Consul Adriene Hickey. The Irish Government supports St Brigid's Day throughout the world in celebration of the creativity and contribution of Irish women.

MARILYN HARRIS

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—Marilyn Harris has always had a passion for music and theatre, moving from Newcastle to Broken Hill in 1978. Marilyn is integral to the music and performing arts scene in Broken Hill. She has been a member of the Philharmonic, Eisteddfod and Repertory Societies for at least 40 years. Broken Hill Repertory's Theatre 44, has seen Marilyn produce or direct around 50 shows for adults and children. The music and drama groups that Marilyn runs are crucial in the Broken Hill community, not only for entertainment but also

for those students who wish to experience a career in the performing arts. In addition, Marilyn uses her skill as a pianist for the Philharmonic and Morgan Street School Choirs as well as teaching singing and piano to her private students. Marilyn, thank you for fostering and nurturing the performing arts community of Broken Hill.

CHIEF INSPECTOR ANTHONY MOODIE

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—Chief Inspector Anthony Moodie has been a valued member of the New South Wales Police force for over 30 years, residing in Wilcannia since 2018. Chief Inspector Moodie engaged with the community from day one, door knocking and encouraging his fellow Police officers to get to know their town. He provided activities for young people, like the boxing program "Fit for Life", discos, Christmas parties, circus workshop and movie nights. He collaborated with the School Attendance Officers and Drop-In centre, always willing to listen to the needs of others and giving his valuable time. He was able to support the community and still do what his job required of him. Chief Inspector Moodie tackled some of the hardest policing issues, like domestic violence and sought to learn from other successful programs operating in nearby towns. Thank you for your work in Wilcannia, Chief Inspector Anthony Moodie. Best wishes in your new posting, as you continue to keep our communities safe.

UPPER HUNTER AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter)—I would like to congratulate the following overall winners of the Upper Hunter Shire Australia Day Awards 2021. Upper Hunter Shire Citizen of the Year – Desmond Collison from Scone who also received the Hunter McLoughlin Citizen of the Year. Upper Hunter Shire Young Citizen of the year – Connor Sullivan from Aberdeen. The recipients are to be commended for their community work within the Upper Hunter Shire communities and I thank them for their contribution to the Upper Hunter electorate.

CONRAD PETROVIC

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I congratulate the outstanding achievements of Conrad Petrovic a former student at Broughton Anglican College for his incredible HSC achievements. Conrad placed 3rd in the State for Engineering Studies as well as being named 2020 College Dux with an ATAR of 96.25. To see students come out of the HSC with results they worked for in such a tough year is incredible – particularly those who have achieved such high standards. Here, I acknowledge the high standards of talent, creativity, hard work and passion required to achieve such prestigious acknowledgement. To Conrad, I wish you continued success in all of your future endeavours.

DAVID DE VECCHIS

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I recognise the outstanding achievements of Mr David De Vecchis former student of St Gregory's College Campbelltown for his incredible HSC achievements. I would like to congratulate him for placing third in the State for Geography and being named 2020 College Dux with an ATAR of 99.85. I also congratulate David for being named Quota Campbelltown's Student of the Year for his passion in public speaking, sport and education. The Quota Campbelltown Student of the Year contest has run for more than 40 years. Faced with a tough and challenging year, David still managed to achieve excellent HSC results. I wish David the best of luck in his future studies and goals.

AMINA MOUBAYED

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—I acknowledge Amina Moubayed of Seven Hills for being chosen to participate in the 2020 Children's Week Parliament. Amina attends Malek Fahd Islamic College and addressed the sitting of the children's parliament with a one minute speech regarding depression, particularly as it effects young persons in high school. I want to thank Amina for highlighting this important issue. Mental health matters in my local community and those across the state have been a worry during COVID-19 as those of all ages have been impacted via loss of employment, social isolation or health complications. The next generation of leaders continue to inspire the leaders of today with their insights of what matters and how government can play a real role in assisting young people. Well done to Amina on her work on behalf of the Seven Hills Electorate and for the NSW Advocate for Children and Young People and The Y New South Wales for putting on the Children's Week Parliament.

WESTERN SYDNEY ACADEMY AFL SENIOR GIRLS ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—I am pleased to announce the Western Sydney Academy's AFL Senior Girls Athlete of the Year, Emma Vitanza. Emma is a Hills based AFL star who attends the Western Sydney Academy of Sport, volunteering her skills to local athletes within Western Sydney. The Academy offers young players within the Seven Hills Electorate local community an opportunity to develop their sporting ability in a wide range of activities. These include netball, AFL, BMX racing and rowing to name a few. Regardless of the

circumstance, Emma is known for her hardworking attitude, dedication and giving nature. This has been reflected throughout the year as she continues to sacrifice her time within the Academy despite challenges that Coronavirus has presented. It is volunteers like Emma that make our local communities enjoyable places to live, providing opportunities for everyone. I know so many volunteers across the Seven Hills Electorate sporting organisations that dedicate their weekends to the community and thank them for their efforts. Congratulations Emma for this well-deserved award. I wish her all the best in future endeavours.

DETOUR HOUSE AND THE GIRLS REFUGE

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House an organisation that changes lives in the Balmain Electorate. Since it was founded in 1984 by Elisabeth Newhouse and Julie Macken, Detour House has given countless women a second chance at a better life. Detour House supports women who are recovering from drug and alcohol dependency and runs the only gender-specific youth crisis accommodation service for women under-18 in New South Wales, The Girls Refuge. Since they were established, over 5000 mighty women and girls have been connected to Detour House and The Girls Refuge. I had the pleasure of meeting with their team recently. I would like to acknowledge board members: Kiara Salmon, Monique Purcell, and Sandy Kervin. Their incredible staff team including: Fran Seijas, Geena George, Kelly Fewtrell, Marls Filmer-Sankey, Monika Tasic, Monique Nicol, Nikki Butterfield, Olivia Nguy, Sinead Bradshaw, Undarmaa Bayarbaatar, and Wendy Loupos. And their community partners and supporters including: B Miles Women's Foundation, the Community Restorative Centre, and the Day Street Band. On behalf of the Balmain Electorate I thank all of the wonderful people involved with Detour House for making our community a better place to live.

NOELLE HUMPHREYS – 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)—I would like to wish a happy 100th birthday to Noelle Humphreys of Hornsby. She celebrated the milestone late last year surrounded by family and friends. Noelle, who lives at the Adventist Aged Care Facility Azalea Court in Hornsby, had an afternoon tea party with staff and residents. CEO Brian Swanepoel said she was a breath of fresh air with a positive attitude. When Noelle was born her father put a gold sovereign in her hand and said, this girl will live long, will be surrounded by good friends, will never be left hungry or without a roof over her head. This is certainly been the case for Noelle who is still living independently. Congratulations on reaching this milestone Noelle and happy birthday.

COMMUNITY ADVOCATE RAMONA COCCO

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—I wish to place on the Parliamentary record the community's gratitude to Ramona Cocco, who campaigned for years to raise awareness about the notorious 'Rutherford Stink' that plagued West Maitland for more than two decades. Ramona agitated about the mystery odours that regularly invaded the community, permeating homes and sometimes necessitating the evacuation of businesses. Ramona also served for several years on the Rutherford Air Quality Liaison Committee, and was a committed NSW EPA informant. In my role as Member for Maitland I've had the honour of working alongside her as we have fought to cut to the root of the problem and force those responsible to restore amenity to the community. The Rutherford Stink forced many people to sell up and leave the area, while others sat tight and endured – often at great personal cost. Ramona, who has lived in the Rutherford area for around 50 years, herself suffered more than 20 years of asthma, skin rashes, headaches and bouts of a sore throat. While the odour problem has been addressed, a great deal of work remains to be done, and I thank Ramona for her continued resolve and tenacity in this ongoing saga.

CELEBRATING THE HUNTER'S 2021 GRAPE HARVEST

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—I salute the great winegrowers of the Hunter Region, who are an integral part of our tourism industry. Together, Hunter vineyard and tourism industries inject \$1.8 billion annually into the NSW economy. Twelve months ago, Hunter wine growers were reeling under the triple threat of heat, smoke taint and ongoing drought. Smoke taint alone reduced the 2020 grape crush of many growers. Tyrrell's Wines lost 80 per cent of their vintage. This year, the challenges could not have been more different. Instead of blistering heat and parched earth, our viticulturists and winemakers have faced the spectre of disease born of La Nina's high moisture, and too much rain too close to harvest. The good news is: we're halfway there. The sun came out in the nick of time for the whites, and from all reports, the harvest looks promising. We now wait, with one eye on the synoptic chart and one eye to the sky, to see how the red harvest progresses. I congratulate Hunter vineyard and tourism industries – their leaders and their employees - on making it through 2020 and its challenges, and wish them every success in the months ahead.

GRAEME IRWIN AM

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—Congratulations to Graeme Irwin on being recognised as a Member of the Order of Australia in the 2021 Australia Day Honours for his significant service to education and

Christian schools associations. Mr Irwin was only in his late 20s and not long out of university when he founded St Philip's Christian College. The school opened in 1982 with 25 students in a church hall. Today, it has four campuses with over 3500 students, as well as a school for students with additional needs and another specialised education service for young parents. As well as being a pioneer in Christian education in the Hunter, Mr Irwin has also served as member of the Hunter Region Independent Schools Association and the Australian Association of Christian Schools. Tens of thousands of students have benefitted from Mr Irwin's leadership, and will continue to long into the future.

PROFESSOR MARGARET ALSTON AM

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—Congratulations to Professor Margaret Alston, who was named as a Member of the Order of Australia in the 2021 Australia Day Honours. Although she was previously recognised with an Order of Australia Medal in 2010, Professor Alston did not rest on her laurels and this time was awarded for her service to tertiary education, social sustainability and women. Professor Alston's work on gender has spanned rural women, agriculture and disasters, and has seen her act as a gender expert to the United Nations and an Australian delegate to its Commission on the Status of Women. She also established the Gender, Leadership and Social Sustainability Research Unit at Monash University, which is now based out of the University of Newcastle. With over 150 books, chapters and journal articles under her belt, Professor Alston's commitment to improving the lives of women all over the world is unwavering and will have far-reaching impacts long into the future.

FAHEY 60TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—I would like to offer my congratulations to Dennis and Margaret Fahey who celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary this month. Honesty, support and mutual love are what they say are the key ingredients to a long and happy marriage. Both Dennis and Margaret were born in Bowral, and married in St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church in 1961. The couple established themselves in a new home in Bowral where they raised three children, and where they still reside today. Dennis and Margaret are well-known members of the Southern Highlands community. Dennis worked at Bunter's Menswear for 50 years and Margaret worked at numerous local offices, including 20 years working at St Thomas Aquinas Catholic School office. I would like to thank the Faheys, not only for their contribution to the Southern Highlands and Wollondilly community, but also for doing what is both the most ordinary and yet powerful things an individual can do: commit to another person for life through marriage and create a family.

COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION - BOWRAL BRANCH

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—This past Christmas once again brought people together, if not physically then at least in spirit. The Bowral Branch of the Country Women's Association gave thanks to the community for their generous support through the Coles Community initiative. The CWA members gathered trolleys of donated non-perishable food and toys, which were then taken to CWA rooms in Wingecarribee Street to be sorted into hampers. A special thought was given to the bushfire affected community in Balmoral, with toys being distributed to families by the Balmoral Community Association. The remaining items were distributed by the Salvation Army to those in need throughout the wider community, including to residents in Bundanoon, Penrose and Wingello who lost their homes in the recent bushfires. Thank you to the CWA and all those involved as well as those who made donations to such a worthy cause.

CHELSEA ATKINS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today I rise to acknowledge a talented young football player in my electorate, Chelsea Atkins who has been named the 2021 Harrington Sportsperson of the Year. Described as a rising football protégé in the making, Chelsea has already achieved much in her early sporting career. Her first taste of representative football was competing at the Under 12 State Titles, paving the way for bigger and better things to come. In 2019, Chelsea led the U14 Women's Premier League (WPL) to victory in the Northern NSW Football State Titles. Last season was notably problematic for most sporting organisations around the globe with local clubs managing their way through COVID-19 restrictions. This however, did not seem to hinder Chelsea's team as the Under-14s achieved runner-up status last season in the grand final. Throughout the year, Chelsea also represented the Under-17s side for the majority of the season, finding her feet with the older players while enhancing her abilities in the WPL. Chelsea was also selected to attend the NNSWF State Identification Camp, with sights set to compete in the 2021 National Championships for the Under 15 Squad. A Matilda in the making, I congratulate Chelsea for her sporting accomplishments.

AUSTRALIA DAY - HARRINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT'S HONOURED

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today I acknowledge the students from Harrington Public School who were nominated for an award during the Australia Day celebrations held at the Harrington

Community Centre. It was a tough year for the judges to select the winners of the Australian Day accolades with a pool of young, talented nominees each equally worthy of the prestigious award. The Junior Sportsperson of the Year was awarded to Noah Lindsay acknowledging his passion to motivate and inspire his fellow students to perform their personal best at swimming, cross country and sporting carnivals. Awarded the Junior Citizen of the Year was Tia Benson for her dedication and commitment towards her studies as well as always displaying an eagerness to support other students reach their full potential. Nominees Riley Williams, Tiarna McLucus, Reiley Wheeler and Kale Moore were also applauded during the proceedings for their enthusiasm, commitment and attentiveness to learning and their commendable personal attributes of honesty, respect and integrity admired and modelled by their peers. As a former teacher, I am thrilled to see each student rewarded for striving to achieve academic excellence and for upholding the school's motto in Moving Forward Together.

CLEAN4SHORE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of students who were tasked with removing weeds from the small island at the end of South Kincumber Channel and picking up litter from the foreshores of Kincumber Broadwater. This environmental project saw a partnership between Clean4shore, Central Coast Council and students from Kincumber High School who, despite strong winds blowing and a low tide reducing accessibility, spent three hours collecting litter and removing weeds from the Kincumber Broadwater! Our local environment will benefit from the removal of plants such as bitou bush and asparagus fern, which threaten local native plants, Mister Speaker. In addition, a massive 160 kilograms of litter was collected. In addition to the environmental outcomes, students were taught to identify invasive weeds and their impact on bush regeneration as well as the impact of plastics on the wetlands. I want to send a big thank you to both Clean4shore and the Kincumber High students for their contribution to the local community and I look forward to seeing the positive impact of further projects in our community.

NORAH HEAD LIGHTHOUSE RESERVE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I would like to congratulate Norah Head Lighthouse Reserve on their wins of Best DIY Wedding and overall Best of the Best awards at the annual Brides Choice Awards which recognise wedding businesses that operate across the Central Coast Region. In particular, I would like to congratulate Tracy Stubbings on her fantastic work in promoting and operating the Norah Head Lighthouse Reserve. As well as an operating lighthouse, Norah Head boasts a beautiful and photogenic location perfect for weddings. This pristine location is used for wedding photos, ceremonies, receptions and wedding night accommodation. Wedding parties can even bring their own caterer if they have public liability cover. Given the location, it is no wonder 17 wedding receptions have already been booked so far this year, using Crown Reserves such as Norah Head Lighthouse benefits the community and the funds raised from weddings are put back into the operation of the Reserve. Again I want to congratulate Tracy Stubbings and the Land Management Board for this fantastic recognition of Norah Head Lighthouse Reserve.

EMANUEL SYNAGOGUE VISIT

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse)—On 12 February 2021, I visited the Emanuel Synagogue to catch up with Senior Rabbi Jeffrey Kamins OAM and CEO Suzanna Helia. It was an opportunity for them to take me through their plans to restore the Synagogue's art deco Heritage Sanctuary. Part of the work is upgrading the sanctuary's sound system made possible with a \$20,000 New South Wales Government Community Building Partnership (CBP). My local CBP Program also supported their good work in 2018 with \$30,000 for a communal garden, 2017 with \$30,000 for a new war memorial board and 2013 with \$40,000 toward the construction of their second synagogue sanctuary. I commend the Synagogue's leadership including Rabbi Kamins, Rabbi Jacqueline Ninio, Rabbi Rafi Kaiserblueth, Rabbi Cantor George Mordecai, Rabbi Dr Orna Triguboff and Reverend Sam Zwarenstein. Also to President Alex Lehrer and Board members Sam Chipkin, Daniel Hochberg, Michael Hukic, Claire Jankelson, Cr Will Nemesh, Alan Obrart, Sam Weiss and Eve Altman. I look forward to visiting again soon.

SUSIE PRETTY REPRESENTS CAMMERAYGAL HIGH SCHOOL

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker, I acknowledge Cammeraygal High School student Susie Pretty who participated in the Children's Week Parliament 2020. The event hosted by the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People and The Y NSW, saw ninety-one children and young people take part, representing 89 New South Wales electorates. They were invited to prepare a one-minute speech on an issue they were passionate about that affects children and young people in New South Wales. Susie chose mental health as her topic, a topic that I also consider of major concern affecting our young people. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the Children's Week Parliament was held virtually, however their passion was still evident. Susie highlighted the need for increased mental health services, and suggested providing a more accessible counselling

service or centre for young people in our local community. Congratulations Susie on representing North Shore in the 2020 Children's Week Parliament and for raising awareness on such an important topic.

DR PERRY MCINTYRE RECEIVES AUSTRALIA DAY HONOUR

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker, today I acknowledge Dr Perry McIntyre who is a Mosman resident and was recently awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) as part of the 2021 Australia Day Honours, and received this award for services to history and genealogy. Dr McIntyre has been involved in Irish history and genealogy since the late 1970's, and has also served as an executive President of the History Council of NSW, is a member of the Royal Australian Historical Society, and the Great Irish Famine Commemoration Committee. Dr McIntyre had her PhD on convict family reunions first published in 2010 and was a councillor of the Society of Australian Genealogists for 20 years. She has spoken and published extensively on immigration, particularly on 19th century Irish immigration. Dr McIntyre has successfully lead or co-lead nine successful tours to Ireland between 1991 and 2007, and has worked for 6 years as the archivist at St John's College at the University of Sydney. Congratulations to Dr Perry McIntyre on receiving this award.

MIRANDA KINDERGARTEN

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge Miranda Kindergarten who are the successful recipients of \$6,000 from the New South Wales Government's 2020 Community Building Partnership Program for the purpose of installing a new saucer swing. Miranda Kindergarten was founded by a community of families in 1950 and has continued to educate and inspire children in the years following. The team of skilled educators strive to provide a safe environment for children to learn and grow. The idea for the swing came from the children themselves who were involved in the playground design. The children voiced their ideas and submitted hand-drawn pictures to playground designer Tessa Michaels who helped realise their vision. The new swing will provide gross motor and interactive experiences for students with special needs who can use the swing independently or with peers. I commend President Laura Barry, Director Jenny Hind and educator Tracey Baker who championed the project alongside Liz Amor, Kelly Awad, Danielle Baldwin, Teresa Borgese, Dakoda Cliff, Belinda Daly, Vera Diacoumis, Kendall Frearson, Linda French, Ruby Jackson, Christine Jinn, Jill Peters, Chris Rendell, Mel Seddon, Eli Stantic, Helen Smith, Marnie Smith and Lisa Tibbey. I thank Miranda Kindergarten for bringing the importance of this project to my attention.

MORISSET HIGH SCHOOL CAPTAINS

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I'd like to congratulate four outstanding students from Morisset High School who have been elected as the school's 2021 Captains and Vice-Captains. Bryce Webber and Kaylee Bercli have been elected as School Captains and are wonderful role models. Bryce is a two-time international athlete who won the International Children's Games Fair Play Award in 2017. He has also worked closely with the CSIRO on ways to integrate renewable energy into our existing power grid. Kaylee has constantly developed her leadership skills over the past five years by participating in peer support, Starstruck and the Student Representative Council. She's a hardworking student with an excellent academic record. Taiah Burbage and Cameron Moore have been elected Vice-Captains. Taiah is a recipient of the Deputy Principal Award, the Community Service Award and a Rotary scholarship. She also received the Long Tan Leadership Award and has been on the SRC since Year 8. Cameron is a diligent student who consistently works hard and received the Year Advisor's Award in 2019. Cameron has outstanding attitudes towards learning and is well regarded by his peers. I congratulate these young adults on their achievements.

CHARLTON CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I'd like to congratulate the 10 Charlton Christian College students who have been selected to form the school's 2021 leadership team. Harrison Allwood, Anthony Charlton, Georgia Craig, Lucy Donoghue, Jack Drayton, Laura Hyslop, Richard Kao, Thomas Kristofferson, Lauren Potter and Sophie Webster were selected to form the leadership team by their peers after they each demonstrated the ability to connect with, engage, motivate and support students of both primary and high school ages. This group of students also boasts a wide range of skills and talents including public speaking, athletics, music and academically gifted students. It's always wonderful to see young people accept responsibility and become leaders, whether it's within their immediate friendship group, broader school class or indeed the entire school. Young people who take on such responsibility are very likely to go on and be leaders in other ways, whether it's within their chosen profession which may include public life, business or public service. I congratulate these 10 students and wish them all the best for the 2021 school year.

LAKE COUNCIL SUSTAINABILITY PLEDGES

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Speaker, I acknowledge the continued efforts by Lake Macquarie City Council to take meaningful action towards sustainability. Most recently, the Council has announced the five

pledges it will undertake as part of its commitment to the Cities Power Partnership, which is Australia's fastest-growing national climate program for local government. Lake Macquarie City Council is one of 140 Australian councils in the partnership, representing more than 11 million Australians. After joining the partnership in 2020, Council undertook community consultation with residents to understand their opinions on which climate actions are most important for Lake Macquarie. This feedback enabled Council to decide on the pledges that will improve the City's environmental footprint. The pledges include measures to encourage sustainable transport, educate local businesses about adapting to climate change and support renewable energy projects. The Council has long been a proponent of sustainability, acting to protect the interests of current and future generations of Lake Macquarie City.

PROPHETIC RELICS PHOTO EXHIBITION

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—Recently, the Prophetics Relics Photo Exhibition was launched under the patronage of the Darulfatwa - Islamic High Council of Australia and the Organising Committee of The Annual Multicultural Mawlid Concert. The community was able to come together to view the photographic display of many different relics of the Prophet Muhammad. The photographs were arranged around the auditorium of Salamah College in Chester Hill with visitors free to walk through the exhibition to see the relics. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Darulfatwa The Islamic High Council of Australia Chairman His Eminence Sheikh Salim Alwan Al Husainy and the President of the Islamic Charity Projects Association – Australia Mr Mohammad Mehio for organising such a wonderful opportunity for the community.

BONDENO CAFÉ, FAIRFIELD

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I would like to acknowledge the Bondeno Café which has become a fixture in Fairfield society after being in operation for over 20 years. Specialising in Bosnian cuisine, this cafe is a hidden jewel in Fairfield and is a prime example of how Fairfield business owners have adjusted their business model to deal with the impact of COVID-19. Back in lockdown when business was at a low in the Fairfield CBD, owner Mr Enver Dizdagic and family delivered customer's meals to them via bicycle. This way, nobody missed out on the cafe's signature dish, cevapi, and all the other great meals Cafe Bondeno has to offer. I would like to commend Enver and his staff on this initiative and I wish the Bondeno Café all the very best in the future.

**The House adjourned pursuant to standing and sessional orders at 20:20 until
Wednesday 17 February 2021 at 09:30.**