



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 18 February 2021

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 18 February 2021

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Announcements

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP BREAKFAST

The SPEAKER: I thank on record Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Olympic Committee Matt Carroll for appearing as the special guest at this morning's Thought Leadership Breakfast, which is part of the Professional Development Program for members. I thank those members who attended. Matt's presentation and interaction were outstanding.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Membership

The SPEAKER: I report a message from the Legislative Council informing the Legislative Assembly that the Hon. Trevor Khan be appointed as a member of the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption in place of the Hon. Taylor Martin, discharged.

[Notices of motions given]

Bills

COVID-19 LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (STRONGER COMMUNITIES AND HEALTH) BILL 2021

First Reading

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

Second Reading Speech

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (09:49): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Australia has fared well compared with many other countries in containing the spread of the COVID-19 virus and its potentially deadly consequences. Yesterday we marked a record 31 days of no reported locally acquired cases in New South Wales, a remarkable achievement for the New South Wales community, our health professionals, and our workers on the front line in the hotel quarantine system keeping us safe. Fingers crossed for the next case report at 11.00 a.m. today. However, the recent northern beaches and other cluster outbreaks across the Greater Sydney region, and the recent outbreak in Melbourne, demonstrate that COVID-19 continues to pose public health risks to the New South Wales community. The emergence of new and more transmissible strains of COVID-19 has not yet affected New South Wales in the way we have seen elsewhere, but the risk of outbreak remains. We must remain vigilant and continue COVID-safe practices. These ongoing public health risks are likely to continue until a vaccine has been rolled out and broad community vaccination is achieved.

When I introduced the first COVID-19 emergency bill in March last year, parts of which we are seeking to extend today, we did not know if a vaccine could or would be found. Martin Place was empty. Parents were encouraged to keep their children out of school. Toilet paper was scarce. A uniquely uncertain future awaited our community. Now, less than a year later, the Premier and the Minister for Health and Medical Research have announced that the New South Wales COVID-19 vaccine program will begin on Monday 22 February, with more than 35,000 critical staff in New South Wales to be the first in Australia to receive the vaccine. The Australian Government aims to achieve the ambitious target of broad community vaccination by October 2021. This is an incredible achievement. Although we cannot be certain of the future, we certainly can be optimistic.

The COVID-19 Legislation Amendment (Stronger Communities and Health) Bill 2021 seeks to extend temporarily a number of emergency measures already implemented as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic until

September 2021, with an option of a further six-month extension by regulation. In particular, this is to allow court, tribunal and correctional services to continue to provide services safely during the pandemic. In March and May 2020, the New South Wales Parliament passed emergency legislation to adopt temporary measures to help manage the COVID-19 pandemic, including, in March 2020, the COVID-19 Legislation Amendment (Emergency Measures) Act 2020; and later in May 2020, the COVID-19 Legislation Amendment (Emergency Measures—Attorney General) Act 2020 and the COVID-19 Legislation Amendment (Emergency Measures—Miscellaneous) Act 2020. The majority of the provisions were temporary and included sunset dates to ensure they only remained operational for as long as they needed to be. Without legislative amendment to extend them, many of these measures will sunset on 26 March 2021.

This bill proposes to extend temporarily the operation of certain COVID-19 legislative provisions for a further six months to 26 September 2021, with an option to extend by up to a further six months by regulation. This extension coincides with projected vaccination rollout time frames, incorporating some flexibility in light of the unpredictable nature of the pandemic. The bill does not extend any extraordinary regulation-making powers, colloquially known as King Henry VIII clauses, introduced as part of the COVID-19 emergency response, that allowed government to make regulations altering some legislative provisions if needed urgently due to COVID-19, for example, if Parliament were not sitting. We are grateful for the trust which Parliament put in government in passing these regulation-making powers. However, the continued existence of the extraordinary regulation-making powers is not considered necessary. Parliament has continued to sit throughout the pandemic, and we are now in a different phase of our response. The bill does not propose any new COVID-19 emergency provisions. All provisions proposed for temporary extension were previously passed by Parliament. The bill also proposes minor amendments to the uncommenced Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act 2020 that are unrelated to COVID-19.

I will now turn to the detail of schedule 1 to the bill. All the provisions are proposed to be extended until 26 September 2021, with an option of a further six-month extension by regulation. Schedule 1.23 to the bill provides for the temporary extension of provisions under the Public Health Act 2010. These are, first, sections 63 and 64, which remove the requirement to seek confirmation by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] of an individual public health order, made under section 62, made in relation to a close contact of a person with COVID-19. The second is section 71A, which allows a police officer to arrest a person whom the police officer suspects on reasonable grounds is contravening a section 62 public health order relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. On being arrested, the person may be returned to the person's home or usual place of residence, or the place specified in the public health order that the person has been ordered to reside, or if the person is a public health detainee, the person's place of detention. Third, sections 112 and 118 allow a police officer to be an authorised officer for the purpose of issuing a penalty infringement notice and allow police officers to require a person to provide their name and address. These changes have been part of the COVID-19 response. They will be needed for at least another six months to allow a more streamlined approach to dealing with individual section 62 public health orders and to ensure police have appropriate powers to respond to a person who is breaching COVID-19-related requirements.

Schedule 1.22 to the bill extends a temporary change made to section 70 of the Private Health Facilities Act 2007. In 2020 section 70 was included in the Act to allow the health secretary to exempt a private health facility licensee, or class of licensees, from compliance with licence conditions or provisions in the Act relating to medical advisory committees. An exemption can only be granted if the health secretary is satisfied that the exemption is reasonably necessary for the COVID-19 pandemic, and patient care and safety can be properly maintained. The amendment was included in the Act in case a private health facility needed to expand their operations to deal with COVID-19, for example, by turning office space into a ward, but in undertaking this action was not able to meet all current licensing standards. Thankfully, it has not been necessary for the health secretary to grant any exemptions under section 70. However, it would be premature to let section 70 expire at the end of March 2021. If widespread community transmission does occur in the future, the provisions in this section of the Act may still be required.

Schedule 1.15 to the bill provides for the temporary extension of part 5 of chapter 7 of the Criminal Procedure Act, apart from the extraordinary regulation-making powers in section 366 of the Act. Division 2 of part 5 of chapter 7 enables a judge to order that a relevant witness can give evidence by having their evidence recorded in advance of the trial at a pre-recorded evidence hearing, with that evidence to be subsequently viewed during the trial. Division 3 of part 5 of chapter 7 of the Criminal Procedure Act enables a record of evidence given in trial proceedings to be admissible in a subsequent trial. Section 365 of the Criminal Procedure Act provides that a court may, on its own motion, make an order that the accused person be tried by a judge alone, but only where the accused person, or persons, consent to be tried by a judge alone, in circumstances where the court is satisfied that they have received legal advice about the effect of such an order; and if the prosecutor does not agree to the accused person being tried by judge alone, the court considers a trial by judge alone to be in the interests of

justice. This maintains the streamlined process for allowing judge-alone trials in the current environment, while preserving the accused person's right to be tried by a jury if that is their preference.

The extension of part 5 of chapter 7 of the Criminal Procedure Act also extends the operation of section 182 (5) of that Act, so that written pleas can be lodged for accused persons who have been granted or refused bail or where bail is dispensed with. This temporarily extends existing written plea provisions under section 184 to apply to bail applications during the pandemic, to reduce the number of physical appearances in the Local Court. All these measures have been used during the pandemic. They should be continued to help ensure criminal proceedings can continue during the pandemic, while ensuring safety of participants to proceedings.

Schedule 1.17 to the bill extends temporary provisions in section 22C of the Evidence (Audio and Audio Visual Links) Act 1998 to facilitate increased use of audiovisual links [AVL] in court proceedings, to reduce in-person court appearances during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly by accused appearing from custody. Section 22C provides a presumption in favour of AVL for bail appearances and gives the court the power to direct the use of AVL in hearings and trials, including fitness hearings, and for appearances by witnesses and legal representatives. These provisions reduce physical attendance at court. Their use is subject to several safeguards under section 22. Section 22 (3A) includes a regulation-making power to exclude certain matter types.

This has been used to make a regulation to exclude proceedings on indictment unless otherwise ordered by the court. This recognises that trials in indictable matters are more likely to require in-person appearances, while AVL can still be ordered where appropriate. The option to conduct various court proceedings via AVL was heavily relied upon in the early stages of the pandemic to facilitate all bail appearances and some hearings as well as other proceeding types. These provisions are still being used to minimise court attendances where possible. Their extension is necessary to minimise interpersonal contact in the court system.

Schedule 1.11 to the bill extends temporary provisions under part 3, division 1A of the Court Security Act 2005 to enable court security officers to conduct body temperature checks on persons entering or on court premises and to require those individuals to answer questions about their health in relation to symptoms of COVID-19 or whether they are likely to have been at risk of exposure to COVID-19. If a person has a temperature of greater than 38 degrees Celsius or exhibits or reports other common signs of COVID-19, the security officer may deny them entrance to court premises or require them to leave. These provisions have been incorporated into the day-to-day operation of courts throughout the pandemic. They form part of a suite of measures taken to ensure that our courts are a safe place to be. Courts are continuing to prevent people from physical court attendance on the basis of screening. Retaining temperature checks and other screening questions will maintain public confidence in the safety of attending court.

Schedule 1.20 to the bill extends temporary provisions under sections 25 (4) and 25 (5) of the Jury Act 1977. This will continue to empower the sheriff, on their own motion, to exempt a person from being summoned for trials or coronial inquests if the sheriff is of the opinion that there is good cause for the exemption. A good cause for an exemption would include, for example, protecting the safety and welfare of the person or the wider community. These provisions are and remain central to the safe operation of courts and confidence in attending court. Schedule 1.7 to the bill extends part 5 of schedule 1 to the Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2013, which provides the NCAT with greater discretion to manage its workload in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak. In relation to NCAT generally, the provisions, first, allow NCAT or a court to extend the time period within which anything must be done in connection with the tribunal and, second, extend the time period within which NCAT must provide written reasons from 28 days to 90 days.

In relation to the Guardianship Division, the provisions, first, allow the tribunal to be constituted by two members instead of three when exercising certain functions, with any decision made under this provision later reviewed by a three-member panel, and, second, allow the tribunal to provide an oral statement of reasons within 30 days after a decision is made. The tribunal may still provide a written statement of reasons. In relation to the Administrative and Equal Opportunity Division, the provisions allow the tribunal to be constituted by two members instead of three when exercising a public health function under the Public Health Act 2010. While the provisions have rarely been required, they would be necessary in the event of a significant outbreak of COVID-19 in New South Wales. The bill does not extend the extraordinary regulation-making powers found in clauses 26 and 30 of schedule 1.

Schedules 1.5 and 1.13 to the bill ensure powers remain in place in the Youth Justice system and the adult correctional system to protect the health of offenders, staff and the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. These powers allow the Commissioner of Corrective Services and the Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice to prevent visits to adult correctional facilities and youth detention centres to help combat the spread of COVID-19. The emergency powers override all provisions in these Acts and other legislation that would otherwise provide for persons, aside from the Ombudsman and Inspector of Custodial Services, to enter custodial and Youth Justice facilities. These powers have been needed and put into use during the pandemic

to institute both blanket and targeted, location-specific suspensions on visits based on public health advice. They are also used to screen individuals and prevent their entry if they do not pass screening. Where the powers are used to suspend in-person visits, inmates are still able to communicate with friends, family and legal advisers by post, telephone, email, audio-visual link or other means.

Schedule 1.13 to the bill extends provisions under section 276 of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999 that give the Commissioner of Corrective Services the flexibility to release certain inmates early on parole in response to COVID-19. To date, the commissioner has not needed to exercise this power to manage the risk of COVID-19 to the correctional system. This is testament to the fact that the commissioner and Corrective Services NSW have gone above and beyond to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on correctional facilities, inmates and staff.

This has included precautions to minimise transmission through screening, reducing movements of staff, external visitors and inmates into correctional centres, reducing movements to and from courts, health education, hygiene measures and protocols for managing those with exposure to COVID-19. It has also included use of the emergency COVID-19 power to restrict temporarily visits to correctional centres. It has included quarantining all new inmates separate from the general inmate population for 14 days. Sentinel testing occurs during this period. There has been isolation of any inmate with flu-like symptoms or suspected COVID-19, returning the inmate to the general population only once cleared by the health provider. There has been the establishment of several isolation hubs and a field hospital to manage any inmate who tests positive to COVID-19.

Due to these measures, Corrective Services has not had to resort to using the commissioner's power to release any inmates on early parole. Nevertheless, it is important that the power remains available as a failsafe for the correctional system. I reassure the House that community safety is at the heart of this measure. The commissioner cannot release an inmate serving a life sentence, a sentence for murder, a serious sex offence or a terrorism offence. Section 276 (1) grants a regulation-making power to determine the class of inmates for conditional release. Regulations have been made under this power to specify only two classes of persons eligible for early release on parole: The first is inmates with an existing medical condition or vulnerability that makes them higher risk during the COVID-19 pandemic; and the second is those that are within 12 months of their release date, excluding national security inmates and inmates with certain higher risk security classifications. The regulation allows the commissioner to make such an order releasing an inmate on parole only if satisfied that it does not pose an unacceptable risk to community safety.

Section 276 (4) also requires the commissioner to consider, before releasing an inmate on parole, the risks to community safety of releasing the inmate, the impact of the inmate's release on victims named in the victims register in relation to the inmate, the protection of the victim of any domestic violence offence by the inmate and any person the inmate is likely to reside with if released, the availability of suitable accommodation for the inmate if released, and any other matter the commissioner considers relevant. Any conditional release of an inmate will be subject to the standard conditions of parole and additional conditions as deemed necessary. If made, the parole order would be managed in the same way as any other parole order, including powers for managing breaches and revocations for Community Corrections and the State Parole Authority. The commissioner also retains the power to return an inmate to custody for any reason at any time or to vary, revoke or add new conditions to the parole order at any time.

Schedule 1.3 to the bill extends the operation of sections 9A and 14A of the Children (Community Service Orders) Act 1987 to facilitate the Children's Court continuing to make children's community service orders during the pandemic. Usually, under section 9 of that Act, the Children's Court must be satisfied that there is community service work available before imposing a community service order, having regard to a report from a Youth Justice officer that outlines the availability and suitability of that work for a young person to do. Section 9A enables the court, where a community service order would be appropriate but for the COVID-19 pandemic affecting the availability of suitable work, to make a community service order if satisfied that work will become available during the term of the order.

Section 14A of the Act provides that during the COVID-19 pandemic, a young person may report to a Youth Justice officer via telephone or AVL to fulfil the requirement under section 14 (1) of the Act that they present at a nominated place to commence their community service. These provisions continue to allow flexibility in making and commencing children's community service orders. Retaining this provision will assist to ensure community service orders continue to be available as a sentencing option during the pandemic. Sheriff's officers regularly assist other New South Wales agencies to fulfil their various functions, particularly in times of emergency. For example, sheriff's officers have been assisting the NSW Police Force with the quarantine of individuals in hotels in New South Wales. To assist sheriff's officers to prevent and respond to assaults, damage to property, and unlawful exit or entry to restricted premises while performing these duties, schedule 1.24 to the bill extends the operation of section 7C of the Sheriff Act 2005 to grant temporarily to officers powers to issue

directions; to enter rooms or quarantine facilities; to arrest and detain persons for the purpose of handing them into police custody; and to use reasonable force to exercise the new entry, arrest and detention powers.

I am advised that these powers have not had to be used to date, but they would be needed if the pandemic situation deteriorated. The powers are consistent with functions the sheriff's officers already have in their civil law enforcement and court security roles. The powers are only available in connection with premises where a person is required to reside under a Public Health Act order relating to COVID-19, or other premises prescribed by the regulations. Schedule 1.1 to the bill extends section 54 of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012. This will empower the Children's Guardian to continue to exercise discretion to extend the life span of Working With Children Check clearances beyond five years in appropriate circumstances. In the event of further lockdowns, and in line with any health advice, the discretion will allow frontline workers who provide services to children or those working with vulnerable children to continue working in these roles without the need to renew their clearance for a specified but temporary period of time.

Section 54 builds flexibility into the Working With Children Check renewal processes to remove practical barriers that could affect clearance renewals, and ultimately, an individual's ability to work with children. The Office of Children's Guardian exercised this discretion in 2020 to extend Working With Children Check clearances which were due to expire between March and September by six months, so that people were not required to physically attend a Service NSW centre while restrictions were in place. It will be important for the Children's Guardian to retain this discretion in the event of further lockdowns to prevent a significant operational impact on services working with children. To prioritise child safety, other ongoing monitoring measures still apply. For example, carers in out-of-home care settings can provide certified copies of their proof of identity documents to their foster care agency, instead of going to a Service NSW centre. Schedule 1.9 to the bill extends provisions under schedule 8 to the Constitution Act 1902 to enable the Executive Council and the Governor to continue to perform key functions and operate in an environment consistent with the evolving health advice.

Schedule 1.19 to the bill extends section 84 of the Interpretation Act 1987, which expands the grounds on which existing powers to modify or waive time periods can be exercised where it is reasonable to do so for the purpose of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most limitation and other time periods continue to apply across all New South Wales legislation. However, if emergency and social distancing measures delay or suspend processes and procedures, these provisions will allow decision-makers to consider the impact of the pandemic when deciding whether any action should be taken within the prescribed time periods. This will allow courts, tribunals, and other decision-makers to respond to the pandemic in a flexible way. The bill repeals the regulation-making powers in sections 85 and 86 of the Interpretation Act, which are considered no longer necessary.

I will, for completeness, list the Stronger Communities COVID-19 measures being repealed by this bill or otherwise lapsing in March, because they are no longer considered proportionate or necessary. Regulation-making powers which will end on 26 March are: section 366 of the Criminal Procedure Act 1986; section 85 of the Interpretation Act 1987; section 86 of the Interpretation Act 1987; regulation-making powers under part 5 of schedule 1 to the Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2013, to modify time limits or other tribunal practices and procedures; and section 17 of the Electronic Transactions Act 2000. The Electronic Transactions Amendment (COVID-19 Witnessing of Documents) Regulation 2020 was made under this regulation-making power. Those were then moved into the Electronic Transactions Act 2000 by the Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Courts and Civil) Act 2020 and will operate until the end of this year. The bill also does not extend the operation of section 29 (4) of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007. This COVID measure was to allow police-issued apprehended violence orders to remain in force for up to six months if they cannot be listed for consideration by a court within the usual 28-day time frame. As a result of further amendments to the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007, this extended period is no longer required.

I turn to schedule 2 to the bill. The Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act 2020 was passed in June 2020. It replaces the Mental Health Forensic Provisions Act 1990 and introduces a suite of reforms to forensic mental health. The implementation of the Act required significant system changes across the criminal justice and forensic mental health systems before commencement. The amendments introduced by schedule 2 to the bill will help clarify some of the transitional amendments in the Act and also amend two minor drafting errors. The Act is due to commence shortly after these amendments are made. Schedule 3 to the bill repeals the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Amendment (Victims) Act 2018. I thank agencies and staff involved in planning for the implementation of these reforms and for their diligence in preparing for the smooth commencement of the new Act. The bill extends important legislative provisions which unfortunately continue to be necessary to enable the Government to continue to manage the COVID-19 pandemic.

I thank agencies and their hardworking staff who have continued to provide services throughout the pandemic. In particular, I thank the judiciary and court staff, who have worked hard to keep the wheels of justice

turning, and the dedicated officers of the NSW Police Force, who have enforced public health orders where necessary and served on the front line of the pandemic in quarantine hotels. I thank the staff of Corrective Services NSW, who have managed to keep our custodial facilities COVID-free. I thank our teachers, who kept our children learning in immensely difficult circumstances. I thank all the hardworking health professionals, the backbone of this fight, who have sacrificed so much. This bill extends a suite of important COVID-19 temporary measures. It addresses some transitional amendments and drafting errors in relation to the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act 2020 to allow smooth transition to the new regime shortly. I thank all those involved in drafting the bill. I thank all our frontline services who are keeping us safe. I thank, most importantly of all, the people of New South Wales for their continued adaptability and resilience in these challenging times. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION AMENDMENT (MINISTERIAL CODE OF CONDUCT - PROPERTY DEVELOPERS) BILL 2021

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Jodi McKay, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Ms JODI MCKAY (Strathfield) (10:18): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time. The Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Ministerial Code of Conduct—Property Developers) Bill 2021 will prevent Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries acting as property developers. We introduce this legislation as the Labor Party and the Opposition because we believe if you are a Cabinet Minister or a Parliamentary Secretary you cannot also be a property developer. You can put people first or you can put vested interests first, but you cannot do both. You can put integrity and the interests of the citizens of New South Wales first, but you cannot then put yourself first.

The Opposition is introducing this legislation because we believe politics in New South Wales needs to return to a higher standard. We believe the standards of integrity that apply to our politicians and public institutions must be made stronger. That is the responsibility we have as parliamentarians in New South Wales. We believe the public's trust in the people who represent them in this Parliament needs to be reaffirmed. That is why the Opposition brings this bill to the House today. Politics should be about serving the public; it is about representing the views of our citizens and making society a better place. We must always strive for that. But all too often we are faced with those who have gone into politics for the wrong reasons: to enrich themselves and their mates at the expense of the citizens of New South Wales. There are people who aim to use public office and public resources for their own private gain.

We should always strive for stronger measures to protect the integrity of our democracy and public institutions. That is a duty we hold dear on this side of the House. It may be a new year in Parliament, but we cannot forget all the things we have learned about the Government over the past year that caused deep concern for those who are concerned about integrity in government. Too many members of the Government have serious form when it comes to using public resources for private gain. Let us look at the former member for Wagga Wagga, Daryl Maguire. He used his office as a Whip and as an MP to enrich himself, and to lobby the Premier's office and other Ministers on behalf of property developers who were based hundreds of kilometres away from his electorate. I note the presence in the Chamber of the member for Canterbury, whose electorate was a focus of Daryl Maguire in his deals with property developers.

Worse still, the Premier of New South Wales knew about Mr Maguire's business dealings with property developers because he was her partner. She knew about the receipt of commissions by Daryl Maguire, shown in a text message revealed at the Independent Commission Against Corruption inquiry. Everyone in the Chamber remembers what that said. This will be the third or fourth time I have brought this to the House as the Opposition introduces its suite of integrity measures. When the Premier congratulated Mr Maguire on receiving payments from prohibited donors she used the words:

Congrats!!! Great News!! Woo hoo.

The Premier of New South Wales congratulated her partner, the then Government Whip and an MP, on receiving commissions from property developers. That is outrageous. Then there is the member for Drummoyne, John Sidoti, who stood down as a member of the Cabinet. I repeat: You cannot be an MP by day and a property developer by night. Both of those matters are before the Independent Commission Against Corruption. On top of that, Treasurer Dominic Perrottet unlawfully used funds from the State workers compensation agency, icare, to employ a right-wing political operative from the United States in his ministerial office. That agency is responsible for helping, caring for and supporting sick and injured workers in New South Wales. The Premier and her office

also used the Stronger Communities Fund, a scheme worth millions of dollars in taxpayers' money, for blatant political purposes in Liberal and National Party seats.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Shame!

Ms Kate Washington: Shame!

Ms JODI McKAY: You can hear the outrage on our side of the House because many of the electorates that we represent completely missed out on that funding. The fund is worth a quarter of a billion dollars and more than 90 per cent of it went to Liberal and National Party seats. No clear criteria were issued. The documents implicating the Premier and revealing her office's involvement were then shredded and emails were deleted. That is the way the Government operates—it is about hiding the involvement of the Premier. In the past couple of weeks that conduct was found to be unlawful. Over past months the Opposition has brought many integrity measures to the House, which I will speak about shortly. One of those was an offence that involved the reckless destruction of documents in government.

I find it extraordinary that the Opposition even has to bring that to the House, but that is the point we are at in New South Wales. This is not a government that upholds the standards of integrity that the people of New South Wales expect. It is a government that is beholden to vested interests, whether they be its shadowy property developer mates, its favoured lobbyists, its own MPs, or its donor and corporate mates, who were handed the keys to icare and allowed to take whatever they wanted. It is a government that looks after those vested interests to the detriment of the people of New South Wales at a time when the performance of our schools is in freefall. We have the lowest standards in 20 years in New South Wales schools. There are schools that have been promised and never delivered. There are overcrowded classrooms and the Government is unwilling to act to improve the standards and the quality of education that people across New South Wales expect.

Our public hospitals are under enormous pressure. Through the parliamentary inquiry we have heard terrible stories coming out of south-western Sydney, particularly about Campbelltown and Liverpool hospitals. More than 800 submissions have been made to the inquiry into rural and regional health from people who have not had a voice until now. The Opposition has promised we will bring their voices to the Parliament and expose the two-tiered health system that currently exists in this State. Western Sydney, south-western Sydney, north-western Sydney and regional and rural New South Wales are experiencing a healthcare crisis of catastrophic proportions.

Then there are whole suburbs that are simply missing out on much-needed infrastructure. Over the past two weeks the Opposition has brought to this House question after question, holding the Government to account for the infrastructure that has been promised. Yesterday Opposition members focused on Henry Lawson Drive and Oran Park fire station. They are important projects that may not mean much to the Premier but mean an awful lot to the communities that are crying out for that support. The Government is failing to adequately prepare those communities for population growth now and into the future. The Opposition moves this amendment to the NSW Ministerial Code of Conduct because it believes the sole focus of government must be addressing those issues and other issues that are plaguing the citizens of New South Wales.

Opposition members know that people must be put first. We believe the Government is leaving people behind. Each and every question time we will continue to bring those issues to the House. We are not afraid to ask those questions because they matter in the electorates that we represent. Cabinet Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries are privileged to have information before them that allows them to make decisions on development and infrastructure. That is at the core of why the bill is before the House today and why it is necessary. We know that infrastructure is being planned and that the time frames for delivery are known only to the Government. We know that critical information that should be used to make decisions to benefit the whole of New South Wales is in fact being shared within government and with the mates of those in government. That gives them an advantage they should never have. That information should remain secret and subject to Cabinet confidentiality, but that does not matter to this Government. The bill seeks to reduce that risk. It ensures that there is one less opportunity for those on the other side of the House to look after a few at the expense of the many.

I turn to the details of the bill. It inserts a new requirement into the NSW Ministerial Code of Conduct to require that a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary must not remain or become a property developer. For consistency, it applies the definition of "property developer" set out in section 53 of the Electoral Funding Act 2018. The bill amends the NSW Ministerial Code of Conduct to provide that:

- (a) a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary must take all reasonable steps to cease to be a property developer before or, if that is not practicable, as soon as practicable after appointment, and
- (b) the Premier may give a ruling to approve a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary remaining or becoming a property developer in special specified circumstances, and

- (c) a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary must promptly take steps to cease to be a property developer if the Premier, being satisfied that being a property developer has the potential to give rise to a conflict of interest, directs the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary to do so.

The Opposition believes the content of the bill is entirely reasonable and reflects what the community believes would be happening already. We are not introducing a bill that makes significant changes to the code of conduct or that seeks to impact on the way a Minister does business. I am referring to business for the citizens of New South Wales, not business that benefits Ministers or their property developer mates. The bill will prevent the likes of Daryl Maguire serving simultaneously as a property developer and a Parliamentary Secretary or Minister. As I said, I am stunned that we have to bring this bill to the House. It is common sense to members on this side of the House that a Parliamentary Secretary or a Minister should not also be a property developer. Those in our electorates expect it, and we believe those in Liberal and National Party electorates also expect it.

Time and again we see our electorates, such as that of the member for Canterbury, used at the whim of people like Daryl Maguire to benefit their own interests. The bill will reaffirm that the New South Wales Government is meant to act in the public interest, not on behalf of vested interests. The bill will make sure that people like Daryl Maguire, who is currently before the Independent Commission Against Corruption, cannot act in their own best interests or in the interests of property developers whom they seek to represent. The bill will make sure they cannot do business in electorates that are hundreds of kilometres from their own. It will make sure that MPs, Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries focus on what they should focus on.

I have mentioned those issues: the schools that are not being built; the educational standards that have never been lower; the care not being provided in our hospitals, and the doctors, nurses and ancillary staff who are not there, particularly in regional and rural New South Wales. We speak about the two-tiered health system. Why does inequality in health care exist in New South Wales? Why is access to health care restricted? That should be a priority for this Government, but it is not because people like Daryl Maguire and John Sidoti are out there acting in their own best interests and not focusing on what is in the best interests of the citizens of New South Wales.

Earlier I mentioned that the bill does not exist in isolation; it is part of a wider suite of integrity measures that Labor has put before the Parliament over the past few months. They include banning the receipt of commissions from property developers and making it a crime to recklessly shred important government documents. Who would have thought that we would ever have to introduce a bill to make shredding government documents a crime? We have also brought before the House a requirement for the publication of ministerial registers of interests. The Opposition will continue to do that. We will continue to introduce bills in the House that seek to strengthen the integrity of this Parliament and make MPs accountable for their behaviour, to build trust within our community and to make sure that citizens are looked after.

I hope that Government and crossbench MPs will support all those measures, along with the bill before the House today. I call on the Government to return to the consensus that this Parliament should have, irrespective of politics, to fight corruption. It has existed within our State for the past 30 years. How did we get to the point where we have a climate that allows corruption? How did we get to the point where standards are so low that the Premier congratulates her partner, an MP, on receiving commissions from a developer? How did we get to the point where the Premier does not abide by what she is required to do under the NSW Ministerial Code of Conduct: declare her relationship with Daryl Maguire because she is making significant decisions that will benefit him?

How did we get to the point where the Premier knew all this but did not report it to the Independent Commission Against Corruption? Under section 8 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, if she has a suspicion of corruption or wrongdoing by an MP, she has the responsibility to report that to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. But she did not. Instead, it took telephone intercepts to expose what she knew. I will never forget the Premier sacking Daryl Maguire, then walking into this House and saying, "If you know something, you should tell ICAC." But what did she do? She knew it all and she did nothing! It took the Independent Commission Against Corruption to expose her misdeeds. There is a lot more to come on this. We on this side of the House know that.

I call on the Government to help us strengthen the legal framework and the institutions that keep corruption out of our State's political culture and our public life. I call on the Government to help us clean up politics in this State because the people of New South Wales deserve so much better than what they are getting now. I call on the Government to help us make politics in New South Wales better because in this period of pandemic and economic uncertainty the people of this State expect us to be focused on their interests alone. There are simply no circumstances when it is acceptable for a Minister or a Parliamentary Secretary to use their public office to gain access to confidential information or public money for their own benefit or for the benefit of their mates. This has to stop. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

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

Debate resumed from 11 February 2021.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (10:39): I continue my contribution to debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Coercive Control—Preethi's Law) Bill 2020 and pick up where I left off last week in discussing the work that the Government is doing regarding coercive control. The Attorney General has issued a discussion paper on this complex area of domestic violence. It is an area that needs decisive and strong action that has been based upon a significant amount of consultation with key stakeholders and experts in the field. All members ought to be encouraged that a couple of years ago other jurisdictions, as explained by the Attorney General, introduced legislation to address coercive control. That should give us the confidence that there is a pathway forward and that, by working together and in consultation with experts, we can create a significant piece of legislation that addresses the concerns contained in the bill.

The discussion paper touches upon a couple of areas including the definition of coercive control, how coercive and controlling behaviours are currently addressed in New South Wales, the experiences of other jurisdictions in responding to coercive control, how evidence of coercive control is currently considered in New South Wales legal proceedings, the potential benefits and practical challenges associated with criminalising coercive control, the possible elements of an offence of coercive control, other avenues for legislative reform and other related non-legislative issues. So the discussion paper is quite broad and open in its content. I certainly encourage anyone and everyone who has a concern or interest in this field to participate in this process.

I thank the member for Shellharbour for introducing the bill. Concerns have been expressed in this debate about the unintended consequences of the bill. I understand that those unintended consequences are probably not intended by the member but they are what they are. That is why the Government cannot support the bill in its current state. However, we are taking on this important issue and working towards a piece of legislation—

Ms Anna Watson: Put amendments up.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES: I did not interrupt you. We will introduce comprehensive legislation that tackles this very serious issue. There is no debate that coercive control is a fundamental and systemic issue in domestic and family violence cases and situations. It must be confronted head on and the Government is committed to that end. The bill before the House has not benefited from wide consultation or an in-depth examination of the experiences of other jurisdictions that have introduced laws to address coercive and controlling behaviours. It is imperative that genuine and comprehensive consultation is undertaken with the broader community before reforms on this complex issue are considered further. That concludes my comments about the bill. At this point in time I cannot support the bill.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (10:43): I speak in support of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Coercive Control—Preethi's Law) Bill 2020 introduced by the member for Shellharbour, which is long overdue. It criminalises coercive control and shines a light on this hideous behaviour. The member deserves applause for that. The bill achieves many vital goals, but two in particular. First, it pays tribute to the beautiful Dr Preethi Reddy; and, secondly, it draws a reluctant government to our domestic abuse action table—"action" being the operative word. In his contribution to the debate the Attorney General outlined a well-written precis of the 80-page October 2020 "Coercive Control Discussion Paper", which I have read. While the Coalition Government, under the leadership of the first female conservative Premier, makes up its mind, as the Attorney General said, "One woman every nine days is killed by a current or former partner." That is a terrible statistic. Why have there been 10 years of Coalition Government inertia?

The Attorney General repeated his careful words throughout the discussion paper as well as in his contribution to debate on the bill—terms such as "cautious", "careful" and "methodical" are oft used. Of course, I agree with the notion of a methodical approach and comprehensive consultation with all stakeholders. I know the member for Shellharbour wants that too. But, along with every other woman in New South Wales, I also want to see actions and decisions—words that have been lacking in the Attorney General's communications. I mentioned the Government's hesitancy; the United Kingdom, which is years ahead of New South Wales and Australia, has accomplished quite the opposite. To give a tangible example of outcomes, laws introduced in England and Wales six years ago freed Sally from an 18-year murder sentence, which I will briefly outline for the House.

For 20 years Sally endured torment from her husband, Richard, who controlled her finances and movements, gaslighted her, cheated, verbally abused her and fat-shamed her. Her conviction was thrown out last year after evidence showed that she had been subjected to coercive control for years, which is a criminal offence

in the UK. What if Sally had been a New South Wales citizen? She would still be locked up. Currently only Tasmania has laws that seek to respond to coercive and controlling behaviours in Australia. But let us turn briefly to Queensland. Tomorrow is Hannah Clarke's memorial—one year since her horrendous murder. Apart from paying tribute to Hannah, we must remember the incident, not because we want to remember how traumatic or horrific it was but to learn from it. The Queensland Government has learnt from it. It made a commitment before the election that it would take action through implementing a coercive control criminal offence, which it is doing right now. In fact, this week the Queensland Attorney-General announced that she has made a commitment that the State will have legislation within the next year.

The member for Shellharbour also has goals. We understand the importance of the joint select committee inquiry and I totally support communications and consultation with all the various services, police and the judiciary. They must be communicated with. I understand that the committee will report at the end of June, which is important. I ask the Attorney General to outline what happens next. He can do two things. He can look carefully at the bill before the House and say, "Well, it is not perfect but here are some amendments that I will adopt to make it better according to the Government." That is one step he could take to make a decision and take action right now, which is the option I prefer. The other option would be to say, "Okay, it is an Opposition bill"—which he will be partisan about—"and I cannot let a private member's bill from a member of the Labor Opposition get through so I will make sure that I take action soon." So after the report is delivered by the joint select committee at the end of June, the Attorney General could introduce legislation similar to that of the member for Shellharbour. I suspect that might be the outcome, but I say to the Attorney General, "Look at the time. It is important, because every day that you hesitate another woman is being murdered in New South Wales via coercive control." Unlike Sally, women who are forced to take action against their violent partners are thrown in jail.

The member for Shellharbour has goals too. Her bill's goal is to create a broader definition of domestic abuse. I note that in schedule 1 to the bill she takes the time in new section 14A, subsection (2) (a) to (f) to outline, define and explain what coercive control is and what actions will be taken by the police and judiciary if it happens. I like that clarity, because the Attorney General said, "Well, people are confused. They do not know what is going on yet. They need more information." I urge members to read new section 14A, subsection (2) (a) to (f), and they will find some explanations. The next point I make is about the involvement of children. The member's bill states in new section 14A (3):

Conduct may have, or be reasonably likely to have, an effect referred to in subsection (2) on a person even if the conduct is directed at a third person, including a child ...

That is important to me. What price do we put on children's wellbeing? What effect will coercive control have on children as they grow up if they have witnessed that kind of abuse from their father or their mother's partner? We cannot ignore the implications, the trauma and the toll on children. The bill highlights how children are involved and what impact such behaviour will have on them. We do not want children to be involved, but they are. The Attorney General talked about being more careful and more timely. I suggest that he look carefully at the bill again, because it contains many answers. We know that last year, while our community supported the 16 days of action against gender-based violence, for the first time since its inception the Counting Dead Women Australia group recorded three deaths allegedly as a result of domestic violence in just one day.

We must take action, and we must take the people with us. I was going to refer to Jess Hill's book—which, as far as I am concerned, is the gold standard in understanding what domestic abuse and coercive control is all about—but instead I pay tribute to Jess Hill for the wonderful work that she has undertaken. I conclude by saying that it is just not good enough for us to say we must do what we can to prevent and end domestic violence; we must take real action. That is what the member's bill is all about. Support for the bill is clear. Real and clear action must be taken because the current suite of laws is not enough to address domestic violence. I applaud the member for Shellharbour.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (10:53): Today I speak in support of amending the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act to ensure that the shameful practice of coercive control is properly recognised and punishable under New South Wales law. I commend the member for Shellharbour for bringing the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Coercive Control—Preethi's Law) Bill 2020 to this Chamber today. The disgrace that is the perpetuation of domestic and family violence is much more than acts of physical harm, threats of such harm or wilful damage designed to frighten and intimidate. In fact, coercive control is often where it starts and it may be so subtle that it can be unrecognisable. Keeping tabs on someone's movements, comments intended to humiliate, limiting independence—these can all be behaviours that bring a person under the perpetrator's control in order to create complete and utter dependency. The tactic is often a precursor to violence, with a perpetrator needing to escalate in order to maintain that control.

In a domestic violence relationship the signs of coercive control may not be as obvious as aggressive and violent behaviour, but they are no less psychologically damaging. This tactic still creates an environment of fear,

destroys self-confidence and exploits a victim's vulnerabilities. When it goes unchecked it can not only ruin lives but also take them. Of course, that is just part of the picture. Legislation is one thing; ensuring that survivors of domestic and family violence are equipped to break from those relationships and are supported as they emerge on the other side is another. To that end, I acknowledge the work of several Newcastle services that work tirelessly for survivors, including Jenny's Place, Nova for Woman and Children, and the Victims of Crime Assistance League. Their passion for their work, their ongoing advocacy and their commitment to those they support does not go unnoticed. As a result of advocacy from these services and hundreds more around the State, we have been making improvements as lawmakers to support survivors.

While there is still a way to go, recent changes to protocols around court appearances to mitigate the ability of perpetrators to further intimidate their victims and the recognition of the way that animals are threatened and abused to manipulate victims of domestic and family violence have been sorely needed. This bill to criminalise coercive control is another necessary step on this road. It is unlikely that there is one member of this House who has not denounced domestic and family violence. But the reality is that, unless we turn those words into greater consequences for perpetrators and criminalise those seeds of violence, the outcomes will not change. The bill creates real consequences for people who base domestic relationships on control and fear, and I have no doubt that criminalising coercive control will save lives. It is imperative that all members support the bill.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (10:57): I contribute to debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Coercive Control—Preethi's Law) Bill 2020. The impact that coercive control has on women, in particular—because, let us be frank, predominantly women are affected and far too many women are still dying at the hands of their intimate partners—continues to concern all those in this place. We know that, as the New South Wales Coroner's review into intimate partner homicides stated, before murdering their partners 99 per cent of perpetrators displayed coercive and controlling behaviours towards the victim. Too many women are being killed and too often it is coercive control, and not other forms of physical violence, that escalates and causes the death of a woman. We are taking action on many fronts in this place. We have the bill introduced by the member for Shellharbour, the Hon. Abigail Boyd's bill in the upper House and a parliamentary inquiry. We have a momentum in New South Wales that we have never seen before.

I welcome that and welcome what I believe is a uniform approach across Parliament to legislate and ensure we introduce laws that address coercive control. I put on record that I genuinely believe we need to legislate to address coercive control. I know some people think that, as of yet, creating an offence relating to coercive control is not necessary, but I believe we need to create such an offence. We have seen significant success in Scotland. We know that in the first year of the legislation in Scotland 1,000 charges were laid and 96 per cent of them were prosecuted. That would be unheard of in New South Wales, and in most other jurisdictions around Australia, because there is not the capacity to charge people for a number of instances of coercive control and abusive behaviour.

We also know that the pointy end—the most extreme end, which is the death of women in our community—is in many ways not the most harmful impact of coercive control. There can be years, and even decades, of manipulation, undermining, financial abuse and psychological abuse. As the member for Newcastle said, it can include threats to pets and to children. It is not just the pointy end of death that we need to focus on. It is the very real lived harm and the experience particularly of women and of children in those families that can go on for years and decades. I want to see us legislate for the appropriate outcome. It is disappointing that we have not yet reached that point and I would like to see much greater momentum. I would like to see us work faster to achieve an outcome with the right legislation. I hope we will see that following the cross-party work that is being done in the parliamentary committee inquiry into this matter.

I think it is a complex area of law—much law that comes through this place is complex. There continues to be debate amongst the legal fraternity, those involved in policing and domestic violence advocates about the appropriate application of any legislation. It is not simple. I credit the member for Shellharbour with the amount of work that she has put into bringing this legislation forward. She has made a very serious and significant contribution, but I also acknowledge that we do not yet have it right. As the member for Wallsend stated, even Jess Hill's book *See What You Made Me Do* cautioned about the way we approach this matter. It talked about the fact that the exact wording and drafting of these laws will be crucial to their success. I want to see us introduce this legislation as quickly as humanly possible, but I also want to ensure that it is effective and can make the best possible difference. We need to take that on board and keep working with the process that is underway through the parliamentary inquiry.

Many people in this place will know that in my family, after the breakdown of my parents' marriage and their divorce when I was very young—I was three when they were divorced, with shared custody arrangements—my sisters and I were in an abusive household for many years. Following that, we went through the Family Court system when we were quite young. My lived experience is a little different from that of many other domestic

violence survivors because I was incredibly young. I have the fortune of having limited memory of much of that experience. My older sisters, particularly my eldest sister, were not quite so fortunate. Because of her age she was much more capable of comprehending, understanding and being impacted by that experience.

In some small way, I feel the fear and disappointment that particularly women and families have about not having somewhere to go, someone to protect them or something that will help them. So many people need our help. So far, as a society we have failed at all levels to ensure that we can protect not only their lives but also their safety, security and freedoms for the many years and decades leading up to what could be—but is not always—a potential loss of life. I hope we can all come together with those with lived experiences and work to make sure that we get the right outcome when we are representing the people in our community who continue to be impacted on a daily basis by coercive control.

There is merit in the bills of both the member for Shellharbour and Ms Abigail Boyd in the upper House. Both come from a very well-informed and well-intentioned background, so I know that we have good content to work with. I make a couple of observations about some changes or things that I would like to see in final legislation on top of what has been presented already. As I mentioned, Jess Hill has been quite impactful in her ability to cut through as a journalist. Instead of being more academic or research oriented, she is very relatable when she speaks with people and presents her content and analysis. Broad-ranging literature and research recognises that patterns of non-physical behaviour and/or acts of physical violence that are experienced over time need to be taken into consideration as a whole experience. They cannot be seen as individual instances. Undertaking that analysis is not uncomplicated for policing or for the justice system.

We need to focus on the course of conduct. We need to focus on patterns of behaviour and not look at individual incidents, because sometimes those incidents can appear to be quite trivial. We need a significant shift in the way our criminal justice system operates and observes those patterns of behaviour between individuals. To be effective, we need to implement a whole pile of quite comprehensive practice changes to alter the way we address this issue. They will include training for police, legal practitioners, the judiciary and the services sector. We also need to make sure that consultation is deep and broad in order for it to be effective and well operationalised. While there is a lot of merit in the bill from the member for Shellharbour, this particular shift is not recognised within the legislation. I would like to see it taken into account as we progress towards legislating for this conduct.

The shift that investigation of coercive control requires is from an incident-based approach to a more holistic assessment of a relationship. It will impact on the entire service system, which means that we need frontline service providers—often the people whom victims will turn to in the first place—to be included in any reform process. We also need to give consideration to how we can best address gaps in existing frameworks and systems, thinking carefully about what is working now and how we can enhance such features in response to coercive control in a way that best meets the needs of victims and survivors and addresses the accountability of perpetrators. The best way for us to do that is to learn from the experience of frontline responders across all our sectors, to draw on their specialist knowledge and expertise. I seek an extension of time. [*Extension of time*]

We also need to make sure that we have workforce development, capacity building and response capability for our supporting service providers. We cannot introduce something like this without enabling them to do their jobs in this environment. I know that the joint select committee is currently considering those intersecting issues and I have faith in the work that it will do in making appropriate recommendations for our next steps. I would like to see law reform implemented once those deliberations have concluded so that we do not pre-empt the outcome of that work, but we also need to raise awareness in our communities and continue to look at attitudes towards women and respectful relationships. It has been quite a concerning week for us when we think about the treatment of women in workplaces and environments like our own and the attitudes that can perpetuate those kinds of behaviours both inside and outside the home.

We know that coercive control can be very nuanced and difficult to identify. In some circumstances, victims often have problems naming what is occurring to them and what they are experiencing. Their friends, families and colleagues may also not recognise the subtle signs of coercive control. It is likely that we also need to continue to invest in education, support and awareness campaigns to ensure that people understand and can identify exactly what coercive control behaviour is and know how to get support. At the end of the day, a lot of people do not really feel that what is happening to them is wrong. That is often because of patterns of behaviour that have convinced them, potentially through gaslighting, that nothing is being perpetrated against them. We need to ensure that we inform and empower people to understand what is actually occurring.

I would like to see the joint select committee come to an outcome promptly and work with the member for Shellharbour and Ms Abigail Boyd in the other place to make sure that we get the right legislation through this House and this Parliament. I know it is incredibly complex but, as I said at the outset, not only are too many women dying but also too many women are living lives of abuse, day in and day out. We cannot shy away from

that. It happens in every postcode and every suburb. It happens regardless of one's job, family background or how much money one has. It happens everywhere.

It could be happening to your next-door neighbour, a family member or a close friend. When I think about the people who are suffering day in, day out it puts fear into my heart and causes a significant amount of sadness. In my opinion we have an obligation to act as quickly as possible and know that the work of the member for Shellharbour and Ms Abigail Boyd in the Legislative Council will contribute to the best outcome. I know that the Attorney General takes this issue very seriously.

In the past the Attorney General has referred to coercive control as an example of slavery, which is very strong language when we think about the way in which he views the impact, particularly on women, of coercive control. I also acknowledge the member for Wallsend and what she has been doing in her role as the New South Wales representative on the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians steering committee in bringing Jess Hill into our Parliament and for constantly sending out information to members in this place to make sure that we are actually aware of the bodies of literature out there. It is very easy for these insidious wicked problems that occur in people's homes to go underneath the radar and to not have the constant focus we need to get the momentum to ensure we have change.

I acknowledge the Liberal Women's Council of which I was the president for a number of years. Mary-Lou Jarvis is now the president and she also provided a submission to the joint select committee in support of addressing coercive control. Even within my own party we have voices of women who are pushing for this momentum and for an outcome. I know that with the work of all those people, together we will see a positive outcome at the end of this process. I just hope it comes very soon. I thank the member for Shellharbour for putting forward this bill.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (11:11): I acknowledge the thoughtful contribution of the member for North Shore and the sharing of her lived experience as a child. The member for North Shore referred to the need to make coercive control part of the law, and about education and preparedness, which I understand, but more compelling is to take advantage of this opportunity to pass the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Coercive Control—Preethi's Law) Bill 2020. I thank my colleague, the member for Shellharbour and Opposition Whip in this place for bringing this long overdue bill to the House. This bill gives full expression to the entire range of controlling and crippling behaviours that constitute domestic violence.

The legal definition of domestic violence covers the physical aspects, well known to all of us, but the law to date has not included the sinister behaviours that constitute control over someone's life. That control deprives a person of free will, volition and agency about their daily lives, which is what we refer to when we talk about coercive control. Women who have lived through coercive control—and sadly some have not lived through it—are told how to dress, how to talk, how to walk, how to smile or not smile or when to smile, how to parent or not parent, what to eat, what to buy, who to ring, who to talk to, who to visit and the list is endless, but the result is the same. The result is that the person is being subjugated and they become a shell of themselves.

The member for Newcastle talked about women living through coercive control losing self-confidence. They are a mere shell of themselves and they live in a constant state of apprehension and fear. Generally, it is women who are subject to coercive control and their minds are always focusing on: What will he do? What is going to happen? They have real fear when their partner comes home. We have to recognise those behaviours as criminal because they are part of a pattern of domestic violence, which, as we know, often starts by the belittling of a person or circumlocution, as we say, and a whole range of behaviours in that spectrum that can end up with murder. In a formal sense, it is circumlocution to extermination. They are terrible words, but that is the hierarchy of it. No-one should have to live like that and this is an opportunity to do something about it.

I mentioned that the law does not include coercive control. As law-makers, legislators and community representatives it is our obligation to address this gap in the law. We know that statistically 99 per cent of perpetrators who murder their partner in domestic violence situations had engaged in coercive control. That is a fact. We know that every nine days one woman is murdered in domestic violence circumstances, so we have an obligation to act as quickly as we can. We should not shirk that obligation, even though it is difficult and there might be debate around how to describe "coercive control" and we have to list the elements, because we do that all the time with many laws. I have seen many laws passed here—some almost overnight—when something has become an issue in the community. I will turn now to the four key objects that the bill intends to change to provide better protection for victims, women, when they are subject to coercive controlling behaviours. The bill sets out the four offences. Schedule 1 to the bill, section 14A states:

A person must not engage in conduct that constitutes the coercive control of another person with whom the person has, or has had, a domestic relationship.

Maximum penalty—Imprisonment for 5 years or 50 penalty units, or both. The bill then walks through the elements of coercive control. We have seen this law implemented in other jurisdictions, most notably Scotland which has been mentioned by most members who have contributed to this debate. Scotland seems to have got it right and is a good model for us to look at. I am sure that the select committee is looking at that now. The elements of coercive control are to make the other person dependent on, or subordinate to, the person. "Dependent on" does not mean a relationship with an interdependency that is healthy and fine, but a dependency and a subordination that totally subjugates that person until they have no agency. Coercive control isolates, controls, regulates, monitors and deprives the person of their freedom and access to other services, such as health and legal practitioners and what we need to maintain a healthy life. That abuse also flows on to the children in those family relationships in order to frighten, humiliate, degrade or punish the other person, which constitutes cruel and inhumane behaviour by one person against another. The bill also addresses aggravated coercive control at new section 14B, which states:

- (1) A person who engages in conduct that constitutes the coercive control of another person with whom the person has, or has had, a domestic relationship in circumstances of aggravation is guilty of an offence.

Maximum penalty—Imprisonment for 10 years or 120 penalty units, or both.

It continues:

- (2) A person commits an offence in *circumstances of aggravation*—

The bill then addresses children—not only children, but children in particular. Quite frequently that is part of the whole package of coercive control behaviours. Abuse is also directed at children and the bill clearly addresses that. Geographical application at 14C is another new section, which sets out that wherever an offence occurs it is still considered an offence under our law in New South Wales and a prosecution can take place within the State. The bill then turns to the defence of reasonableness at new section 14D, which is important because we have a rule of law jurisdiction; our State institutions are based on the rule of law and we must always have within our laws the defence of innocent until proven guilty. New section 14D sets out that defence of reasonableness in the bill. I seek an extension of time. [*Extension of time*]

I thank members for their indulgence. There will be a lot of debate about the defence of reasonableness but the member for Shellharbour in her second reading speech set out what that defence means. I will repeat her words in order to illustrate that defence. She said:

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

The reasonable person test that the member for Shellharbour cites is not a new test; that ancient common law test has stood the test of time. It is well known and it is used daily by the courts. I forget the exact percentage, but about 98 per cent of all matters are heard in the Magistrates Court, which deals with that test all the time. Given that there is a defence of reasonableness in the bill, which speaks to the reasonable person test, there is no reason at all to delay. Magistrates, jurors and everybody knows exactly what that means, so we can get it right. I will make two more comments on the bill. I note that the Legislation Review Committee commented on the defence of reasonableness in the bill, which is why I felt it important to put on record. The committee stated:

The Committee acknowledges that proposed section 14D creates a defence of reasonableness to the new offences, and the Bill aims to reduce rates of domestic abuse.

That committee has referred the bill to the Parliament to consider whether the "broadly defined new offences would impact unduly on principles of legal certainty." That is another obligation members in this place have in our rule of law jurisdiction. There is no reason that debate cannot be had today while the bill is before us. If amendments are required I am sure the member for Shellharbour, the mover of the bill, will engage in that debate and accept some of those amendments.

Ms Anna Watson: I have offered.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: The member for Shellharbour just stated, in her timely interjection, that she has offered. So there is no reason that cannot be done. The Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control has slowed down the process. Meanwhile, the bill before the House could be passed today to provide that protection, particularly to the majority of victims who are women, but also to every other victim of coercive control—we could do that now. I say to the members of that joint select committee: Be as quick as you can because you have the power to give that protection, to prevent coercive control and, in passing a law, to prevent another woman who has been subjected to domestic violence from being murdered. With those comments, I commend the bill to the House.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (11:26): I welcome the opportunity to speak on the incredibly important Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Coercive Control—Preethi's Law) Bill 2020, which was brought before this place by my colleague the member for Shellharbour. Domestic abuse and violence is a horrific scourge that impacts all aspects of our society—it impacts each and every electorate in New South

Wales and, indeed, electorates across the country. The statistics are shameful. They have been repeated time and time again in this place, yet nothing has been done. In Australia one woman every week is murdered by a current or former partner. One in four women from the age of 15 has experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner. Intimate partner violence is a leading contributor to illness, disability and premature death for women aged between 18 and 44. Figures released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare show that hospitalisations due to domestic, family and sexual violence are increasing at an alarming rate—and my own community in the eastern suburbs is no exception.

One domestic violence counselling service in the eastern suburbs has reported a 110 per cent increase in demand in the past 12 months—that is a sobering statistic and the fact is nothing is being done to address it. Domestic violence liaison officers from both Waverley and Randwick, with whom I speak to regularly on the matter, advise me that it is incredibly rare that a single shift goes by without at least one call-out to address domestic violence or abuse, and often there are multiple call-outs. Along with physical threats, police report psychological abuse. Coercive control legislation would provide greater scope to address that abuse. Indeed, my own electorate office has seen an alarming increase in the number of people reaching out in search of assistance.

Mr Temporary Speaker, I have no doubt that you can tell how strongly I feel about this issue. That is why, among other initiatives, I am working on a project with Domestic Violence NSW and Dom Svejkar, a strategic designer in social innovation at the UTS Design Innovation Research Centre, to design culturally appropriate communications strategies, not only for victims and survivors of domestic abuse but also for perpetrators. I acknowledge that the Department of Justice has funded that project. The combination of a strong legal framework and the provision of robust social services is key to properly addressing domestic violence and abuse in Australia. Along with the introduction of new legal protections, the legislation looks to amend the way that our society thinks and acts on those types of controlling behaviours. If we needed any more proof of the virtue of the legislation, consider that currently no statistics are kept in New South Wales on incidents of coercive control in domestic relationships. Indeed, until now there has been no working definition of coercive control within the New South Wales justice system, with "coercive control" being referred to in a *Questions and Answers* paper of this House as follows:

... a broad term ... not covered by a specific offence in New South Wales ...

We currently find ourselves in a legislative environment that is not fit for purpose, and is continually letting down vulnerable women and children across the State. That is why we are here today. That is why the member for Shellharbour drafted this legislation and brought it forward. The creation of the bill and the eventual implementation of the law would provide notice to the community that we as a society do not accept this behaviour as part of our story.

We stand here today to create law that will protect our current and future generations of women and children. We know that in most cases violent behaviour is part of a range of tactics to exercise power and control over women and their children. It is domestic terrorism. We know that domestic abuse being experienced by victims can include a wide range of controlling behaviours, such as control of finances, isolation from family and friends, continued humiliation, threats against children, threats of injury or death, and threats towards pets and animals. But at this point the NSW Police Force can only intervene and prosecute under New South Wales law in the case of physical assault, stalking and harassment, or under Commonwealth legislation for the use of telecommunications devices to threaten or intimidate.

There is no scope for early intervention or to address the coexisting elements of domestic and family violence and abuse. There is no scope to protect women and children from harm—only to protect them from further or subsequent harm. We know that intervention too often comes too late. By criminalising those abusive behaviours this legislation will finally enable the justice system and police to embark on early intervention. The legislation will demonstrate our strongest denunciation of those behaviours and will validate the long-held beliefs of victims that the abuse and controlling behaviour they had been subjected to was wrong, extremely dangerous and should be illegal. The bill will also help equip our communities with a shared language and understanding.

The language brought forward in the bill will assist in educating our community and growing our understanding of what coercive control looks like and the devastating impacts it can have, as well as the precipitating effects it has on devastating physical violence. If the bill can provide our communities with a shared understanding and condemnation of the impact of coercive control, we know that we can change behaviour. If the bill can equip our communities with the skills to identify, understand and provide support to women who are being coercively controlled, then we can bring this curse out of the shadows. With a robust and shared understanding we can create a robust and shared response, we will be closer to preventing harm and we will be able to save more lives.

Opponents to the legislation will argue that it is too pre-emptive, that we do not know enough and that it may do more harm than good. That is incorrect. As usual, the Government has been slow to identify the issues and even slower to act. In 2015 England and Wales were the first nations to outlaw coercive control. Scotland followed suit with similar legislation in May 2019 and Ireland in 2020. As far back as 2004 the Tasmanian State Government was identifying and illegalising elements of coercive control through the Family Violence Act, further strengthened by several amendments in the years since. Just yesterday the Queensland Government announced that by the end of this year it will likely have legislation to address coercive control. The proper time to act was long ago. The opportunity to make progress is here and the bill that will do so is on the table. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (11:34): I speak to the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Coercive Control—Preethi's Law) Bill 2020, introduced as a private member's bill by the member for Shellharbour. Domestic violence is a scourge in our community. It is reported that Orange has twice the State average of domestic violence incidents. That is a concerning statistic and one that we should not be proud of. On average across Australia, one woman dies every nine days as result of domestic violence and one man dies every month. Those statistics, along with other reliable data, reveal that domestic violence is an issue across all communities, cultures, demographics, and the length and breadth of our State and nation. No community is immune. As a Parliament and as legislators, the onus is on us to continually look at ways to drive down this scourge.

The bill is well intentioned and I acknowledge the member for Shellharbour for her interest in tackling domestic violence, but it is a bill that I am unable to support in its current form. I will turn to the reasons for that decision shortly. I agree that at some point we need to look at introducing legislation to tackle coercive control, but the policy and legal framework needs to be properly considered, structured and implemented. I am aware of the fact that coercive control may be a precursor to other forms of domestic violence and I am interested to see the results from the joint select committee that is considering that very issue as we debate the bill before the House. I have closely considered the bill and read both the second reading speech of the member for Shellharbour and the contribution of the Attorney General.

In considering the legislation I have had reason to research other jurisdictions wherein coercive control legislation has been introduced, to see how successful or otherwise it has been since its introduction and if there were any policy implementation issues. There are a number of jurisdictions that have legislation about coercive and controlling behaviour, including England, Wales, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Tasmania. In 2015 England and Wales introduced legislation aimed at tackling a range of behaviours, including controlling victims through social media, spying on them online, and stopping a person from socialising with friends and family. It includes emotional, financial and psychological abuse, and can include both intimate and family relationships. Data reveals that since the introduction of the legislation there have been approximately 9,000 offences reported annually, leading to 1,000 prosecutions and about 200 convictions.

That equates to a prosecution rate of about 11 per cent and a conviction rate of just over 2 per cent relative to the number of offences reported. In 2018 Scotland introduced legislation to criminalise abusive behaviour, which came into force in April 2019. Scotland's approach is seen as the gold standard across the planet for that type of legislation. The Scottish Legislature describes abusive behaviour as including making a partner or ex-partner dependant or subordinate to the perpetrator; isolating a partner or ex-partner from friends, relatives or other sources of support; controlling, regulating or monitoring the day-to-day activities of a partner or ex-partner; depriving a partner or ex-partner of, or restricting, their freedom of action; and frightening, humiliating, degrading or punishing a partner or ex-partner.

Scotland's approach was backed by a substantial training program for police. The statistics revealed that in the first few months police received approximately 400 reports and referred 190 matters for prosecution, of which there were 13 convictions at a conviction rate of about 3.25 per cent. Tasmania introduced sections 8 and 9 of the Family Violence Act 2004, which criminalise economic and emotional abuse. I am advised that eight people have been convicted in the 10 years since the introduction of those sections. The lack of use of the legislation has been attributed to the vagueness in the statutory interpretation of the offences, along with some overlap with existing traditional domestic violence offences like stalking, intimidation and breaching a domestic violence order.

I turn now to the bill before the House. The amendment proposes to include new sections 14A, 14B, 14C and 14D under part 3 of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007, which is titled "Domestic violence and other offences". New section 14A (2) (a) to (f) outlines a list of certain types of behaviour or conduct that constitute the coercive control of another person. It is an objective test that often relies on a subjective interpretation. That is something that, from experience and analysis of other jurisdictions, has proven problematic and no doubt helps to explain the very low rates of successful prosecution.

I share some of the concerns raised by the Attorney in his contribution. This legislation must be carefully crafted and stakeholders should be widely consulted, including the NSW Bar Association and the NSW Police Force, to name a few. Some of these patterns of behaviour in the bill would duplicate existing legislative provisions. The offences of stalking and intimidation under section 13 of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 may also be relevant to conduct covered by the bill. Sections 7 and 8 of that Act define "intimidation" and "stalking" respectively. Section 7 (1) provides that "intimidation" of a person means:

- (a) conduct (including cyberbullying) amounting to harassment or molestation of the person, or
- (b) an approach made to the person by any means (including by telephone, telephone text messaging, e-mailing and other technologically assisted means) that causes the person to fear for his or her safety, or
- (c) any conduct that causes a reasonable apprehension of injury to a person or to a person with whom he or she has a domestic relationship, or of violence or damage to any person or property.

Section 7 (2) provides:

- (2) For the purpose of determining whether a person's conduct amounts to intimidation, a court may have regard to any pattern of violence (especially violence constituting a domestic violence offence) in the person's behaviour.

Section 8 (1) of the Act states:

- (1) In this Act, *stalking* includes the following—
 - (a) the following of a person about,
 - (b) the watching or frequenting of the vicinity of, or an approach to, a person's place of residence, business or work or any place that a person frequents for the purposes of any social or leisure activity,
 - (c) contacting or otherwise approaching a person using the internet or any other technologically assisted means.
- (2) For the purpose of determining whether a person's conduct amounts to stalking, a court may have regard to any pattern of violence (especially violence constituting a domestic violence offence) in the person's behaviour.

I appreciate that with the increase of technology, prevalence of social media and other digital platforms, legislation must keep pace with technology. That is not lost on me. I do not want legislation that is cumbersome and raises difficulties of proof. Further time is needed to consider the bill properly, engage community stakeholders and ensure that the legislation is efficient, effective and robust, and ensures the protection of victims. The fact that other jurisdictions already have legislation in this area lends strong weight to my opinion that we need to get this right. I concur with the comments of the Attorney-General on that issue. For those reasons I will not be supporting the bill.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (11:42): The impact of domestic violence is deep and long-lasting, and perpetration rates remain high. Awareness campaigns are still not cutting through. The United Nations continues to say that the most dangerous place for a woman is her own home. I thank Jess Hill for her book that peeled open my brain to coercive control, as it did for many others in this place and across our State, our country and our world. I thank the member for Wallsend for inviting Jess to speak to us in the Parliament. I also thank the many progressive people working in the public sector to educate and raise awareness not only about domestic violence but also about coercive control. I thank everyone involved in reframing police education and police responses to domestic violence to ensure that all victims are heard, supported, and believed.

A number of things must change to make sure that people know what to look out for and that they realise that domestic violence is not only about physical violence. Non-physical aspects of domestic violence are not always obvious. They are often publicly invisible forms of violence. As legislators, our responsibility is to shine the spotlight on that in legislation. Gaps in the legislation continue to put people in danger. I acknowledge my friend and the member for Shellharbour for her work in this place. I told her that she should have been doing this years ago. When we surveyed domestic abuse victims and survivors, and asked them what they wanted to change, 98 per cent of victims said that law reform was needed and 97 per cent of professionals said that coercive control should be recognised in law. Therefore, supporting legislative change around coercive control is urgent and important. Coercive control is abusive behaviour that dominates, manipulates, and micromanages many aspects, and sometimes every aspect, of a victim's life. It might be restricting access to bank accounts, isolating the person from friends and family, or monitoring phone conversations and Facebook messages. I am aware of one circumstance where it involved monitoring food in the fridge. It is a horrible space for someone to live in.

COVID has made the situation worse with a number of coercive behaviours increasing during lockdowns, which involved social isolation, financial stressors, job insecurity and more time spent alone with perpetrators. This behaviour is domestic terrorism towards victims, including women, children and also pets. The physical and psychological wellbeing of women and men must be protected by legislation. Tasmania is the only State to recognise coercive control as a crime. In other parts of our country these behaviours are punishable only when a domestic violence order is violated. South Australia is considering legislation that would mean offenders could

receive up to seven years in jail if convicted of coercive control. Fear should never be part of a healthy relationship. Supportive reporting structures are vital to enable victims to overcome their fear and come forward to ensure that the full spectrum of abuse is exposed. Police must know what to look for to identify coercive and controlling behaviours and how to get the right information from the victim and for the victim.

As kids, we walked on eggshells in fear of my alcoholic father. Maybe it made me tougher, but it sure as hell destroyed part of the innocence of my childhood. I want to ensure that I am in this place to stop that happening to others. I was secondary fallout. My mum was the victim of my father. It is so sad. As so many women in our communities do, my mum lived every day and every hour on eggshells, whilst delivering her utmost in her role as a mum, a wife, an employee, a canteen volunteer, an artist, a community member and so much more. In my electorate and in every one of our electorates, women are living in exactly that space. As legislators, it is our responsibility to walk forward. It is too late for what occurred 20, 30 or 40 years ago, but it is time we took action.

In 2015 England and Wales became the first nations in the world to criminalise such controlling behaviour in relationships, making coercive control punishable by up to five years' jail. In 2018 Scotland and Ireland followed. In New South Wales we must improve community education and extend support structures to stop the harm that is occurring. In 2017, not long after I was elected, Blair Dalton was killed by her partner in an act of domestic violence that rocked our community to the core. I acknowledge Blair's family and friends as we work towards creating a framework to improve outcomes for victims and build stronger structures to hold perpetrators to account. Sadly for Blair, this comes too late. Coercive control is an indicator of domestic homicide. Domestic homicide numbers are not going down, so we, as a Parliament and as a society, must do so much more.

I refer to the king-hit death that shut down Sydney's nightlife, and I ask this chauvinistic Government: Where are the protections and equitable responses to protect the women who we know are at risk? I encourage the few women who are on the other side of the Chamber to stand up and shout loud as we push for legislative change to protect women from domestic violence. Domestic violence is a national crime in Australia, with physical injury resulting in hospitalisation at an alarming rate. Hospitalisation evidence does not take into account the harm caused by coercive control. Homicide is the last step. Evidence supporting the inclusion of coercive control in our legislation is overwhelming, and we as legislators must take action.

I credit the work of Destroy the Joint, which is also Counting Dead Women Australia. It is painful to my heart that that organisation needs to exist to remind us, as legislators, of the issue. In January this year we lost four women due to violence in the home by their partners. New South Wales should be a safe State for all of us. I thank everyone involved in the NSW Women's Alliance for their efforts in promoting a State free of sexual, domestic and family violence. I thank our non-government sector, our police, our educators and our communities for their amazing work in this sector, and for their support of victims and survivors. I acknowledge the role of teachers in supporting students and families across the State because we do not have sufficient protections in place. Teachers are seeing harm that is disrupting the education and future of our kids.

I also thank all community members who have communicated with their elected representatives in Parliament about their concerns regarding domestic violence and the lack of support that is available to them. It is important that they contact us so we can help magnify their voices and get them the support they need. I thank Domestic Violence NSW and all peak organisations and statewide service providers responding to and working to prevent sexual, domestic and family violence. In particular, I thank the fabulous women's health centres on the Central Coast, as well as our community centres, which often provide an important drop-in location and information space to connect women to many other services and support them escaping domestic violence.

I also thank all those who form part of the Central Coast Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, and our police domestic violence liaison officers, for their leadership and support of victims of domestic violence in an overstretched system. I thank the Central Coast Community Legal Centre, Pacific Link Housing, BaptistCare, Vinnies, Peninsula Lighthouse, our GPs, and our talented and aware police, who provide important support and safe spaces for women and people escaping domestic violence across communities on the coast. I really believe pushing this legislation through the New South Wales Parliament relies on more women being elected to this place. I once again thank the member for Shellharbour for bringing the bill to the House. I also thank the shadow Minister for women and member for Blue Mountains for her long-term advocacy and support of organisations across New South Wales that support women, and for supporting this important bill. Labor supports legislation to criminalise coercive control.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (11:51): From the outset, I say that I welcome the opportunity to speak in debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Coercive Control—Preethi's Law) Bill 2020. I congratulate my colleague the member for Shellharbour on doing what local members of Parliament are elected to do: to try to improve legislation in this place to help people in the community, particularly those who are vulnerable. That is our job. It is not to get scripts from Ministers and read them in this place; it is to look at how we can modernise legislation and make it better by listening to the community and putting that before the

House. On behalf of my community, I acknowledge the work of the member for Shellharbour, who has been a tireless advocate in this space. As the member for Gosford said, she has worked closely with the member for Blue Mountains as the shadow Minister to advocate an important change in legislation. It is a long time coming and should be part of our legislature going forward.

I have watched carefully and it has frustrated me that on multiple occasions the member for Shellharbour has said to the Government that there is an opportunity to amend her bill. She approached the Government in an open and transparent way. Unlike a lot of Government members, she did not present the bill and say "This is the bill, too bad if you do not like it", and move on. She has been open to improvements and changes. I note what the member for Orange said earlier, but there has been and still is an opportunity to act. Surely in this day and age we can understand that this legislation is keeping up with the way in which domestic violence is inflicted and impacts people in our communities. The bill has coercive control at its heart and at its core. To be quite blunt, we should have been dealing with this legislation quite a long time ago. There is an opportunity for all of us in this place to come together and say, "We have a problem. This is a part of the issues we dealing with in domestic violence."

I am glad that groups in my area, such as Supported Accommodation and Homelessness Services Shoalhaven Illawarra and the team led by Kathy Colyer, are doing fantastic work. But they tell us that for a lot of people this issue can be out of sight and out of mind. Many members in this place, including the member for Gosford in her contribution, have told personal and heartbreaking stories about the impact that domestic violence has had on people. Every member in this place knows women, families and children who are impacted by it every day. It is not a Labor or a Liberal issue; it is a community issue. Surely in the oldest Parliament in this country we can sit down, come together and work through amendments and improvements to the bill. The member for Shellharbour has been the first to say she is happy to sit down and do that, but the delay has been really frustrating. I put that out there from the very beginning. As I said earlier, when we come to this place we have a duty to ensure that we have the best possible criminal justice system in place for our families and the people we represent.

It is vitally important we tackle the domestic violence crisis that we are facing. In recent years a light has been shone on this area of public policy, legislation and criminality. But the light needs to continue to shine bright and, as legislators, we must continue to do more to make sure that our laws are modernised in a way that reflects some of the challenges and impacts for victims. Family, domestic and sexual violence is a major social issue, but it is also a significant health issue. It is an issue that is often brought to my attention as the shadow Minister for Health. It directly impacts on people's health outcomes—both psychologically and, obviously, physically—particularly if it is physical and sexual violence. It occurs across all ages and does not discriminate socio-economically or by demographic. But it mainly affects women and children.

Family and domestic violence can have far-reaching consequences, which the member for Shellharbour outlined in her second reading speech, the member for Blue Mountains raised in her inaugural speech in this place and the member for Gosford outlined to this Parliament during her contribution to debate. One of the first families I helped when I became the member for Keira was a mum. Her story has stayed with me for a long time. I have been in this place now for 10 years and I will never forget it. To protect her identity I will call her Amy—and I always respectfully do that. She suffered horrendously at the hands of her husband. I remember receiving an urgent message from her teenage daughter saying that she was frightened and scared of her father. She sent me that message. Amy and her children were not just being harmed physically; they were financially and emotionally abused and controlled by someone who was supposed to help protect them as part of their family structure. The years of abuse and torment that that family endured has sadly left its mark not only on Amy but also on her three children.

They are resilient kids but they are not without their wounds and scars. The difficulties they faced in the court system were incomprehensible. They knew that the non-physical abuse was not taken as seriously because the legislation was not there for them. The laws were not built strong enough to help and support them. We were able to help them but the law did not protect or assist them. I am frequently in contact with that family and have remained so over the past 10 years. It is an important story because it highlights why a bill such as this should be treated by this Parliament in the spirit in which the member for Shellharbour introduced it, rather than with political ideology—Labor, good; Liberal, bad. We must understand that the member has a long and extensive history of interactions with stakeholders and with victims and their families, who have brought to her attention the need for this Parliament to change the legislation.

They have not said that Labor or Liberal must do it; just that this place must do it. So I say to the Attorney General: There is an opportunity today to work with the member for Shellharbour to produce a piece of legislation that not only all of us in this place can be proud of but also protects people like Amy and her family, families that are in all of our communities. I thank the member for Shellharbour for her advocacy on behalf of women and children, who are predominantly impacted by domestic violence. I look forward to working with her

at a local level to make sure that communities in the Illawarra are provided with the best possible protection against the scourge of domestic violence. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (11:59): I thank the member for Shellharbour for bringing the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Coercive Control—Preethi's Law) Bill 2020 to the House for consideration. Out of all those who contributed to the debate, the last two raised concerns about issues that are happening in their electorate, obviously focusing on domestic violence. The member for Gosford brought her personal account. This reinforced to me and also to everyone that domestic violence is not that far from anyone—anyone might know someone who has been impacted. The member for Keira relayed one of his constituent's stories. Many of us may have been associated with or tried to support people who have been experiencing domestic violence. As most people know around here, I am first and always talking about the city of Blacktown, its importance and how we are sometimes underrated. But unfortunately when it comes domestic violence I cannot hide behind the fact of our averages. We are below average as far as domestic violence is concerned.

Among people with financial stresses in lower socio-economic areas or even among people in high-paid jobs, there is never, ever an excuse for domestic violence. People are at breaking point. We need to have laws like this that send a clear signal to the public that, whether it is physical, subliminal or emotional abuse, it is not accepted and it is seen and treated as the same. I understand that the Government, as the member for Keira was saying earlier, may introduce its own bill and the other place is undertaking an inquiry. I think the member for Shellharbour is putting out an olive branch. Let us get this bill passed as soon as possible. I know and understand that dealing with coercive control is a difficult issue. The bill provides for the judicial system to give some weight of evidence to coercive control rather than discard it or attribute to it a higher standard of proof than physical abuse. Too many times we have seen the statistics say coercive control actually leads to physical abuse. They are the early signals and the only signs that we often do not look at.

We have seen many examples of coercive control starting to take control of a relationship. People have highlighted many examples of where this could happen—trying to isolate a person and saying things about the in-laws. It could simply start off as a joke; we often make jokes about the in-laws, "Do you have to go and see the mother-in-law?" I can understand that as a joke. I will not comment on my mother-in-law, who was wonderful, God rest her soul. I think I have the best mother-in-law now. I might be giving away some personal stuff here. It may be something that is said or done as a joke in a normal relationship. I never would have contemplated saying to my wife, "No, you cannot see her", or reduce her opportunities to access and see her family. The early signs of coercive control are when the relationship starts to impact on who a person can and cannot see. Controlling a person's day-to-day activities, taking away their decision-making power, depriving them of their fundamental rights, reducing or stopping them from seeing health professionals or other professionals, frightening or degrading them in front of their family and friends may start off as a joke, but end up as being physical abuse.

The unintended consequences of putting coercive control into the legislation are often raised here. I am pretty sure that the police will not drag these matters to court if they are without substantial proof or long-term problems. We need to send a strong signal, as representatives of the New South Wales Parliament, to the public that coercive control in any of its forms is not acceptable. It is fundamentally wrong. If it looks and feels wrong, then it is wrong. Unfortunately these laws are dragging way behind societal changes. The world of social media and the internet have changed the array of communication and how we deal with people. People are using phone apps to track where others go. People will say, "Oh, this coercive control bill will stop you finding out where your kids are." Finding out where your kids are late at night as a safety issue is one thing. Even your employer tracking you seems to be totally acceptable these days—I fought employers following workers when I was a union official—but if someone is tracking, disciplining and attacking people where they are, that is coercive control.

Sometimes we get caught up too much in the legislation and having a fundamental, all-inclusive and non-defeatable paragraph that can be defended at all times in the law but, as we all know, a lot of the laws that we pass are sending signals. For example, we have seen so often that it is up to the police as to whether they prosecute the law of trespass. It is a simple fact that any customer can go into any shop to buy something, but the moment the shopkeeper says, "No, I do not want you here" because of whatever problem the customer is causing, that person is trespassing. But no police officer will ever enforce the law of trespass unless the person causing the problem starts throwing things and commits other crimes, such as physical violence. Hence, the coercive control bill is really important in sending the right signal and giving police substantial ability to send a signal to the person that coercive control is wrong.

In the Blacktown area, we have the Blacktown Women's and Girl's Health Centre led by Jhan Leach. It is a wonderful community-based, not-for-profit women's centre that provides health and wellbeing services for women and girls, networking opportunities, workshops and legal counselling services, but more importantly it focuses on domestic violence support. I talked to them and they raised lots of issues on coercive control. For example, a relationship could be going through its good phase where partners may be taking photos in interesting

positions or in various layers of clothing—I am not suggesting that I would ever do this. That may be great when you are together, but when the relationship breaks down those photos are being used as revenge porn. The husband—it is usually the husband—is tracking, stalking, looking at and actually providing personal information—phone numbers and addresses, et cetera—on social media. And then there is identity theft. Once again, all that stuff comes about through the coercive control measures that could have been stopped.

Imagine knowing that your phone number has been published all over the place. When your phone rings you do not know whether it is a family member or friend, or one of those pesky telemarketers. It might actually be a stalker or a friend of the person you have the issue with: They are all try to back each other or they publish it on the web. Unfortunately there are too many strange websites that gangs or groups use to attack people. It causes havoc in a person's life. Social cohesion is important. Anyone caught in such a situation has to change their phone number constantly. Every time you change your phone number you have to let people know, and you sometimes lose contacts with family and friends. Control of bank accounts or other financial decision-making is another form of coercive control. You may want to work together with the family, and the credit card— [*Extension of time not granted.*]

Debate interrupted.

Motions

COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (12:10): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the allocation of \$5.43 million in Commonwealth funding for community legal centres impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- (2) Recognises this additional funding will deliver more free legal support for people experiencing disadvantage across New South Wales, including people facing domestic and family violence.
- (3) Notes all 34 community legal centres in New South Wales that made an application received funding.

I am pleased to be moving this motion this afternoon. It is a win for our community legal centres [CLCs] and for citizens who may require free legal support due to disadvantage. As we all know, the needs of vulnerable communities have intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, migrants and refugees, people experiencing domestic violence, people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, people with disabilities, older people, young people, and people in rural, regional and remote locations have all been particularly affected by this once-in-a-century pandemic. As a result, the volume and complexity of legal needs has increased. More than ever, people in disadvantaged communities need free legal support.

Community legal centres across New South Wales reported a surge in requests for help in relation to domestic violence, family law and child protection matters. People across New South Wales have had urgent questions about their tenancy, employment, social security, insurance, credit or debt and immigration as COVID-19 has impacted on their day-to-day lives. In a targeted response, the New South Wales Government allocated \$5.43 million of additional Commonwealth funding in 2020-21 to CLCs across New South Wales. Of that funding, \$4.34 million is for frontline legal services to help meet the increased need. This was part of the Commonwealth Government's funding boost of \$15.6 million for the New South Wales legal assistance sector.

Funding of \$3.68 million was allocated to bolster the capacity of the Aboriginal Legal Service [ALS] to deliver services including family and criminal law and child protection to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in New South Wales. The ALS has also received information and communications technology [ICT] funding directly from the Commonwealth Government. Evidence was provided by CLCs of their communities' legal needs as a result of COVID-19 and of their ability to meet those needs. The Government considered how it could support existing services to help expand their service delivery. A diverse range of support services are benefiting from this extra frontline services funding.

The New South Wales Government is providing greater assistance to older people, who are disproportionately affected by the health and social impacts of the pandemic. From March to July 2020, the Seniors Rights Service received over 1,700 calls related to COVID-19. This CLC has been responding with increased legal services for vulnerable older people, including those experiencing elder abuse. It will continue reaching out to older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It has also been providing legal information to explain what New South Wales public health orders mean for older Australians.

The New South Wales Government is responding to important questions in the community from renters. In the first month of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Tenants' Union of NSW reported that its online renters' guide to COVID-19 was visited 1.2 million times. With this extra funding, the Tenants' Union will increase its advisory

services and create resources to respond to the concerns that people have about their accommodation. Regional communities impacted by domestic and family violence, employment issues, and credit and debt issues are being supported by CLCs. The Mid North Coast Community Legal Centre will be increasing its outreach to people who have been unable to get legal help or who were not aware that free legal help is available. It will be reaching out to migrant and refugee communities in the languages they need.

In addition to increased demand, the legal assistance sector has transitioned to virtual service delivery. Restrictions related to COVID-19 have created further obstacles to accessing services in rural, regional and remote communities. Community legal centres had to adapt quickly to providing legal advice, court assistance and community legal education online or by phone. They had to respond to a rapidly evolving situation, keeping both clients and staff safe. To continue supporting their clients and communities, CLCs needed to adapt without impacting on their quality of service. That is why the New South Wales Government distributed just over \$1 million of Commonwealth funding to support CLCs to purchase the ICT they needed to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, CLCs like the Marrickville Legal Centre are using the New South Wales Government's Access to Justice Innovation Fund to harness artificial intelligence through the launch of the online chatbot New Age Legal Assistant to help clients who are experiencing disadvantage. The allocation of \$5.43 million in Commonwealth funding for community legal centres supports them to deliver services effectively today and into the future.

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (12:16): I thank the member for Camden for bringing this matter to our attention. We will take any source of additional funding, especially when Federal funds are coming in to support the State. It is always good to get. I believe the State gives about \$12 million in support. I was telling the shadow Attorney General earlier that it is an important cause and many of us will be speaking today in support of our community legal centre. Unfortunately, over the years there have been a lot of disruptions and changes in the sector. My electorate used to host the Mount Druitt Community Legal Centre, which was previously a lot more locally based. It was there for decades and I had the privilege and honour of serving for a couple of years on the board of management as treasurer, being the local accountant—which is the position that no-one ever wants to have. During that time I saw firsthand the work and support services that it offered.

That leads to an issue we should be addressing. It is fabulous to see some additional money going into the system, but the biggest concern from the community legal centres' perspective is that there is no clear funding strategy for the delivery of services. Members should look at how much each centre gets and the mergers and changes they have gone through. We now have an overall western Sydney service. There is no ratio and no obvious connection between each legal centre and how much money it ought to be receiving. The member for Camden talked about the wonderful work of some of the regional legal centres, especially in delivering translation services et cetera.

Welcome to the City of Blacktown—188 different nationalities and 182 languages, one of the most diverse places in the world. I understand that the United Nations has only 195 nations registered, so only seven are missing from the City of Blacktown. But we are working on it; we will find seven families from the seven countries. As long as they do not come to Australia by boat, they should be welcome. Anyway, we are looking at the funding because at the moment some community legal centres can be funded by both State and Federal governments. Some of these have State funding, others have Federal funding and many centres, such as the Toongabbie Legal Centre at Blacktown, are not funded by government.

Access to community legal aid is also difficult. The nett assessable income for legal aid is \$400 per week. A person's income includes family tax payments, pensions, rent assistance, carer's allowance and National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] support payments—NDIS is not a profit; it provides support to pay for services, but it is included as part of an assessable income. Some expenditures are allowed such as rent of \$455 per week in Sydney when we know that rent is actually \$525 per week on average so it restricts the number of people who can access legal aid. The patrons of the Toongabbie Legal Centre are Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley, AC, QC, the Governor of New South Wales, and former President of the New South Wales Court of Appeal. As I said, it is totally unfunded but it supports many different activities. Because it is not bound by the Legal Aid requirements as far as income is concerned, it can help people from a lower socio-economic basis in neighbourhood disputes or if they receive a parking fine, for example, and need representation or guidance.

How do people who earn a few hundred dollars a week access legal centres? We need to look at the funding and the amount of money they receive. The Western Sydney Community Legal Centre or the Toongabbie Legal centre run courses and do a lot of valuable lead-up work. We know that in relation to domestic violence and many other issues our challenge is to build a lot of trust before someone takes the quantum leap of bringing a court action. The Blacktown Youth Services Association, the Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre or SydWest Multicultural Services have to build up years of support for their clients to have faith in the legal system. The

clients may have come from within Australia or overseas and may not have much faith in the legal system. We welcome the additional Government funding, but our challenge is to make sure that we use the funding transparently. Therefore I move:

That the motion be amended by adding the following paragraph:

- (4) Calls on the Government to work with the Commonwealth Government and key stakeholder representatives to establish a more transparent funding allocation that includes the needs of the area as well as funding for support agencies that can effectively support the person during their time of crisis.

I have said that funding needs to be more transparent and given to the agencies that desperately need it. It is good that the State Government has moved to a three-year cycle, although the Federal Government is still on a one-year cycle for funding for legal centres.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (12:24): I will talk about the increased funding for services for victim-survivors of domestic violence. The needs of vulnerable communities intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. An Australian Institute of Criminology survey of 15,000 Australian women found that between February and May 2020 about 9 per cent of those living with their partners experienced physical or sexual violence. Two-thirds of those women said it was either the first time their partner had been violent, or that the violence had become worse. As a husband and a father of two girls I find that appalling, and as a society we have to do a lot better in this area.

That same study reported that the risk of violence is exacerbated by COVID-19 related to financial stress, and the inability for women to contact family and friends due to restrictions. Those alarming reports demonstrate an urgent need for increased services. That is why we have allocated \$5.43 million in Commonwealth funding to 34 Community Legal Centres [CLCs] across New South Wales impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some \$4.34 million of the funding is for CLCs to deliver frontline services to people experiencing disadvantage across New South Wales, including people experiencing domestic and family violence. Almost 80 per cent of the funding delivered to frontline services supported victim-survivors to get the legal support they needed.

Thirteen of the CLCs received additional COVID-19 funding through the Department of Communities and Justice to support victim-survivors. The New South Wales Government has also administered two tranches of COVID stimulus funding to domestic violence service providers to enable them to adapt and increase their services, and continue to meet client need. This included funding directly to services with a pre-existing government contract to directly and immediately address the needs of the most vulnerable women and children in our community, many of whom are also clients of CLCs. The second tranche of domestic violence COVID stimulus funding was distributed via open grant, allowing a diverse mix of service providers to extend or adapt their services, upholding the safety of our community across New South Wales.

I will provide a few examples of increased services to victim-survivors: The Women's Legal Service NSW reported that clients are being forced to spend more time at home with their violent partner, with limited ability to attend face-to-face appointments, which obviously places them at increased risk of harm. Now the Women's Legal Service will be able to expand its service delivery, and notably to some of its most vulnerable clients. The Intellectual Disability Rights Service reported a significant rise in clients with a cognitive impairment reporting instances of domestic and family violence during the pandemic. We are supporting the Intellectual Disability Rights Service to provide more legal and non-legal support to parents with cognitive disability in care and protection matters. People with cognitive impairment will receive legal advice and assistance in a way that they can understand.

The Northern Rivers CLC will be increasing legal services to victim-survivors with multiple legal problems. This will allow the same lawyer to help clients with family law and civil law issues including credit and debt, employment law and tenancy. This saves a victim-survivor from re-telling their story many times and risk being re-traumatised in the process. We are very proud to support CLCs deliver more services to victim-survivors, hold perpetrators to account, help victim-survivors escaping violent households and ultimately save lives.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (12:22): I am delighted to participate in this debate and once again I declare how enormously supportive I am of Community Legal Centres [CLCs] and acknowledge their important work. I have had a very long connection with CLCs. A very long time ago I was a student volunteer at the Redfern Legal Centre when I was a law student last century. Likewise I was at some of the early meetings that led to the establishment of the Marrickville Legal Centre. I recall meetings at Marrickville Town Hall with people like Daryl Melham and Phil Bolton. In the interests of full disclosure I should say that my daughter currently works for a CLC. The very obvious and important things about CLCs are that, first, they do their important work consistently on the smell of an oily rag. There is not one part of the legal system that delivers such valuable services for so little money. It takes a particular commitment to work in that sector, and they do very important work.

The second significant thing is that CLCs often deal with the most marginalised and dispossessed people in our communities. They are the people at the coalface dealing with some of our most intractable social problems. The advantage of that is that they are an invaluable source of advice. One cannot seriously attempt to be the shadow Attorney General in this State without paying a lot of attention to the advice one has from the individual CLCs and also from the peak body whose chief executive officer is Tim Leach. Their advice and recommendations seem to me to be almost always correct.

One of the more recent events was the changes to the Victims Support Scheme in 2020, which I thought were fundamentally misconceived. I relied heavily upon the CLC's advice to me about that. Additionally, in practical terms, CLCs are often able to deal holistically with individual clients in a way that traditional lawyers cannot, and that provides solutions that you do not necessarily normally get. In that sense, they are often able to help someone through a legal process and, in fact, make the formal legal process and court proceedings much easier and more successful.

I mention in particular two legal centres—the ones that I am physically closest to. The first is the South West Sydney Legal Centre, which is fortuitously located just upstairs from my office. Its staff do an immense amount of work over a whole range of projects. I have been particularly impressed with the work they have done with victims and survivors of domestic violence. It has been particularly important. The other is Macarthur Legal Centre, and I had the pleasure of going to its thirtieth anniversary a couple of years ago. It was such a significantly important event that it attracted the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Hon. Justice Tom Bathurst, as well as Court of Appeal Justice His Honour Anthony Payne, who interestingly had something to do with the establishment of Macarthur Legal Centre in his previous life.

Macarthur Legal Centre also does a great deal of important work relating to survivors of domestic violence. I have had more than the odd dealing with its staff over the years about that. They do terribly important and useful work. CLCs survive on the smell of an oily rag. I know it is more complex than just saying this, but if there is one group in our society that merits more funding it is community legal centres.

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (12:31): During the COVID-19 pandemic, a lot has been said about the transition to virtual service delivery across a wide range of sectors. The legal assistance sector has also made this change, ensuring that it continues to provide effective frontline service delivery to communities experiencing disadvantage. COVID-19 has increased the challenges of rural, regional and remote communities accessing services. Community legal centres [CLCs] have needed to adapt quickly to provide legal advice, assistance and representation to clients online or by phone. Many CLCs have needed to change the way they delivered services in court, continued outreach to remote communities and maintained relationships with local partners. They have needed to respond to a rapidly evolving situation, keeping both clients and staff safe.

CLCs have had to grapple with questions such as: How can a lawyer deliver services to someone who cannot leave their home? How can lawyers continue to deliver services to hard-to-reach communities? For example, how can a lawyer reach a domestic violence victim isolated at home with their perpetrator, someone with communication difficulties due to their disability, a new migrant, or someone experiencing homelessness? How can we ensure that clients are not excluded from accessing the services they need? How can we keep lawyers and staff safe?

To continue to support their clients and communities, CLCs needed to adapt quickly and nimbly, without impacting the quality of their services. How to do that, and to continue to provide legal services during the pandemic, was obviously something that was considered, and we allocated \$5.43 million in Commonwealth COVID stimulus funding to CLCs for this purpose. Over \$1 million of this funding allowed CLCs to purchase information and communications technology to adapt their service delivery. This funding ensures CLCs can deliver services online or by phone. We considered which CLCs would benefit from website updates, web chat functions, online referral pathways, telephone system upgrades and personal protective equipment needed to transition to remote service delivery. Funding administered by the New South Wales Government ensures that CLCs can deliver services effectively today and into the future.

The New South Wales Government has partnered with CLCs because of their history of direct service to the community and the most vulnerable and, more importantly, their commitment to providing frontline services during times of crisis. The Commonwealth funding builds on the New South Wales Government's record investment in CLCs, with more than \$40 million injected into the CLC sector over three years. That includes \$15.6 million in additional investment from the New South Wales Government, with a funding boost of more than 85 per cent since 2015-16. The funding continues to support delivery of services to tens of thousands of vulnerable people experiencing disadvantage across the State. The legal assistance sector faced formidable challenges in adapting its service delivery during COVID-19. It did of course, however, rise to the occasion. During a time of unprecedented upheaval, the increased funding administered by the New South Wales Government has enabled CLCs to deliver more free legal support to people experiencing disadvantage across the State than ever before.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (12:35): Central Coast Community Legal Centre [CLC] is a community-owned, community-run, not-for-profit organisation, the purpose of which is to promote social justice for the people of the Central Coast. The centre has been servicing the Central Coast community for 25 years. I particularly acknowledge Deborah McMillan, the CEO, and Giles Feeney, the chairperson. Like many organisations on the Central Coast, this community legal centre faced particular challenges during COVID in 2020. The centre, however, increased its activity in reaching the most vulnerable people on the Central Coast, seeing over 3,900 people.

To demonstrate the importance of the service it provides, that 3,900 people was a 61 per cent increase from the previous year. That is unfortunately because the Central Coast is still number two in New South Wales for domestic violence. Over 1,397 people struggling financially or experiencing disadvantage and a multitude of barriers to justice were assisted with free legal advice from the dedicated team at Central Coast Community Legal Centre. Sadly, over 50 per cent of those seeking advice were the subject of family violence and 36 per cent suffered from a disability or mental illness. Twenty-six per cent of clients identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and, significantly, in 2019 the Central Coast Community Legal Centre launched its very first reconciliation action plan.

Central Coast CLC also auspices the Children's Court Assistance Scheme at Broadmeadow, Wyong and Woy Woy children's courts assisting over 8,000 young people, families, carers and workers in criminal matters. Central Coast CLC receives funding from a variety of bodies including the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, the Legal Aid Commission, the NSW Public Purpose Fund, Legal Aid NSW, the Office for Women's Policy and the New South Wales Department of Premier and Cabinet. During COVID, it received 12 months' funding for a Men's Behaviour Change Program. Central Coast Community Legal Centre staff recently welcomed their new senior solicitor, Ken Beilby. Ken comes to the Central Coast from the Northern Rivers with a wealth of legal experience in the sector. He is certainly a valuable new addition to the team. I also acknowledge Bobbi Murray, the Aboriginal access worker at the centre. Bobbi is an inspirational individual who does a fantastic job in her role.

Central Coast Community Legal Centre is also a place where young solicitors and practitioners can learn from more seasoned professionals through learning programs. The young people get to accompany solicitors to court and do basic paralegal work such as legal research and file management. Their roles require them to draw on a wide variety of subjects and skills learnt at law school, including everything from criminal law, family law, employment law and contracts through to alternative dispute resolution and civil procedure. One such person is Sarah Etherington, who has a role as an intake officer at Central Coast CLC. Sarah chose to work at Central Coast Community Legal Centre because she felt it had a fantastic reputation for providing assistance to disadvantaged people on the Central Coast. Sarah identifies one of the highlights of her job as being able to go to court with the solicitors and observe the justice system in action.

I acknowledge the incredible job that the staff and board members do at Central Coast Community Legal Centre. During several visits, including one at the end of last year, I have seen the incredible work they are doing. I acknowledge the volunteers who turn up and help the centre to provide services. The centre is severely underfunded. For every person the staff see, there are probably three or four others they could be helping. I support the words of the member for Blacktown, who said that there needs to be a more purposeful funding model that recognises need in the community and provides funding accordingly both at a State and Federal level.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:39): By leave: On behalf of The Greens I strongly support the incredible work of each community legal centre [CLC] in New South Wales. I thank the member for Camden for bringing this issue to the House. The electorate of Newtown is lucky enough to be home to a significant number of CLCs, including the head office of Community Legal Centres NSW, and we have the opportunity to work closely with many of them. They perform a vital role in our community, working every day to provide assistance to people experiencing financial hardship, discrimination, domestic violence, tenancy issues and other forms of disadvantage. That is assistance that people would not receive if community legal centres did not exist. The centres also help to shape and guide policy and laws. They also advocate to address inequality in our communities and inconsistencies in our laws.

I acknowledge the additional funding that flowed to the community legal sector as part of the Federal Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This was much needed because, as the pandemic unfolded, CLCs across the State were faced with a drastic increase in the number of people accessing their services and requiring vital support. I note that, unlike Victoria, the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government did not match the Commonwealth funding boost for frontline legal assistance services and they remain in desperate need of increased and secure funding to properly deliver their services. It is crucial that community legal centres receive stable funding that is based on careful analysis of legal need.

Every member in this place can talk about the value of community legal centres. We must ensure that the centres have stable funding to enable them to strategically plan for and maintain adequate levels of service delivery in their communities. Consistency is key. Right now, CLCs are in need of additional funding to meet a rising demand for services caused by crises such as the current pandemic and the bushfires; to fill service gaps in rural, regional and remote areas; to deliver State Government assistance to support the New South Wales operations of four nationally operating community legal centres; and to improve access to justice for families engaged with the child protection system and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We know that community legal centres, like many other organisations, have made pre-budget submissions. I urge the Treasurer to consider those requests closely.

It is urgently important that the Government invest an additional \$11.68 million per year over the next four years into the community legal sector, which should include increased general funding for community legal centres to address unmet need and to improve access to justice for people experiencing domestic and family violence. In addition, we would all agree that the incarceration rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is a key concern and one that community legal centres are well placed to address. We and the centres are urging the Treasurer to commit \$19.3 million over the next five years to ensure the full implementation of all 125 recommendations from the independent review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care in New South Wales.

It is absolutely crucial that community legal centres are properly funded before people's problems spiral out of control, pushing them into poverty, homelessness and debt and increasing their interactions with public hospitals, police, courts, prisons and systems providing out-of-home care. Community legal centres do vital work. I thank those centres in the electorate of Newtown, including the Australian Centre for Disability Law, the Court Support Scheme, the Financial Rights Legal Centre, the HIV/AIDS Legal Centre, the Intellectual Disability Rights Service, the Criminal Justice Support Network, the Greater Sydney Aboriginal Tenants Service, the Redfern Legal Centre, the Refugee Advice & Casework Service, the Tenants' Union of NSW, the Seniors Rights Service, the Older Persons Legal Service, the Welfare Rights Centre and—just over the border of the electorate of Newtown—the Marrickville Legal Centre and Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre. I thank all community legal centres in the electorate of Newtown for their incredible work.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (12:43): By leave: I acknowledge community legal centres in general and in particular the list that the member for Newtown mentioned in her contribution. My office does a lot of work with Marrickville Legal Centre, Redfern Legal Centre and a number of Indigenous legal centres. Every year we make additional representations to government, asking it to provide additional funding to the legal centres. People in my community from low socio-economic backgrounds, the working poor or from migrant or refugee backgrounds find accessing legal services very difficult. Even walking in the door of a private legal firm could cost a few hundred dollars, which is out of reach for many people in my community.

I represent a large multicultural community. We will continue to defend the wonderful traditional institutions that we hold dear to us in our robust democracy in Australia and New South Wales. I acknowledge the work of the Attorney General as well as the very good work of our shadow Attorney General. They are very committed to community legal centres. Who would have known a year ago all of the issues that COVID would create. Many businesspeople have lost everything. They cannot afford to go to a solicitor to try to get out of the tenancy agreements they have with commercial landlords. They do not have the funds to access private legal advice. A whole range of issues are coming forward. I think that the Attorney General should consider a lot of these requests. I know that an annual funding envelope of \$11.6 million is required, and the Government should really consider that. I absolutely support bringing these issues forwards at the pointy end because it can lead to a better outcome, whether it is mediation or negotiation.

We held a mental health forum in my electorate a few months ago. I have written to the mental health Minister, and our shadow Minister for Mental Health has been pursuing this and advocating on our behalf. Many of my community groups and organisations are doing a lot of referrals to legal services, but they may only have a person with legal skills working one or two days a week helping the community. The Government should consider that we need additional funding for mental health aspects because there are many concerns. I know the Government recognises that and that Federal money has been invested. I acknowledge all the people who work for community legal centres. We work well with them, but they are overwhelmed with important work. I call on the Government to provide additional funding.

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (12:47): In reply: I acknowledge and thank the member for Blacktown, the member for Wollondilly, the member for Liverpool, the member for East Hills, the member for Wyong, the member for Newtown and the member for Canterbury for their contributions in support of the motion. Having said that, we will not be supporting the amendment moved by the member for Blacktown. In a time of crisis, existing frontline services needed to expand their capacity to assist vulnerable communities and to do so

safely. The allocation of \$5.43 million in Commonwealth funding, administered by the New South Wales Government, has enabled community legal centres to deliver more free legal support for people experiencing disadvantage across New South Wales. Effective and targeted legal services delivery is more important now than ever before.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The member for North Shore will come to order. The member for Blacktown will come to order. The member for Camden has moved a motion, to which the member for Blacktown has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes42
Noes45
Majority.....3

AYES

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

NOES

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

PAIRS

Haylen, J	Lee, G
Hoening, R	Roberts, A

Amendment negatived.

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

Motion agreed to.

FREE TO BE ONLINE? REPORT

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (13:01): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes a recent report entitled *Free To Be Online?* shared experiences of young women and girls who faced harassment on social media platforms.
- (2) Notes it is clear that little is done to protect girls and young women online.
- (3) Calls on the Attorney General to reform legislative frameworks to deal with online harassment and violence against all girls and young women.

Technology has overtaken the world. The internet, for good and sometimes not for good, plays a big role. I know that parents would agree with me when I say that they worry that online abuse, harassment and hate is taking social media in a wicked direction. Harassment includes sexual and pornographic pictures, death threats and impersonation—deep, dark messages. Many women in this place have experienced harassment in person, by mail, by email or, most predominantly, online via their social media pages. I have been targeted via social media many times. I have received threats against my life that have forced me to involve the police. The *Free To Be Online?* report spoke to 14,000 girls across 32 countries around the world, including Australia, about their experiences online. It is the largest ever survey of its type. The report showed that more than half of the women surveyed were harassed and abused on social media—that is shameful.

In 22 countries girls were exposed to horrible explicit messages, pornographic pictures and cyberstalking. Some 59 per cent of women reported being targeted with abusive and insulting language, 41 per cent of women faced deliberate embarrassment and 39 per cent of women were subjected to body shaming and threats of sexual violence. Australian results were worse than the global average because 65 per cent of girls and young women reported being harassed or abused online. That is also shameful. The survey tells us that social media platforms that are designed to connect us to a global community are drastically failing young girls and women, with inadequate reporting mechanisms that allow harmful abuse to slip through the cracks. That should not be happening. Girls must know that when they are abused and threatened online they can report it and we must ensure that there are mechanisms to do that. We must make it easier for them. They must be listened to, action must be taken and perpetrators must be held accountable.

Social media companies are using automated content moderation tools in an effort to flag and delete gendered hate speech more quickly. Those tools are designed to detect harmful social media posts instantly but they can only do so when they have been told which words are considered abusive. That leaves many blind spots for abusive language that are yet to be flagged as abusive by non-human moderators—they need human moderators. Research shows that online abusers are evolving the language they use in order to avoid detection by moderation tools. That process is called "malign creativity"—a term I had not heard before—and it is a significant challenge for social media companies; they must overcome it in order to conduct effective content moderation at scale, but at this point it has not been properly dealt with.

Abusers craft false narratives and memes that are tailored to the female politicians they seek to harass and those messages are shrouded in coded language. A great example of that false sexualised narrative—though it is a terrible example—was made against Vice President of the United States Kamala Harris. It was reported that Kamala Harris slept her way to the top and was therefore unfit to hold office. Of course, not only is that not correct, but when are those statements ever made about the male gender? I congratulate Kamala Harris on doing a wonderful job. Coded language and dog whistles are subtle messages that are designed to be understood by a certain audience without being explicit, which makes detecting gendered and sexualised disinformation on social media particularly difficult without high levels of investment in detection technology.

That is why the report recommends that social media platforms update their content moderation tools to pick up new and emerging narratives that demean the world's most powerful women. It must be done in coordination with the women themselves and it must be done with campaign and marketing teams as well. Platforms must allow women to submit incident reports that cover multiple individual posts, rather than forcing them to report each piece of abusive content one at a time, which is laborious and upsetting and creates barriers against reporting. But the buck stops with the social media sites first. When they fail or when problems fall through the cracks, governments are obliged to step in. That is why I urge the Attorney General to work with his State and Federal counterparts to reform the legislative frameworks that deal with online harassment and violence against all girls and young women, otherwise it will continue and it will get worse.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (13:08): I move:

That the motion be amended by leaving out paragraphs (2) and (3) with a view to inserting instead:

- (2) Commends the Commonwealth eSafety Commissioner for dealing with online harassment and violence against all girls and young women.

I thank the member for Wallsend for bringing this important issue to the House. Regulating the online space is ultimately the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government, with the New South Wales Government taking

on a more consultative role. That recognises the fact that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a significant increase in internet usage globally, as the world has turned to the internet for work, education and social activities. Online abuse targeting women and girls can take many forms, from physical threats and sexual harassment to displaying unsolicited offensive or sexually explicit material.

The 2020 report *Free To Be Online?* published by Plan International, a non-government organisation which supports girls' rights, reported that 58 per cent of girls surveyed in 22 countries reported experiencing some form of online harassment on social media platforms. Of those who had been harassed online, 47 per cent had been threatened with physical or sexual violence. Online abuse can have serious consequences for women, including higher levels of anxiety, stress and depression. Online abuse can impact women in their own homes, workplaces or schools 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There can be no break from it.

The work that I was involved in through the inquiry into the prevention of youth suicide stressed to me that this is such an important issue that needs to be addressed. It is important that its targets know where to turn. It is important they know that the Office of the eSafety Commissioner is the Australian Government agency responsible for keeping Australian citizens safe online. The Commonwealth eSafety Commissioner was created by and operates under the Commonwealth Enhancing Online Safety Act 2015. In April 2020 the Commonwealth eSafety Commissioner reported that higher use of the internet during the COVID-19 crisis had been accompanied by a 40 per cent spike in reports to the commissioner across its reporting areas, as Australia transitioned into working and studying from home.

Under the Commonwealth Enhancing Online Safety Act 2015, the Commonwealth eSafety Commissioner oversees a regulatory framework to address the take-down of serious cyberbullying material targeting Australian children. The Commonwealth eSafety Commissioner may investigate complaints relating to material which any ordinary, reasonable person would conclude is likely to have been intended to have an effect on a particular Australian child, and which would likely have the effect of seriously threatening, intimidating, harassing or humiliating that child. If satisfied that a complaint has been made out, the Commonwealth eSafety Commissioner may issue social media services with notices to remove such cyberbullying material. Once a request or notice has been issued by the Commonwealth eSafety Commissioner, social media services have 48 hours to remove child cyberbullying material. Failure to comply attracts a civil penalty of up to 100 penalty units. The Commonwealth eSafety Commissioner can also issue removal notices to the end user who posted the cyberbullying material.

The commissioner does not currently have the legislative power to remove abusive or threatening material directed towards an adult; however, the Commonwealth Government is currently undertaking public consultation on an exposure draft of a new online safety Act, which includes an adult cyber abuse scheme. Under the proposed scheme the Commonwealth eSafety Commissioner would be able to investigate complaints of cyberbullying against adults, and issue removal notices to service providers and end users where satisfied that a complaint has been made out. Under both Commonwealth and New South Wales laws, serious cyberbullying of an adult can also constitute a criminal offence. Under the Commonwealth Criminal Code Act 1995 it is a criminal offence to use a carriage service to menace, harass or cause offence. The offence is punishable by up to three years' imprisonment and has been used to prosecute serious cyber abuse of adults.

In New South Wales it is an offence under section 13 of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 to stalk or intimidate a person with the intention of causing them to fear physical or mental harm, punishable by up to five years' imprisonment, 50 penalty units or both. The definition of "stalking" includes contacting or approaching a person via the internet or other technologically assisted means. The definition of "intimidation" includes cyberbullying. While the offence is contained in the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act, it is an offence of general application and does not need to occur in a domestic violence context.

Having an image posted online without their consent can leave people feeling invaded and violated—more so if it is an intimate image. A young person in particular could feel victimised and not know where to turn. It is important they know that the Commonwealth eSafety Commissioner's current functions include administering a civil penalties scheme to assist with the removal of intimate images or videos of both adults and children from online platforms. The commissioner has powers to investigate complaints relating to intimate images and to issue removal notices to service providers and end users, requiring them to take all reasonable steps to remove said images. Posting an intimate image without consent and failure to comply with a removal notice both attract a civil penalty of up to 500 penalty units. According to a 2019 speech by the Commonwealth eSafety Commissioner, her office has been successful in having image-based abuse material removed from online platforms in over 80 per cent of cases.

Under the Crimes Act 1900 it is an offence to record, distribute, or threaten to record or distribute an intimate image without consent, punishable by imprisonment for up to three years, 100 penalty units or both. The Commonwealth regulatory regime for online safety and both Commonwealth and New South Wales criminal

offences capture a wide range of online harassment that requires regulatory or criminal justice intervention. In December 2020 the New South Wales Government and the Commonwealth eSafety Commissioner jointly launched a new campaign to crack down on image-based abuse by providing advice and support to people who have had intimate digital content shared without their consent.

Reports of image-based abuse to the Commonwealth eSafety Commissioner increased by 130 per cent between April and December 2020 when compared to the same period a year earlier. In a joint media statement released by the New South Wales Government and the Commonwealth eSafety Commissioner it was reported that women aged 18 to 24 are among those most at risk, but image-based abuse can happen to anyone, regardless of age, sexual orientation, race, religion or socio-economic status. Anyone experiencing abuse can report it to esafety.gov.au or call 1800RESPECT, which is 1800 737 732, for 24/7 support and referrals. Please know that help is available.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): It being 1.15 p.m., debate is interrupted.

Ms Jenny Leong: I seek the leave of the House to permit the motion, which is due to lapse under Standing Order 105 on 19 February 2021, to not lapse so that it may be considered on the next sitting day that general business is considered. Given that the Government has moved to amend the motion, I would assume the Government is supportive of the motion. The amendment sounded quite strong. Given that there are a number of MPs, particularly women, who would like to make a contribution to the debate around the idea of online intimidation of women and girls, I seek the leave of the House to allow the motion to continue for debate so that people are able to make a contribution. Recognising that the purpose of the motion is about highlighting the fact that women and girls are not feeling safe in online spaces, I hope that we would give the space for women MPs in this place to express their views. I request that debate on the motion continue on private members' day, recognising that the Government is supportive of its own amendment. It has just moved an amendment to the motion. The amendment will never be voted on if we are not allowed to continue debate.

Leave granted.

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

Members

MEMBER FOR SWANSEA

MEMBER FOR WYONG

MEMBER FOR MULGOA

The SPEAKER: I wish a happy birthday to the member for Swansea, the member for Wyong and the member for Mulgoa, all of whom celebrate their birthdays during the next two weeks.

Announcements

PARLIAMENTARY WORKPLACE POLICIES

The SPEAKER: The President and I, and the department heads of the Parliament—the Clerks and the CEO of the Department of Parliamentary Services—all support a safe, respectful and secure working environment. For the benefit of members and staff, information will be circulated shortly confirming the relevant processes and policies that are currently in place.

Members

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: On behalf of Ms Gladys Berejiklian: I advise the House that in the absence of the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education:

- (1) The Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade will answer questions today in relation to skills and tertiary education.
- (2) The Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation will answer questions today in relation to sport, multiculturalism, seniors and veterans.

Question Time

TAFE NSW

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:19): My question is directed to the Premier. Why is the Premier sacking almost 700 staff from TAFE NSW in the middle of a recession and a skills crisis?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:20): I do not think it will surprise anybody when I say that the alleged facts outlined by the Leader of the Opposition are wrong. The best advice I have received is, in fact, that there are some positive changes happening in the organisation across the State.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Before I come to that I make the following observations. During the pandemic the New South Wales Government offered 100,000 fee-free courses for people to take up whilst the State was asking people to stay home. I am pleased to say that tens of thousands of people who took up that opportunity now have gainful employment. I commend the Treasurer and all my colleagues for helping deliver an unemployment drop of 4 per cent in New South Wales. That figure came out today. Tasmania is the only State that has lower unemployment than New South Wales. We are down to 6 per cent, which is 0.4 per cent lower than the national average. It is interesting to see that States like Queensland, Western Australia and Victoria, all of which have imposed various lockdowns on their communities, have higher unemployment rates than New South Wales.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. I did not ask what other States are doing. I asked why this Government is cutting 700 jobs from TAFE in the middle of a recession and a skills crisis.

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that the Premier has directly answered the question.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: This is very important because jobs and skills matter to the people of this State. If it was left to those opposite, they would not want any organisation to modernise or become more relevant to its students. In some areas of TAFE and vocational education and training we are hiring more people.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: When it comes to this specific—I am being entirely relevant.

Mr Jihad Dib: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. We have made a concerted effort to make the questions very direct.

The SPEAKER: I have indicated that the Premier has answered the question. She can now continue as she wishes.

Mr Jihad Dib: The question was: Why?

The SPEAKER: The member will resume his seat.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I understand that in this specific restructure and change process—mind you, we are increasing staff in some parts of TAFE—less than 50 people across the State will be directly impacted. None of them are in frontline teaching positions.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The numbers we have put to the Premier today are taken from the Government's own document.

The SPEAKER: I have ruled on that point of order. I will not rule again. The member will resume her seat.

Ms Jodi McKay: This is the Premier's internal document.

The SPEAKER: The member's microphone is off. The member will resume her seat.

Mr Andrew Constance: Her mic is always off.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Exactly! The Opposition tried this stunt in scaring everybody before the last election. It did not work. Members in the upstairs gallery should be careful. We can hear every word they say, including about the Leader of the Opposition. We can hear every single word they are saying to each other. Yesterday we heard directly comments made by an Opposition member in the upstairs gallery about the Leader of the Opposition, so they should be careful.

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: The Premier is directly engaging with members in the upper gallery. She should direct her comments through the chair.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. The Premier will direct her comments through me.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I will; I was just making an observation. As I said, the Government is committed to tertiary and further education. It took a Liberal-Nationals Government to introduce 20 new courses in our high schools next year, where students can make sure—

Mr Jihad Dib: And you've sacked 5,500 staff.

The SPEAKER: The member for Lakemba will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Your scare campaigns go nowhere; your leadership goes nowhere; nobody knows who you are.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order: Today and yesterday it has been hard to hear Ministers give answers because of the continued ruckus in the upper gallery. I ask that disorderly members are called to order.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. I once again ask members seated in the upper gallery—as I have had to do every day this week—to come to order. Members are seated there in unusual circumstances. When those arrangements were put in place I asked members specifically to moderate their behaviour. Members seated in the upper gallery have the right to take a point of order by standing in the usual way and seeking the call. I will then direct them to come downstairs onto the floor of the Chamber. I remind members seated in the upper gallery that what they say carries more than they might realise and it is difficult to hear with the amount of noise they are making.

Mr Ryan Park: To the point of order: As you know, we have repeatedly asked—and maybe this is an opportunity to update the House—why we cannot have more people in the Chamber under the two square metre rule.

The SPEAKER: As the member for Keira knows, those matters can be discussed outside the Chamber, and I am happy to talk to him about it outside this Chamber, as we have been doing. I do not intend to engage in a dialogue about that now.

Ms Jenny Leong: To the point of order: I am aware that those chats that happen behind the scenes between certain members might not involve all representatives. It would be good if crossbench members could be involved as well.

The SPEAKER: The member for Newtown is free to come and speak with me. I did not initiate that conversation but I am happy to respond to questions when they asked, which was the nature of the conversation.

WORKING PARENTS EMPLOYMENT

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (14:27): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Government is protecting and creating jobs for working parents?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:27): I thank the member for Camden for his question and for his great work in his local community, where working families are growing in number and the population is increasing substantially. On Monday I was pleased to be in his community at Camden Public School with the education Minister to make an important announcement. Whilst New South Wales is doing as well as it can to create and keep jobs during the pandemic, we know that the pandemic has hit women and working families hardest when it comes to reduced hours because many of them rely on casual hours and part-time work. We know that those hours have been disrupted during the pandemic. The Government is on a continued mission to not only create but also protect and secure jobs. That is why on Monday our announcement at Camden Public School ticked all those boxes to ensure the delivery of 47 more before- and after-school care hubs in our school system to ensure that working families, especially families that may be more stretched in terms of employment, have that time and the ability to drop their children off before and after school hours.

By the end of June this year there will be an extra 47 of those hubs throughout the school network. I am pleased to say that at Camden Public School I was able to see firsthand its brand-new hub—it is one of the 47—and speak to some of the students who use it. They ranged from all years of the primary school. Some attend one day a week and others three afternoons—each family has different challenges to meet that work-life balance. It was pleasing to hear from the children about their positive experiences. Those 47 hubs will occur across the breadth of the State. Included in that 47 alongside Camden Public School are Austral Public School, Newington Public School in Auburn, The Oaks Public School in Wollondilly, Madang Avenue Public School in Londonderry, Kariong Public School in Gosford and schools in Bathurst, Dubbo and Orange. That is on top of the existing out-of-school-hours services that exist on our school sites. They are purpose-built hubs to ensure flexibility for parents and a capacity to expand with school communities.

Ms Liesl Tesch: You did not ask local people if they wanted the contracts.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am not sure why the member for Gosford is complaining. She is getting a brand-new hub at Kariong Public School so I am not sure why she is upset. As a government we must think outside the box. It is not just about focusing on skills and re-skilling people into new jobs, or about our infrastructure pipeline, which is increasing the number of people employed; it is not just about our planning and acceleration program to make sure that projects come to life sooner, or our digital program, which is making life easier for citizens by creating jobs. It is about thinking about solutions that help working families, particularly women who may have been adversely affected by the pandemic.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members seated in the upper gallery will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As I said, by the end of June there will be 47 new hubs that will care for around 2,400 students, which is a big task but an important one. We must also ensure that before- and after-school care is convenient, accessible and affordable, and that parents have confidence in the facilities that their children are attending. I vouch for the one I saw at Camden Public School. If that is the prototype of all the other hubs that are being rolled out, parents should feel extremely comfortable with the facilities available and the flexibility they offer.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In addition to before- and after-school care—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Thank you, it is hard to hear over her. [*Extension of time*]

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As I was saying, in addition to the before- and after-school care hubs that are being delivered, I was pleased to announce the extension of our free preschool program, in which we are offering 15 hours of free preschool a week for working families. That will help take cost-of-living pressures off them during what has been a difficult time. We are providing an extra \$120 million to extend the program for at least another year. We know that we are helping the parents of more than 44,000 preschoolers by providing those 15 hours free a week and we know the difference it will make. As my colleagues and I travel the State—and I am sure all members receive similar feedback from their constituents—I know that everybody is pleased to have that one bit of stress release, given the pressures that are on working families at the moment.

I also highlight the \$10 million Return to Work Program for women that was announced, which involves providing women with grants of up to \$5,000. This is to help them. This was an announcement made in our budget, so I thank the Treasurer. It supports women in education and training, for materials for courses and for other equipment to support them into the workforce. We know that all the things the Government is doing is having a positive effect. I do not want to take away from the challenges and stress that many working families are feeling across the State at this time. But I will say that, in addition to the support we are giving working families, the support that we are giving women in particular to get back into the workforce is having a positive impact, because I was delighted to see that New South Wales unemployment figures have dropped by 0.4 per cent since the last measure. This is a positive move for New South Wales. We are now 0.4 per cent— [*Time expired.*]

The SPEAKER: The member for Canterbury and the member for Prospect will come to order.

PUBLIC SECTOR JOBS

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (14:35): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. He promised that there would be no public service job cuts in rural and regional New South Wales. How does the Deputy Premier explain today's decision to cut up to 470 TAFE jobs in rural and regional communities?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:35): I thank the member for Lakemba, a member I respect in this House. Let us go back through the whole process of what has occurred at TAFE. In 2016 TAFE made the decision that it would go from 10 institutes to the One TAFE model, where we were able to offer quality training right across the State in regional, rural and metropolitan areas. We decentralised digital TAFE out of Ultimo and put it out to Armidale. Why? Because we wanted to break down geography and distance. If digital TAFE could not do that through its digital headquarters, how could we encourage people to look at a digital transition and transformation when it came to TAFE? Over that period, we have seen investment in new models of learning through the Connected Learning Centres and investment in TAFE working with businesses and industry, and free apprenticeships and traineeships at the same time.

We offered free training for those who live in social housing. We offered training for a raft of people in our community so that they will get the skillset to get them out of their position and be trained for the jobs of the

future. We said at the time that this journey was going to take a number of years. It was not going to be this shock-and-awe approach in turning 10 institutes into one. Why are we doing that? The reality is that there is duplication of back-office management and mid-level office positions. We saw a duplication in accounts, marketing and administration departments.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: The question was specifically about the fact that the Deputy Premier said there would be no job cuts in regional and rural communities. There are 470.

The SPEAKER: The Premier is being relevant.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I am disputing the number, for starters.

Mr Jihad Dib: It has come from your own document.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lakemba will resume his seat. I call the member for Lakemba to order for the first time.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I am disputing those numbers because we are actually up for consultation now. We are engaging with employees and the unions.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The reality is this: There has been plenty of research done on TAFE. For a TAFE classroom to open its doors without a teacher or a student in it, somewhere between 45 per cent and 55 per cent of that cost is already part of the overheads of TAFE. We cannot sustain that ongoing cost forever, so we decided to go from 10 institutes to the One TAFE model, which was absolutely accepted by all. Why? Firstly, because it is a new competitive environment. Secondly, it is a demand-driven model. The reason TAFE cannot compete with private registered training organisations is because of the old dinosaur model not being flexible. In order to be able to meet students' and industry needs, we had to recreate TAFE. The TAFE model going forward, and where I will answer the member's question in relation to jobs is of course there will be—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129. The Deputy Premier may remember he made this commitment about rural and regional New South Wales jobs.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Yes, I am getting to that.

Ms Jodi McKay: It would be good if he could get to that because we are talking about up to 470 jobs in rural and regional New South Wales that are being lost, in direct contradiction of what he promised.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier has indicated he is heading in that direction. The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Again, I dismiss those numbers. We are up for consultation. Not a person in this place could argue that we need more middle management and back-office positions. We are cutting the overhead costs so that we can invest in more teachers, which gives us more opportunities in the bush.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: Student support office staff are not "back office". They are the ones who help students.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member for Lakemba will resume his seat. I call the member for Lakemba to order for the second time. I call the member for Lakemba to order for the third time.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We know there has been duplication. It was originally part of the model. There was duplication, to a One TAFE model, where all our resources were going to students and into teachers, but offering more. It is a demand-driven model. The more students you have, the more teachers you will hire. Our model is to make TAFE competitive against those private providers. It is able to offer flexibility and meets needs of industry and students. Right across the State we are seeing investment in new campuses. I remind the House that those opposite stood in front of Kingswood, the Nepean campus, and said that they were closing it, but behind them there were cranes building the new Kingswood campus. Again, members should not always believe what the Labor Party says. It will spruik the message on behalf of unions, but we on this side are focused on teachers and students. The reforms are all about more opportunity for students. It is about outcomes—not just union jobs.

REGIONAL ROADS AND JOBS GROWTH

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (14:40): My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is investing in roads and jobs in the regions?

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (14:41): I thank the member for Clarence for his question. You can go anywhere in regional New South Wales at the moment and see hi-vis and hard hats. You will see the men and women out there on the ground who are building the infrastructure projects that are making lives better for people living in the regions. These projects are bringing businesses closer to our customers. They are also making freight more efficient. We are building new bridges that are taking hours off journeys. We are allowing our farmers to get stock to the saleyards and ensuring the school bus gets back home safely. We have spent years mopping up Labor's neglect of the regions. That is why we are accelerating our investment into the road and rail network across this State. We are ensuring that it will be there to serve generations to come.

I urge members to look at the duplication of the Pacific Highway. That was one of the most important roads in our State's history. It is a 650-kilometre journey. The project cost around \$15 billion, but it also created around 100,000 jobs. We also have the Coffs Harbour Bypass, which will make that trip on the North Coast even better. It will create thousands of jobs too. In the same way we have transformed journeys on the North Coast, we are transforming them on the South Coast with the upgrade of the Princes Highway. We have the Albion Park Rail Bypass, which will create another 2,800 jobs, the Berry to Bomaderry upgrade with another 200 jobs and the Nowra Bridge with another 200 jobs. If you look at our Fixing Local Roads program, we have \$250 million worth of projects underway right now. That is hundreds of small projects that are making a big difference in regional communities and creating more than 2,000 jobs.

Councils are telling us how valuable the Fixing Local Roads Program is. Weddin Shire Council wrote to me and said that the \$4.6 million it has received for three local roads will turbocharge the local economy, generating jobs and encouraging spending. Bourke Shire received \$4.6 million to seal Coronga Peak Road at Byrock. The council says this project was a distant dream before this funding. Now it is scheduled to start next month. Inverell Shire says these projects will be a huge boost for local contractors. Of the 250 Fixing Local Roads projects in round one, more than 40 of them are already finished and benefitting locals. So much good news is going around. That is why it is a bit disappointing that Facebook has decided to block Australian users from sharing or reading news. But I am a helpful guy, so I thought I would do a little bit of work this week and share some of the headlines that you may have missed. Facebook might have blocked them, but I will unblock and share them.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. Three minutes 20 seconds in, and I think even the Speaker would see that this is not generally relevant.

The SPEAKER: The Minister has been overwhelmingly relevant. Consistent with previous rulings, I will allow slight digression.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I am talking about headlines that have good news. One from *Mirage News* says, "More than 100,000 seniors travel cards rolled out in regions". The Treasurer has given that post a like on Facebook. I know that he cannot get enough of the regional seniors travel card. A headline from the *South Coast Register* says, "Shoalhaven City Council gets \$2.9 million to fix local bridges"—a great yarn on our Fixing Country Bridges program, which is creating over 2,000 jobs. One of my favourites comes from *The Daily Telegraph*. It says, "One last chance: Labor MPs eye McKay's leadership" I also have one from *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I will give the member for Lakemba the opportunity to take a point of order. However, I remind him that he is on three calls to order, so he had better make it a good one.

Mr Jihad Dib: The *Mirage Times* and the *South Coast Register* are not at all relevant to the question, which was about regional roads.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will continue. He has been overwhelmingly relevant.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I do not know how that headline ended up in my notes but I apologise. Another headline reads, "\$15 million in upgrades for Bogan Gate, Trundle freight roads". [*Extension of time*]

That came from the *Parkes Champion-Post*. Another one from *The Sydney Morning Herald* says, "Labor's nervous troops fear an election under Jodi McKay". I know they all have a lot of shares on level 10 and I know the member for Strathfield had an emoji that was a pretty good frowning face.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. For one, the Minister should resume his seat when a point of order is taken. Members were removed from this Chamber on our side yesterday because of unruly behaviour.

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

Mr Ryan Park: There are two sides to this Chamber.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The member for Keira's emoji would be the angry face if he was liking anything.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: It is not only a long-established practice, but is also in the standing orders that when a member rises to take a point of order and the Speaker calls that member, whoever is speaking sits down. The Minister has transgressed that.

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that the Minister did sit down. The Minister will continue.

Ms Jenny Leong: Point of order: Will the Speaker ask the police Minister to either repeat on the record the comments that he just yelled out or alternatively to withdraw them?

The SPEAKER: I did not hear them, but if the member for Newtown wants to make a personal explanation later then I will give her that opportunity.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Sky News reports, "Labor now 'has to get rid' of Jodi McKay and her 'logical replacement' is Chris Minns". I note that the member for Kogarah has liked that one as well.

Ms Liesl Tesch: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. There have been repeated points of order. I will hear the point of order from the member for Gosford, but not if it is simply to run down the time on the clock.

Ms Liesl Tesch: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This is not relevant at all to regional roads.

The SPEAKER: I will hear further from the Minister.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: As I said, those opposite have been getting plenty of views right across New South Wales this week. I assure the House that we will continue to focus the headlines on the things that matter to people in New South Wales. The Labor Party's leadership might be on its last legs, but the Government is getting stronger and will continue to deliver for the people of New South Wales.

PUBLIC SECTOR JOBS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (14:48): My question is directed to the Treasurer. Given that he has cut 700 staff from TAFE and redundancies are taking place in other departments, how many jobs is the Government cutting across New South Wales in other departments and agencies?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:49): If the member for Fairfield actually knew what he was talking about then he would know that TAFE jobs have increased over the past few years under our Government. When we look at the increase in the recurrent expenditure on TAFE, it is up 5.7 per cent over the past 12 months—close to \$2 billion recurrent expenditure. I always remember the \$1.967 billion in recurrent expenditure for TAFE. It reminds me of the great debate two days before the last election campaign when the member for Maroubra, who for some reason has been here all week, thought he would increase the TAFE budget by \$3 billion. He would have sent the State broke with his \$3 billion investment in TAFE.

Mr Michael Daley: Except that it is the subsidy government does give TAFE.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The member for Maroubra has finally got there, two years later. He has finally got the explanation out for his \$60 million increase election commitment, which he inflated to \$3 billion. Do you know what happened?

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: My point of order relates to Rozzoli and Murray regarding directing statements through the Chair. The Treasurer is directly quarrelsome over the table. I ask that he direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: To the point of order: Rozzoli was wrong. When I was reading that ruling from Rozzoli many years ago, I often waited for the day when an inspired Speaker by the name of O'Dea would come into this place and overrule it and set a new course to ensure that this place has strong and robust debate. I ask you to rule on the point of order, Mr Speaker, and set a new precedent.

The SPEAKER: I rule that Speaker Rozzoli was correct, but that the Treasurer is not being unnecessarily quarrelsome at this stage.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: You got it half-right, Mr Speaker. To the question: When it comes to investment in TAFE—

Ms Jodi McKay: It's not investment in TAFE; it's how many jobs you're cutting.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The Leader of the Opposition is obviously focused on her job at the moment.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This is not Young Liberal politics. The question is how many jobs the Government is cutting across New South Wales in other departments and agencies. They are people's jobs. I ask the Treasurer to stop making fun of them and answer the question.

The SPEAKER: I will hear further from the Treasurer, but I ask him to return to the leave of the question.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I could not be more relevant. Since 2016 we have increased jobs in the TAFE sector. The recurrent budget intake has increased by 5.7 per cent to an investment of \$1.967 billion. If members look at every single measure right across the public service, from nurses—

Mr Brad Hazzard: Seven hundred and fifty new paramedics, 8,300 new medical staff.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Seven hundred and fifty new paramedics, and where was Gerard Hayes?

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Where was Gerard Hayes when we announced the paramedics?

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: He was standing at the press conference with us whilst walking the corridors this week looking for a new leader. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services knows all too well that when it comes to frontline police officers, there has never been more investment than the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government has made. The same is true for teachers. We were the first State to sign up to the Gonski reforms. We have invested more than ever before.

The SPEAKER: The member for Lakemba is on his last warning.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Looking across the board and not just in the public sector, if members compare our record when it comes to unemployment with those opposite, we have seen record investment in jobs right across the State. Under Labor, 68 of 70 consecutive months saw unemployment above the national average. Leading into the pandemic under the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government, New South Wales had 75 consecutive months at or below the national average for unemployment. Those opposite talk about jobs and we deliver them.

RURAL AND REGIONAL JOBS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (14:54): I address my question to the Minister for Local Government. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is creating jobs across rural and regional New South Wales in partnership with our local government sector?

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (14:54): I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her question and her interest in local government. A couple of weeks ago I was with her in Port Macquarie and her council when she advocated for some challenging coastal issues. It is important for all members to develop strong partnerships and relationships with their local council, even though it may be difficult at times to do so.

Mr Michael Daley: Can you split up one of mine up, please?

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: You can talk to me later about that; other members talk to me. I encourage members, like the member for Port Macquarie, to develop good relationships with their councils. The Treasurer has been a hero during the pandemic for the local government sector. Opposition members in the gallery do not care about local government but I do. During the pandemic, with the Treasurer's agreement, we provided an economic job stimulus for the local government sector, part of which was a Job Retention Allowance of \$115 million as a fortnightly wage of \$1,500 for the more than 50,000 local government workers, who were not part of JobKeeper. We worked very hard on that package because we wanted to retain workers in local government. More than 50,000 people work in the local government sector. We wanted to retain those people in the local government sector during the pandemic when the swimming pools and libraries closed, so we retrained and upskilled them. Before the pandemic we started the Local Government Skills Package and it worked brilliantly: More than 4,000 people took up retraining and upskilling options in the local government sector.

I thank the Treasurer for continuing to support that program. I have advocated for more money to go into local government.

Mr Dominic Perrottet: Here we go. That's what it was all about.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: It's all right; I'm not asking him for more money. We found additional money was in the local government sector, with the Office of Local Government, so we can fund subsidised training places. I will tell the House some of the councils that have taken up this opportunity because it should be an interest to all members about how many of our local government employees are being reskilled and trained under this program, funded by the Treasurer and me. In the fantastic Bega Valley Shire Council something like 13 employees received Project Management certificates and 16 received certificates in Waste Management. At the Northern Beaches Council, 63 employees went through a certificate IV in Workplace Health and Safety and 11 employees obtained a certificate I in Information Technology and Digital.

One hundred employees of the Port Macquarie Council, which has a great relationship with the member for Port Macquarie, are now engaged in the program with 26 currently enrolled in Water Operations III course, 20 soon to begin their certificate IV in Leadership and Management—a few of those opposite could take that course—10 approved to begin training in Project Management, and 70 who want to learn more in Digital Literacy. Those are the kinds of opportunities we are giving to our local government employees. If an employee comes in on a waste management tier, they no longer have to stay there as a waste collector; they can work their way up through the organisation. Local government is a fantastic organisation to be a part of, and retrain and reskill for the future. From MidCoast Council, 32 council team leaders received their certificate IV in Civil Construction Supervision.

The Government is continuing to work with local government. I encourage all members to do that and understand the challenges they face on a daily basis. I know it is very popular to criticise your local council; we all do it from time to time—but I do not. Our community wants us to work together. Whether we are a different party—a Federal Labor member; or for the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services and member for Kiama and I, a Green mayor—it does not matter to the community. [*Extension of time*]

Members should not start a war with their council as it is not in their best interests. I ask members to avail themselves of more skills and training. I have heard the member for Wollongong does not really need any more training but it is my personal opinion that he is ready for a big promotion. I have seen him in action. He should move to the front bench. The member for Keira has been a member for a long time and is a great fellow—maybe a bit of training in spelling or maths, was it? I cannot remember, maybe a little bit. He would be good on the front bench. The member for Fairfield does not need anything else; he should be back on that front bench. I have known the member for Lakemba for a long time. He was a fantastic teacher and principal and he did not deserve that demotion. He should be on the front bench where he belongs. All the Leader of the Opposition needs are simple lessons in letter writing.

FRONTLINE HEALTH WORKERS

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (15:00): My question is directed to the Premier. The Government is spending half a million dollars hiring two new media directors. How does the Premier explain that to Tina, a cleaner at Westmead Hospital who is now \$25 a week worse off, and Grant, a radiographer at Bega who is \$58 a week worse off because of her pay cuts to our frontline health workers?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (15:01): I state at the outset that during the pandemic our Government hired in excess of 1,000 new cleaners. We have outlined the hiring of 1,000 Service NSW staff. Our Government is creating jobs for people who previously did not have job opportunities. Our Government has provided working families who want to protect their jobs or get jobs a stimulus in excess of \$29 billion. There is no doubt that challenges have faced New South Wales in the past 18 months and that pressure has been put on our budget. There is also no doubt the Government has sought advice from its department and experts outside our department, and the result is clear: New South Wales, apart from Tasmania, has the lowest unemployment rate in the nation.

We are now supporting workers more than the Opposition has ever supported them before because we are the party of the workers. We are the party that is employing more people. We are employing working families. We are making sure people get ahead. Those opposite can talk all they want. Even their union bosses have given up on them. Look at what Gerard Hayes said in the last few minutes, unless they have missed it. Even the trade union movement knows that when it comes to jobs, we on this side of the House are doing what we need to do. We are providing opportunities. We are employing more people and we are making sure that anyone in New South Wales who wants to get ahead can get ahead. Through Service NSW we also have innumerate numbers of cost-of-living measures to support our working families. We are not only keeping and creating jobs but also

making life easier for working families. As I said, when it comes to workers, the Liberals and Nats are the parties for the workers.

JOBS CREATION

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (15:03): My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on job creation in New South Wales?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (15:03): I thank the member for Mulgoa for her question and welcome the numbers that are out today. The unemployment rate in New South Wales is down to 6 per cent.

Ms Jodi McKay: What is happening with youth unemployment?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I will get to youth unemployment. The Leader of the Opposition has just asked, "What is happening with youth unemployment?" Well, youth unemployment is now at 13.1 per cent—the lowest amongst all the States. There you go; that is well below the national average of 14.4 per cent. Sorry, hot off the press: Union boss Gerard Hayes slams Labor leader Jodi McKay. That is just in. I do not know if it is relevant because I have not read it, but it may well be. It has been handed to me by the health Minister.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Treasurer, I will give you a chance to read it when you resume your seat. What is the member's point of order?

Mr Michael Daley: I have two points of order. I take a point of order under Standing Order 129 and a point of order under Standing Order 73. There are not enough debates in this place anymore; I cannot wait for the Treasurer to move a substantive motion.

The SPEAKER: There has been no breach of Standing Order 73.

Mr Michael Daley: Well, then I will be back here in 15 seconds.

The SPEAKER: In terms of irrelevancy, I will wait to hear what the Treasurer says to link his answer to the question to make it relevant.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Jodi McKay is saying that she had support—I am trying to work out the link. It says that she had support for her job, but the union boss and those workers whom he represents are not offering their blind loyalty and they "expect outcomes". That contradicted the claim in saying that it was—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129. Youth unemployment is actually at 14.7 per cent, which means that an extra 25,000 young people do not have a job.

The SPEAKER: I thank the Leader of the Opposition. That is an argument that can be had outside.

Ms Jodi McKay: The Treasurer's figures are actually wrong. There are 100,000 young people without a job.

The SPEAKER: I have heard enough. The Clerk will stop the clock. The Treasurer may now continue.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: We have the lowest youth unemployment rate in the nation. The unemployment rate in New South Wales is at 6 per cent, which is the lowest of any mainland State. For 68 of 70 months under Labor, the unemployment rate was above the national average. Leading into the pandemic, we had an unemployment rate in New South Wales that was at or below the national average for 75 consecutive months.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: The Treasurer does not even know the youth unemployment rate.

The SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat.

Ms Jodi McKay: It is the lowest since 2015.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: She just said the youth unemployment rate is the lowest.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: That is why the policies of the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government are driving jobs growth right across the State. An important aspect of that has been the balance between the health response and the economic response as we opened up the New South Wales economy. Members may have seen this week that confidence numbers in New South Wales remain incredibly strong. The consumer sentiment index

climbed 3.5 per cent up to 111.7 points—that is 20 points up on the same time last year. Once again that is the biggest increase of any State in the nation. That is important because by having policies that drive confidence, both for consumers and importantly for business, it drives investment and employment off the back of it. Earlier this week the transport Minister outlined significant jobs growth that has occurred off the back of infrastructure investment in this State, particularly from road and rail projects. He pointed out that the M8 tunnel will produce 10,000 new jobs. The Western Sydney Stadium, which was opposed by members opposite, will generate 1,200 jobs. We also talked about health infrastructure this week. The Westmead redevelopment will create 850 jobs. The Northern Beaches Hospital will create 700 jobs. NorthConnex will create 8,000—

Ms Jodi McKay: Talk about female unemployment.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The Premier has covered that. [*Extension of time*]

Well, there is one female job that we are interested in that may not be around for too much longer.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: Again, 128,000 women in the State are without a job and we have a Treasurer who simply does not care. He stands up here and he thinks that he can make a joke about it. Care about people, Dom.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition's microphone has been turned off. The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: There are 8,000 jobs under NorthConnex. That is one of the best road projects in the history of the State with over 8,700 jobs. The Newcastle Light Rail, which is loved by the member for Newcastle, will create 3,000 jobs. Not only are those projects creating great opportunities for the people of our State at the end of those projects, but their construction will also drive jobs growth. Sydney Metro West, WestConnex, Southwest Metro—there are jobs right across the board. That is a stark contrast to the cancellation culture that occurred during the Labor years in office despite its project announcements. There has never been a government in Australian history that has promised more and delivered less. The member for Maroubra has been here this week. He knows as the former finance Minister that Labor had averaging deficits of \$7.2 billion—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: I raise the point that there were 15 surpluses in 16 years. You are telling lies, Dom!

The SPEAKER: I place the member for Maroubra on three calls to order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Those were vanity surpluses. There was no infrastructure; there was an infrastructure backlog. Anyway, we know from Labor this week that its own team has been saying "Jodi hasn't got the depth or the intellect to be leader", "she isn't willing to do the heavy lifting" and "we've got to be ready to go; she is going to be finished."

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I am not saying that; you're saying it!

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will resume his seat. Does the member for Keira have a point of order?

Mr Ryan Park: I take a point of order under either Standing Order 129 or Standing Order 73. Which standing order would the Speaker like to choose? You know the standing orders. It is pretty clear what is going on.

The SPEAKER: The member will resume his seat.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I have never seen such treachery shown towards a leader in my entire time in this place. Look at those comments and at the 5 per cent.

[*Opposition members interjected.*]

No, we forgave John Barilaro. He is back and he is united, but you are not united over there. [*Time expired.*]

FOREIGN WORKERS QUARANTINE COSTS

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (15:11): I direct my question to the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales. Small and medium growers have indicated that the initial outlay to access worker schemes is too high when employers are required to pay \$3,000 for each worker to quarantine. Will there be a subsidy for quarantine costs for small and medium farming enterprises that are reliant on foreign workers through the Pacific Labour Scheme or Seasonal Worker Programme?

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (15:12): I thank the member for Orange for that sensible non-government question. As the member for Orange knows quite well, as do members on this side of the House, it is a reality that the agriculture industry is very heavily reliant—particularly the horticultural and meat-working sectors—on seasonal and overseas workers. Despite the fact that we would all love more Australians to be working in those areas in particular, sadly for a variety of reasons Australians have shown a reluctance to roll up their sleeves and do some of that hard yakka in those particular fields. That is why the COVID-19 pandemic has put considerable pressures and challenges at the feet of producers in the horticultural sector and also for abattoir operators.

But as the member for Orange identifies, even at the best of times those small operators in particular have difficulty finding a workforce. But when spasmodic and unpredictable State border closures interfere with the free movement of the workforce across State and Territory boundaries, combined with the necessary international border closures to stem the flow of COVID-19 and protect Australians' health, we can understand why that adds pressure. If I recall accurately, modelling was done last year that was predicated on a March 2021 opening of international borders. It said that Australian agriculture would need around 36,000 seasonal and overseas workers over the next 18 months. As we know, those international borders are not going to reopen. We are left with that as a deficit.

In New South Wales our share of the deficit is estimated at about 5,000 workers. In response to that, the State Government was very proactive. It launched the Help Harvest NSW online portal and over 46,000 individuals have accessed it, connecting people who want to do some seasonal or part-time work with producers who desperately need people to help them out. Late last year when the Commonwealth Government announced the reinstatement—

[Opposition members interjected.]

Look, I know you guys aren't interested in agriculture.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: You're not interested. We can't hear you. Speak louder!

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

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: Most people who are ignorant just shut up. They are not proud about it. They do not brandish their ignorance around the place.

The SPEAKER: That is enough, member for Canterbury.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: When the Commonwealth Government decided to reinstate the Pacific Labour Mobility Scheme and the other schemes, New South Wales was one of the first jurisdictions to sign up, thanks to the leadership of the Premier and Deputy Premier. Since that time we have approved more than 1,200 overseas seasonal workers to come into Australia. That is the most of any jurisdiction anywhere in Australia. We continue to work with industry to very quickly approve any further applications that come in. To the specific nature of the member's question about the cost of quarantine, that issue has certainly been raised with me, particularly by the smaller operators in the horticultural sector.

Unlike at abattoirs, the workers do not go to only one particular place. They might initially work at one property and then move to six or seven different properties. It is hard to amortise that cost across multiple producers when eventually someone has to singularly bear that cost. I can advise the House that the Government does not view the actions so far as a silver bullet. It will continue to work with industry and is considering a range of options to further support industry to ensure that those workers can come into this country and fill that void. I am happy to say that nothing is off the table.

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Maitland that she has been called to order three times.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: The Government will have more to say about this in due course.

JUSTICE INFRASTRUCTURE AND JOBS CREATION

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (15:16): My question is addressed to the Attorney General. Will the Attorney General update the House—by limerick or otherwise—on how the Government is creating jobs across the judicial system?

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (15:17): Certainly:

I thank the member for Wollondilly,
His questions are never too silly,
They're right on the mark,
For he's a bright spark,

He'd never go off willy-nilly.

No government is more committed than our Government to the creation of jobs in New South Wales, not just in transport, health, education, roads and every portfolio we can think of, but also in the justice portfolio. Those jobs stimulate economic growth, particularly in areas that have been affected by bushfire, floods, drought and the COVID-19 pandemic. They increase consumer spending, leading to more support for local small businesses, and they provide additional vocational and professional development opportunities, which can lead to greater job satisfaction. Our justice infrastructure projects are supporting jobs by investing in court upgrades and improvements across the State.

In the 2020-21 budget the Government announced over \$150 million in upgrades and maintenance to courts and other justice infrastructure to turbocharge the State's system into the digital age; an additional \$100 million over two years to improve courts, correctional and youth facilities and create jobs; and over \$54 million over three years to deliver a digital transformation for New South Wales courts. It has invested \$10.6 million to upgrade the Downing Centre housed in the old dame of Sydney retail, the Mark Foy's building. That is supporting jobs across a range of industries from plumbing to construction and well beyond. The heritage awnings of the building are getting a bit of a swoosh—

Mr Michael Daley: A what? Do that again.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: Swoosh! In the notorious bathrooms, there has been a rage against the latrine and they are being upgraded. There will be four more courtrooms, including fresh jury boxes. On the subject of juries:

Labor's caucus is just like a jury,
They're a bitter, divided potpourri,
Strathfield's on her way out,
Labor's in a deep rout,
Couldn't organise beer in a brewery.

The SPEAKER: Order! Attorney General, I could not hear that. It was important; I needed to hear it.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Ryan Park: I take a point of order under 129. Not only is that irrelevant, but it is also stupid and it is not funny.

The SPEAKER: Consistent with my earlier rulings, I will show a greater degree of latitude during the last question on a Thursday. Humour is in the eye of the beholder.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: This week I opened the new NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal facility at Parramatta. I thank the member for Parramatta for his staunch advocacy for the justice precinct at Parramatta. The new facility will quadruple the hearing capacity at Parramatta from five hearing days a week to 20 hearing days a week, with four hearing rooms and five conciliation rooms. Coronavirus has caused significant disruption for our local tradies and local economies, particularly in regional New South Wales. We had to get the money out the door and pumping in there fast. Dozens and dozens of communities benefited from an injection of income for tradies and suppliers. We beautified and improved courts across the State. That could not have been done without the Deputy Premier and his staunch advocacy for regional and rural New South Wales, so let me say:

Me and my mate Barilaro,
Who hails from down there in Monaro,
We saw a great need,
Then with diligent speed,
Boosted jobs for today and tomorrow.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. There is a point of order from the Cooper gallery. While we are waiting for the member for Maitland to come down and take her point of order, I can state with some authority that:

My surname is O'Dea
and National Limerick Day
Is 12 May.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. I get the thing about the last question on a Thursday, but it is supposed to be funny. This is not relevant and it is not funny.

The SPEAKER: The Attorney General will continue.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: There are examples right across New South Wales. Bathurst boasts one of our most impressive and beautiful courthouses. The member for Bathurst is concerned about preserving its important heritage:

Now, Bathurst's MP is no fool,
His courthouse, it stands like a jewel,
Until down on his head,
A stone block did embed,
We now have to repair old Paul Toole.

I can assure the House that did not happen, but it is a 140-year-old building. What it demonstrates is just how important the investment into sandstone, copper, lead work and wood is for stonemasons and other heritage restoration specialists. At Dubbo:

That Saunders bloke nagged me forever,
Would follow me whithersoever,
'Upgrade my courthouse.
'If not, you're a louse,'
And he now feels ever so clever.

He is clever, because it is thanks to his advocacy that they are investing \$3.6 million in a new multipurpose courtroom, with up to 71 jobs in that project. At Orange—

Mrs Shelley Hancock: Go back to the bar!

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: I seek a point of clarification: Was the member for South Coast asking members to go back to the bar or the Attorney General?

The SPEAKER: That is not a valid point of order.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Does the member for Maroubra have a valid point of order? I remind the member that he is on three calls to order.

Mr Michael Daley: I do, Mr Speaker:

There once was a lawyer
From the Shire,
Whose humour skills
Were very dire.

That breaches Standing Order 129. Please do not kick me out.

The SPEAKER: In the spirit of the last question on Thursday, the member for Maroubra has gotten away with that one.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: We have invested in the Orange Court House, which now boasts some of the best security and amenities of any court in regional New South Wales. [*Extension of time*]

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: Several times it has been raised that the last question on a Thursday is supposed to be funny. In recognition of that, I seek to correct the record of the House.

The SPEAKER: What is the member's point of order? Please keep it brief.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Earlier this week the Deputy Premier misled the House. I wish to correct the record. He informed the House that the member for Pittwater was the superior surfer in the Parliament. I have evidence to prove that is not the case. Please stop scowling. It is not Bara.

The SPEAKER: I am giving the member for Swansea latitude, but she should keep it short.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Members may think it is Mark Richards, but it is not. It is the member for Newcastle.

The SPEAKER: I have heard enough on that point of order.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: The only thing I could see in that photograph were the sharks circling the member for Strathfield:

On that request for more information
Our Gladys evokes inspiration
But Kogarah plots on their side

Strathfield's out with the tide
Oblivion's her destination.

Whether the Government is supporting regional tradies throughout the drought, bushfire and COVID, or supporting specialised heritage conservation works, or just giving our courts the upgrade they need, jobs are at the centre of every regional economy in New South Wales. While we on this side of the Chamber are focused on jobs for the people of New South Wales, those opposite seem to be concerned entirely about their jobs:

The caucus puts votes in the bucket
The leadership, Jodi did chuck it
Her majority gone
Keira sings out a song
Ah, comrades! This State, we'll just ... muck it.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

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

Social Housing

Petition urging the Government to build 5,000 new social housing dwellings every year for the next 10 years to reduce homelessness and housing stress in New South Wales, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Private Members' Statements

VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (15:29): The 2021 Lunar New Year is well and truly upon us. Last week the local Vietnamese community welcomed in the Year of the Ox. The usual new year celebration was marked by the Vietnamese Community in Australia [VCA] New South Wales Chapter Inc.'s Tet Festival—a massive three-day event that has become a permanent fixture on the local calendar. The festival is a gathering of Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese people to welcome the new year and celebrate Vietnamese culture and tradition. The 2021 Tet Festival was held on a much smaller scale due to the ever-present threat of COVID-19. On Saturday 13 February I had the pleasure of representing the New South Wales Opposition at the Lunar New Year Tet celebration at the Vietnamese Cultural Centre hall in Bonnyrigg. The event was hosted by the VCA, and I was warmly welcomed by President Mr Paul Huy Nguyen, Vice President Ms Kate Hoang and the VCA volunteers.

The event was well attended by local and Federal representatives. I was joined by my New South Wales parliamentary colleagues Ms Tania Mihailuk, MP, Mr Nick Lalich, MP, and Ms Wendy Lindsay, MP, representing the Premier. This year we celebrate the second of the zodiac animals, the ox. Legend has it that people born under the sign of the ox are honest, hardworking, intelligent and reliable people, just like their animal symbol. Traditionally the Lunar New Year is a time for us to focus on family and friends. I have made some wonderful friends in the Vietnamese community during my lifetime, not only in my time as an MP. The Vietnamese community is prominent in Fairfield, Bankstown, Cabramatta and Murrumbidgee and throughout the nation and its members are positive contributors to the wider community. We are all the richer for their contribution. In particular the VCA's members have been wonderful advocates in our community. As a not-for-profit organisation, the VCA proudly represents refugees and immigrants from Vietnam, and Vietnamese Australians.

Since 1975 the Vietnamese community has worked hard to establish support networks such as the VCA, language schools, media and numerous temples. In times of need the VCA is always there to help. In 2019 and 2020, during the infamous summer bushfires, the VCA collected funds for people in need who lost their homes and livelihoods. The VCA also collected funds for the local Horsley Park RFS. The VCA and the Vietnamese people are always generous in supporting their fellow Australians, irrespective of ethnicity and religious background. I am proud to call the members of the VCA dear friends as they are the epitome of the true Aussie spirit, giving of themselves for the betterment of others. As well as hosting dazzling cultural events to promote Vietnamese culture in Australia, they support the Vietnamese community as much as possible through many welfare programs focusing on gambling addiction and money management.

As part of its community engagement, the VCA hosts a medical forum, which is a three-monthly information program that provides free medical advice to the public in Vietnamese. The forum is run by medical practitioners and specialists who get together on a voluntary basis to impart their skills and knowledge on a variety of medical topics. The VCA Youth NSW, another branch of the organisation, provides mentor programs for young Vietnamese in New South Wales to assist them in achieving their goals and exploring career options. Like all multicultural communities in New South Wales, the Vietnamese community places the highest importance on

education for its youth. That priority is highlighted every year with the acknowledgment of and presentation of awards to HSC high achievers with an ATAR of 99 or above.

Members of the Vietnamese community in Australia have contributed to many areas of Australian life, such as politics, cuisine, the arts and academia, representing those fields at the highest level. The Lunar New Year Tet Festival is a great opportunity to reflect on and take pride in the achievements of people who have come to this country; some after facing great adversity. I felt privileged to attend the event and to share that time with the local Vietnamese community. I extend my thanks to Mr Paul Huy Nguyen and Ms Kate Hoang for welcoming me. I congratulate them on this year's successful event. Chuc Mung Nam Moi! Happy New Year, the Year of the Ox!

NEPEAN RIVER

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (15:33): It is with great pleasure that I deliver this private member's statement about the fantastic work happening in the Penrith community around the Nepean River. The people of the Penrith community have an almost spiritual connection to the river. It is an important part of our city and an important contributor to our community as a place where we all love to gather. For some time now we have been looking to expand the master plan of concepts that exist around the river. To do that we have been driving investment into this incredible important part of our community. The city deal will contribute \$24 million to the development of Regatta Park on the Emu Plains side of the river. The designs for that park are currently being consulted on with the community. It is a great opportunity to add a wonderful public open space to make the river more accessible for people on that side. It will also be a genuine destination location for all of western Sydney, particularly my constituency and residents of the wider Penrith area. There is no doubt that it will be an outstanding addition to our local community.

This week the planning Minister announced \$1.5 million of funding through the Crown Land Open Space Activation Program towards the refurbishment of the historic police cottage on the Emu Plains side of the river that adjoins Regatta Park. That is a critical investment because it will allow a building that has started to become dilapidated to have a new sense of life. That wonderful community heritage asset will add to the dynamic location on the banks of the Nepean River. Next door to the cottage is Emu Hall, a wonderful heritage building that now houses a new restaurant and cafe in that beautiful location. It has been upgraded and is a wonderful location for people to go to for a meal or a coffee and enjoy some time with friends. The Emu Hall building was built by James Tobias Ryan, my predecessor as the member for what was then called the Nepean. He was the second member for that electorate in this Chamber. It is great to see that his building, which is such an important part of our community's history, is now delivering such joy to our community as a new restaurant and cafe. On the other side of the river is the historic Log Cabin site, which was a Penrith institution. Unfortunately, it was lost to the community in a fire. This year the Log Cabin is coming back.

A new hotel will be built on the former Log Cabin site by the Laundry family. It will be a fantastic addition to the community for people to once again to come and enjoy the river. It is exactly what the community has been looking for for such a long period since it lost that great location. Further down the river there has been sustained and continued investment in the East Bank property development, which has allowed for the expansion of what most people in Penrith call the coffee club precinct, where we now have a number of new restaurants. If the sun is shining that location is full of local residents down by the river enjoying the fantastic hospitality that is provided by all of those small business owners and the amazing landscape of the Nepean River. I give a big shout-out to the Penrith Men's Walk and Talk, who kick off every week at the coffee club and do a lap of the bridge to bridge to talk about men's health. That is just another example of how those investments are creating a stronger bond amongst our community members.

Another new investment coming in is The Orchard, just down the road from the East Bank development. It will be a unique five-acre hospitality venue that will embrace a country-style setting alongside the Nepean River. It will feature new cafes, restaurants, bars, an inclusive playground and animal yards. It is a real opportunity to show children and families about the nature of paddock-to-plate dining. I am looking forward to the onsite bakery. I thank Jacob Farragher and the guys, who are bringing The Orchard to life, for backing our community and investing their dollars in another tourism initiative. The Yandhai Nepean Crossing has brought all of those things together. The pedestrian walking bridge has allowed the activation of the river by creating a safe crossing to link both sides of the river that thousands of people walk across every week. It has driven substantial investment in this wonderful precinct.

TERRIGAL ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:38): I am delighted to talk about a number of organisations in my community that have received grants under the fantastic Community Building Partnership grants program, which rolls out every year. In particular, 10 organisations in my electorate—not-for-profits and sports clubs—have

received funding. Together they have received about \$136,350. That funding will deliver much-needed improvements to local facilities and organisations in the Terrigal electorate. This year I am proud to provide \$300,000 to schools, sport clubs, community groups and not-for-profit organisations, but today I highlight 10 to begin with that I have recently been able to deliver through that partnership.

The Kincumber Roos Football Club will receive \$30,000 to install a steel-fabricated safety fence at Frost Reserve to prevent balls landing on busy Avoca Drive in the adjacent park. I have had the pleasure of visiting the Kincumber Roos club on multiple occasions, which has received more than one grant from the State Government to help improve its facilities. It is great to see a not-for-profit club getting on board and applying for that funding. I am proud to support the delivery. A grant of \$22,894 has been provided to the North Avoca Surf Life Saving Club for a new audiovisual broadcast system so that events and functions can be hosted in the main club room. I am also pleased to deliver \$16,357 to the fantastic Hardys Bay RSL. The funds will be used to fix rainwater leaks in its roof. I have met with the club on multiple occasions. I know that the funding will go a long way to repairing the roof and providing new guttering.

The Cerebral Palsy Alliance, based at Erina, is receiving \$15,841 to install a ceiling hoist system in the facility's two therapy rooms as well as an upgrade of the plaster room and bathroom. I visited the site during the fit-out and it was great to see so many local tradies delivering that fantastic facility at Erina. What was even better was that the foreperson of the site was a female. It is great to have ladies heading up the construction industry, especially on the Central Coast. In addition to that, two 15-metre-high foul poles will be delivered to the Central Coast baseball park at Hylton Moore Oval. They are valued at around \$12,639 in the funding grant. Again, I am the proud patron of the Central Coast Baseball Association and have seen many projects delivered through State Government funding for the baseball field. It is arguably one of the best baseball diamonds in the State and a great use of a former tip site. I congratulate the Central Coast Baseball Association on applying for that funding.

The 3 Villages Community Group will receive \$11,798 to purchase and install a drinking water fountain station at Jirramba Reserve Playground, Saratoga. Again, I give a shout-out to the three ladies who run that community organisation. They have done a great job pulling the community together to deliver those sorts of projects, including upgrades to Jirramba park. I congratulate them on their first shot at a grants request. It is great to support their endeavours around that part of the region. The Empire Bay Public School P&C Association will install cabinetry, countertops and an oven in its kitchen using a \$10,000 grant from the program. It is a fantastic school with a brilliant principal and a hardworking P&C. Soul Soup is a not-for-profit organisation, which the member for Gosford is well aware of. It does an amazing job feeding homeless and vulnerable people. The great news is that it is based in my electorate at Macmasters Beach. I am delighted to be able to provide \$7,000 to fit out its van with portable kitchen facilities. We see them working with other organisations to deliver a great service to people in need.

Clean4shore is an environmental group also based at Macmasters Beach with Jono. He is benefiting from a \$6,500 grant to install a dual-axle trailer to transport large items of litter to landfill. Some \$3,321 will enable the Killcare Surf Life Saving Club to install split system air conditioning in its training room for better utilisation of that space. I congratulate all 10 of those organisations on their success in securing funding from the New South Wales Government's Community Building Partnership program. I applaud all the work they do in our community.

INTEGRICARE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (15:44): I take this opportunity to speak about a fantastic organisation in my local electorate, Integricare family and community services. Integricare provides early learning, preschool and family services at a range of locations across Sydney, including four in my electorate at Brighton-Le-Sands, Rockdale, Rockdale Plaza and Turrella. Integricare is a "for-purpose" community-based organisation registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, dedicated to delivering services to children and families based on a Christian ethos of practical giving, faith-based teaching and pastoral care. I recently had the opportunity to visit Integricare's Rockdale site with the shadow Minister for Early Childhood Learning, the fabulous Jodie Harrison, MP, and I cannot stress enough how impressed we both were with the services being offered at this amazing centre.

Together, we were able to see the hive of activity at the Rockdale Children and Families Hub, where children and families receive an incredible level of support as they grow and flourish together. I was so impressed with what I saw that I immediately invited my Federal colleague the Hon. Linda Burney, MP, to see the brilliant work being done by Integricare within our electorates. What is unique about the Rockdale Children and Families Hub is that it brings together such a diverse range of partner services, to make a truly special offering to our communities. The hub offers playgroups, family support, parenting information, transition-to-school activities and resources, child and family health services, and support for families and children with additional needs—all from one location. It also has strong links with child care, preschools and its neighbour, Rockdale Public School.

As such, the hub is able to address a huge range of issues facing families, and do so in an integrated and collaborative way that looks after every part of a family's needs. Integricare is consistently rated highly among its clients and families. I believe a large part of the reason behind this is that Integricare sees itself not as the primary educator of children or provider of services but as a supporter and collaborator with the parents in delivering these services. It is a co-educator and assistant. It is not there to tell families what to do, but to provide them with the assistance they need to get the best outcomes possible in their specific circumstances. Its staff are known for their passion and commitment to those they serve, with a very clear emphasis, in all the work they do, on delivering a first-class service at all times.

Integricare is currently growing at a rapid rate. Over the past few years it has added services at Rozelle, St Ives and Brighton-Le-Sands. Expansion is always difficult for any organisation, but expanding during COVID-19 has presented a huge challenge. Having operated a number of businesses over my working life and advised countless others, I know that when you are growing an enterprise and adding operating locations it is easy to lose the elements that make something special. Integricare has been able to keep its operating size "just right". It is large enough to provide value for money and the best possible resourcing to the children and families it serves, while staying small enough to give the kind of personalised service that keeps families coming back, recommending it to friends and loving what they are getting out of Integricare.

It is because of this approach of steady and targeted growth that, despite its expansion during an incredibly tough time for the sector, the diligent management of Integricare's board saw it make a significant turnaround from the previous financial year and produce an operating surplus of \$329,000 in the last reporting period. I am sure the Treasurer could take some advice from its excellent operation. Integricare is an organisation that is devoted to serving both my community and many other communities across Sydney. In everything it does, from the board and the staff to the families it serves, it looks to live the teachings of Jesus Christ and translate those into tangible action. Thank you to the team at Rockdale for inviting me and my colleagues to see just how valuable the work they do is. I look forward to working with them and supporting them in the future.

TAFE NSW

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (15:48): I am a firm believer in TAFE, and the opportunities that a TAFE education can bring. Why is this? It is because I am a TAFE graduate. The skills I learnt at TAFE NSW helped me become a small business owner, an employer, a provider of opportunities for others and New South Wales Florist of the Year. That is why I am thrilled that the people of West Wyalong now have more opportunities than ever to study at TAFE. This month I was joined by the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education to open the new connected learning centre [CLC] at TAFE West Wyalong. This \$6.6 million digitally enabled connected learning centre will help local students get job-ready skills by working with local industries. It will enable students to study courses not previously offered at the campus, meaning they do not have to travel hundreds of kilometres or leave town to get the education they want. And it means the amazing staff and students have a state-of-the-art facility to work and learn in.

Walking in to this facility, you could be in any campus in any metropolitan or regional centre in the State. That is the way it should be. Where you call home should not limit your education. If this global pandemic has shown us anything, it is that we can be connected while being physically apart. You do not have to be in an office in Macquarie Street to be in a highly skilled sector, and distance learning is not only effective but also a vital element in our education sector's arsenal. The success of connected learning centres is not isolated to West Wyalong. Narrandera's connected learning centre was opened in August 2018. This \$4.76 million facility offers courses that have been in high demand across the State through blended facilitated and online learning. This includes courses in Drone Essentials, a Certificate IV in Commercial Cookery and a Diploma in Business Administration. Before the CLC, none of those courses were offered locally, with students travelling to larger centres like Wagga Wagga—a 200-kilometre round trip.

Similar success has been seen in Grenfell, where I had the privilege of opening a new connected learning centre in January 2019. This \$4 million state-of-the-art facility greatly increased the study options, with 20 new courses offered in areas such as agriculture, business, early childhood education and care, and tourism. Previously students had to travel to centres like Young, Forbes and Cowra to undertake those courses. Without remote learning and technology, it would simply not be possible to offer the range of courses now available at these campuses. This makes a huge difference to the local opportunities available for young people, those looking to change careers and those seeking to expand their knowledge.

Our investment in TAFE campuses has not just been focused on connected learning centres. In Young a \$10 million redevelopment of the TAFE campus has expanded the onsite offerings and invested heavily in practical infrastructure. A specialist training salon has enabled hair and beauty students to stay in Young to hone their skills, when previously they had to undertake a round trip of just shy of four hours for this experience. The upgrade features an operating salon, giving students real-world practice. I felt in very safe hands when I visited in

early 2018 and got a mini makeover from the talented students. Beauty is not the only focus of the redeveloped campus in Young. The upgrades also include a simulated hospital for health and aged care, an early education centre with indoor and outdoor learning spaces, a refurbishment of the electrotechnology trade area and new common learning areas.

These connected learning centres and upgraded campuses are proof of the high esteem that TAFE NSW is held in by the Government, and the commitment to ensuring opportunities are available, no matter where you live. It is still an institution of choice for students. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government introduced fee-free courses in April 2020. By May more than 100,000 people had enrolled in them. More than half of them call regional New South Wales home. TAFE is the backbone of tertiary training in New South Wales and I am proud of the Government's investment, ensuring students can stay at home in their communities while expanding their skills and knowledge.

ST GEORGE COMMUNITY AWARDS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (15:53): I inform the House of the St George Community Awards, an event I have hosted over the past 10 consecutive years. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to host a large event at Club Central in Hurstville, where we usually get over 550 attendees. However, we turned this into a positive and took this opportunity to get out into the community and meet those wonderful groups—the businesses and individuals—on location. It was fantastic to meet with everyone and see what they do so well. This allowed me to meet a fantastic family who run RB Hair & Beauty in Mortdale, community groups like the Resourceful Australian Indian Network, the many Lions clubs that litter my local community and outstanding volunteers like Vivienne Morrison and Dorothy Dixon. The St George Community Awards are a highlight of the year for me because they are an opportunity for community leaders, volunteers and local heroes to be congratulated on their service to the local community. The awards remind me of how fortunate we are, having been born and raised in the local area.

Since 2011 I have had the pleasure of representing our local community in this place. Each year I have seven categories of awards that people can nominate for: individual, senior, youth, community group, business, sport and, of course, the environment. Last year we had over a hundred recipients, which is the most we have ever had, and it is very fitting for our tenth anniversary. Volunteers make an extraordinary contribution to Australian society. Volunteers are the lifeblood of our community and come from all walks of life: working people, students, professionals, young people and retirees. What makes our local community so special is that we have a rich and diverse range of people catering to the individual and collective needs of our local community.

I spent a few moments this week reflecting on the successes of our previous community awards nights and the hundreds of individuals who have been recognised over the years. Thinking about all of the people who have invested time, energy and resources in our local community is incredibly moving. Consistent volunteers such as Adrian Prakash and Laxman Shrestha have been volunteering and helping out across the community for longer than I can remember. Environmental groups such as the Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society not only make excellent calendars but also do a fantastic job in promoting conservation. Our businesses such as Club Rivers and Arndu St Paul's Preschool continue to support local families in our local community. Future sporting heroes, such as Zoey Antoniou and Baggio Yin, are rising in the ranks in our local sporting organisations. Our community groups, such as Shopfront Arts, nurture the next generation of theatre performers. Young and driven people such as Bianca Stanghieri are fantastic leaders and motivators for our youth.

The volunteering spirit in the St George area is certainly not diminishing. In fact, it is growing. Many of us juggle an array of weekly commitments, from working to driving our kids to sport, to visiting family and friends. However, these commitments have rarely stopped the local community from enthusiastically embodying the volunteering spirit. In addition to recognising the dozens of award recipients, I also acknowledge the friends, families and colleagues who nominated the individuals and groups for the St George Community Awards. Without the ongoing support of friends and family, those individuals could not have dedicated as much time and passion to their achievements. We are incredibly thankful for it.

No-one can underestimate the power of this support in the lives of those volunteers. It is something that I have always held in the highest regard. Volunteers and volunteer organisations strengthen our communities. I encourage everyone to get involved because every individual can make a huge difference. It is the strength and value of those individuals, businesses and organisations that make the St George area the best place to live, work and raise a family. Our entire community is thankful for their ongoing commitment to improving the lives of those around them and to making our region the best in our State—in fact, in our country. I again congratulate everyone who received an award. I wish them all the best for the year ahead.

NORTH SHORE MEDAL RECIPIENTS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (15:58): North Shore is fortunate to have some of the best schools in New South Wales, and they are some of the best not necessarily because everyone is the best academic achiever but because of the passion and sense of community displayed by students, parents and teaching staff alike. Whenever I visit one of my local schools, the students are all so enthusiastic about learning and the teachers proudly describe their commitment and attitudes. I thank all of our teachers, staff, students and parents who have navigated, together as a community, such a difficult year with the COVID-19 pandemic. I know that online learning and students being at home during the lockdown was not ideal, but our community managed it superbly.

The North Shore Medals are awarded each year to one student at each of our schools who demonstrates excellence in attitude and exhibits in behaviour a commitment to the ethos of the school. This student is also a strong and consistent participant in school and community activities and shows an awareness of others and their needs, which I think was particularly important last year. I provide this award to encourage students to study with diligence while supporting the community. I know that many schools find it difficult to single out just one student for this award, but usually this student goes above and beyond in not just their schoolwork but also in community spirit and participation. I was pleased to acknowledge the outstanding efforts of some of our local students. My heartfelt congratulations go to all the students who received my North Shore Medal in 2020.

Antony Nobilo from Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School was chosen because he was an exemplary student. I was told that when you think of how you would like a year 6 graduate of Sacred Heart to be, Antony Nobilo was the school's obvious choice. He has a generous nature and is consistently fair in his dealings with all students, teachers and parents. I was very grateful to be welcomed by Sacred Heart to present the medal to him at the end of last year. Dara Minogue from Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School has an exemplary attitude to learning and, as a member of the Sydney Youth Orchestra, actively contributes to the life of their parish through her music and shares this talent with the wider community when playing at nursing homes. Dara was also a finalist in my North Shore Bear Pit Public Speaking Competition in this place, where she spoke very eloquently and at length on the topic "If I were in charge, the rule I would make would be ..." and about the value and importance of music education and ensuring that we can democratise music for all students, regardless of their access to instruments and teaching.

I joined Middle Harbour Public School for a morning assembly to congratulate Harry Lawler. He was chosen for his commitment to the school, always taking pride in his work and representing the school's ethos and values. Over at Mosman Public School, Marcus Richardson was selected because his teachers told me that, no matter what the world throws at him, he has a laser-like focus on always doing the right thing. I was fortunate enough to join the graduating year 6 students at their farewell evening, where the P&C had done a fantastic job in decorating the school hall.

I met with Sophia Jongs from North Sydney Demonstration School, who received the medal for always giving 110 per cent in her schoolwork and for always being the first to offer a helping hand to any student or teacher in need. I joined Mosman Preparatory School at its awards day to congratulate all the students who received awards of excellence in academics and their many extracurricular activities such as sport and music. A special congratulations went to Oliver Bucktin, my North Shore Medal recipient, for being a committed student and upholding all that the school represents. He is very community minded both in and out of school and has a kind and caring nature. I joined Neutral Bay Public School's year 6 students to present Finn Pereira with his North Shore Medal. Finn was a member of the student representative council, consistently modelled respectful and responsible behaviour and demonstrated compassion to students in younger years. His teachers described him to me as hardworking, diligent, highly self-motivated and always seeking to achieve all of his personal learning goals. Above all else, Finn was kind to his peers and polite and helpful to every staff member.

Pratham Gupta from Cammeraygal High School is someone I have mentioned in this place a number of times before. It comes as no surprise that he was chosen as his school's North Shore Medal recipient. This is the first year 12 class for Cammeraygal High School, so it is quite an honour. Pratham was described by his teachers as a highly valued student and was regarded as an exceptional leader, evidenced by his consistent involvement in many school and community activities. Nadine Kassis from Beauty Point Public School was awarded for her commitment to the school and always demonstrating a commitment to her peers and the wider community. Molly Gallagher from Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College demonstrated excellence in all areas of her work and was a committed student within the school community. Finally, there is Anneliese Schlederer from Wenona School, who, like the other recipients, exemplified excellence in attitude and behaviour, compassion for others and a strong sense of community. I once again offer warm congratulations to all of our North Shore Medal winners. I am proud to have such caring and committed young people in my community.

Business interrupted.

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

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

*Petitions***SOCIAL HOUSING**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the House take note of the petition.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:04): Today I join petitioners to call for a social housing building boom to prevent a housing and homelessness crisis. This petition does not come from activists or any political campaign group: It comes from St Vincent de Paul Society, which supports those at the front line of housing need. I congratulate Vinnies on getting over 13,000 signatures from across the State—a massive achievement, particularly during a pandemic. It is a testament to the hard work of members, volunteers and supporters, and the importance of social housing to the wider community.

Safe, stable, quality affordable housing is essential to the ability to function and contribute to society. When housing breaks down, it has far-reaching consequences in life and community. New South Wales has a serious social housing deficit. We have over 51,000 households on the social housing waiting list, representing around 110,000 adults and children who are in housing stress, escaping domestic violence or homelessness. In some areas it takes up to 10 years to get a home. While the pandemic has seen average rents in the private market fall, reductions have been limited to the upper end of the market, which continues to remain out of reach for people on low incomes. At the lower end of the market, rents have not been cut, but competition has increased from the extra people on lower incomes. Most people who lost income due to COVID-19 were already on low or very low wages. Housing stress is on the rise. It occurs when over 30 per cent of a household's income is spent on housing, but many poor people spend much more, having to forgo other expenses like food, power and school supplies.

Vinnies reports regularly seeing clients in housing stress and whose relationships, health, mental health, employment and education suffer as a result. People in housing stress live with the constant threat of becoming homeless. Without the safety net of social housing they could be forced into temporary arrangements like supported accommodation, or sleeping on a friend or relative's couch. They may resort to living in crowded conditions or staying with a violent partner. Some will sleep rough on the streets, or in parks, cars or abandoned buildings. Homelessness has been on the rise in New South Wales, jumping 37 per cent between 2011 and 2016—the highest anywhere in Australia.

While significant achievements have been made to house rough sleepers in response to the pandemic, many remain in temporary placements. Other people who are homeless but do not sleep rough continue to be at risk without a stable home. When JobKeeper is removed and banks withdraw mortgage holidays, unemployment will rise, incomes will fall and we will see more people experience housing stress and become homeless. The 2020 report by Equity Economics called *A Wave of Disadvantage Across NSW: Impact of the COVID-19 recession* predicts that by the middle of the year the number of families experiencing housing stress will increase by more than 88,000, with an additional 9,000 people experiencing homelessness.

We cannot face this wave without providing a significant increase in low-cost housing. We must urgently build new homes to meet current and projected need. I acknowledge that through the Communities Plus program the Government plans to build more social housing, but most new homes will replace existing stock. The 1,280 new homes in the recent budget also falls far short of what is needed. What we desperately need is 50,000 new homes over the next 10 years at a building rate of 5,000 each year. This will create 18,000 construction jobs, with employment opportunities spread across the State. The build must be matched with wraparound support to help people who are managing disability, poor health, mental illness, addiction, trauma and disadvantage to maintain their tenancy and function.

New homes must allow people to age in place so that tenants have security without the risk of becoming isolated or having to leave their support network. The inner city's housing stock is mostly ageing, has stairs and is not fit for older, frail tenants who increasingly represent the social housing profile. Many of my less mobile constituents feel trapped in their homes but do not want to transfer because accessible homes are mostly out of their neighbourhood. We need new accessible homes in the inner city and a program to retrofit existing properties. I acknowledge the Government's strong focus on reducing rough sleeping and the leadership of the Minister for Families, Community and Disability Services towards that. Social housing provides a vital safety net that protects

our most vulnerable and helps them get on their feet and be part of the community. Right now we have a severe deficit of homes. I join the petitioners to call on the Government to build 50,000 new social housing properties over the next 10 years.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (16:08:5): I thank my friend the member for Sydney for presenting this petition to the House today and also acknowledge people from the St Vincent de Paul Society, who were integral in collecting signatures for the petition. I particularly acknowledge my good friend Jack de Groot, who is in the building and is a passionate advocate for vulnerable people, along with all members of the St Vincent Paul Society and indeed members of the House who are in the Chamber to speak in this important debate. As one of the two Ministers responsible for social housing, I am delighted to speak about the Government's record in providing support for the most vulnerable in our State through the provision of safe and secure housing. In 2019 the Premier set a very ambitious target to halve rough sleeping by 2025. In 2020, when we were hit with the COVID-19 pandemic, we faced a choice. We chose to invest, and since April last year around 900 people who had been sleeping rough were assisted with temporary accommodation and have been supported into safe and stable housing

This investment continues as part of the 2020-21 budget with over \$1 billion in a range of homelessness and social and affordable housing programs, including \$65 million allocated to Together Home. We are helping to break the cycle of homelessness and get people back on their feet, transforming the lives of some of the most vulnerable in society. The groundbreaking Together Home program involves securing homes from the private rental market and delivering intensive tailored supports to meet the complex needs of the people who are sleeping rough. Almost 400 people have been receiving wraparound supports and over 350 people have been housed.

I have also had the privilege of travelling the State and meeting new tenants who now have, many for the first time in their lives, a safe place to call home. This is part of the \$1.1 billion Social and Affordable Housing Fund [SAHF] that is delivering 3,400 additional social and affordable homes, not just in Sydney but right around the State. It does not matter whether it is in my own area of the South Coast, Gosford, the Illawarra or the Hunter, I have seen the benefits of this program, and I acknowledge Vinnies is one of our SAHF partners and is doing a terrific job. As at 31 December 2020, SAHF has delivered 1,809 new social and affordable housing and homes, with an additional 1,000 under construction. Over 1,400 dwellings are expected to be delivered for tenants over the age of 55, and 232 are targeted specifically for older women.

In Maitland I met Trudi, who was moving into her new home delivered in partnership with Compass Housing just in time for Christmas. She was so proud to tell me that for the first time in many years, she could host her children for Christmas Day. In Elderslie I met Irene, who was moving into her brand-new home in Elderslie developed as part of BaptistCare's Narralling Community Centre, and I was very proud to speak with her about what this safe and stable housing meant for her.

As part of the 2020-21 budget, we announced almost \$900 million to accelerate the delivery of thousands of new homes. This will create up to 3,000 jobs and boost the State's economic recovery from COVID-19. As part of this investment, the Land and Housing Corporation, led by my friend and colleague the Minister for Water, Property and Housing, is delivering a \$400 million Fast Track Construction Package which will deliver around 1,100 new social housing homes to support disadvantaged or vulnerable people. Over just the next two years, \$250 million will be spent accelerating more than 50 social housing projects across New South Wales. We want this money out the door and into the economy creating jobs, so more than two-thirds is committed to projects that commence construction this financial year.

Mr Jamie Parker: But less accommodation.

Mr GARETH WARD: I'd just ask The Greens not to interject and to be respectful for once. I acknowledge Clover Moore and the City of Sydney for their support for projects in central Sydney. When complete, they will provide tenants with new, modern homes, with better access to transport, essential services, community facilities and employment. Today over half of the social housing properties are more than 40 years old, but the needs of social housing tenants are much different now than they were 40 years ago. The needs of our clients are getting more complex, with greater demands for one- and two-bedroom accessible properties. As disabilities Minister, I am pleased that all our new properties meet the silver standard of accessibility. I thank all members for their genuine interest. I know we need to work hard and work together, but I am appreciative of the petitioners and the member for Sydney for bringing the matter to the House.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (16:14): I acknowledge the member for Sydney's petition and the important work the St Vincent de Paul Society plays not just in housing but right across our community. I have two young sons who are in Mini Vinnies and I know how it instils those values about social conscience at a very young age. I welcome the opportunity to talk on such an important social issue. I am glad that many of my Labor colleagues are in the Chamber. Social housing is arguably one of the biggest issues that our electorates face—I know it

certainly is in my electorate. I know the member for Charlestown has been a very strong advocate in this area. She has put to the House a number of questions on notice and other things. We have a really strong understanding that this is an issue that many people speak to us about. It is an issue that we are all going to have to deal with going forward.

As the Minister said, the global pandemic has emphasised the importance of the need for safe and secure housing for the health and wellbeing of individuals and the broader community. I have acknowledged the Government's efforts on a number of occasions in housing rough sleepers. But many of these solutions are temporary. We need a strong bipartisan commitment across the Parliament to invest in public housing. Investment in public housing is not only good for making sure that people get a roof over their head. All the research around the world on housing-first strategies highlights that, once you have a house and that roof over your head, those wraparound services start to make a real difference. For those of us in regional and rural areas in particular, investment in social housing supports local jobs. It supports good quality trades jobs, contractors' work and also apprenticeships. I know that is important in my local community. At the moment we on this side of the House know that over 51,000 people are on the NSW Housing Register waiting for a property. Around 5,300 applicants are now considered a priority for social housing, but we simply do not have enough homes to safely accommodate these people.

I recently met a constituent named Louis. He is a 73-year-old man who has privately rented a granny flat for the past decade. He did that off his own bat. He is on a disability pension and suffers from a number of mental health conditions. For the first time in his life he is facing severe housing insecurity. The owner of his property sadly passed away and the family needs to sell the place Louis has called home for 10 years. He needs to find somewhere else to live, but finding something he can afford is proving exceptionally difficult. Louis needs help. The private market in the northern suburbs of my electorate is increasingly unaffordable for people on low incomes or those on the pension. I know my colleagues talk about this in their electorates, but this is becoming a big problem. The cost of housing has gone up to the extent that many of our children will never be able to live in the area they grew up in. My generation would never have experienced this. Louis is 73 years of age. He is not considered a priority for housing. You need to be 80 years and older to be considered a priority on the housing register.

Louis has a live and current application, but he will need to wait for a housing stock to become available. The wait may cause him to sleep rough—something we do not want any of our constituents to experience. We know that homelessness is a symptom of our social housing policy. I will not stand here and attack one colour of government over another. We know that the estates of the 1950s and 1960s were wrong. One of the biggest housing estates in our region is 250 metres away from my front door at Bellambi. We know they did not make sense. We must come together as a Parliament and have a bipartisan focus on the delivery of public housing. It should be about stimulating our economy and jobs. It should also be about making sure that we get roofs over people's heads so that they can continue to participate in the workforce, become educated and access the opportunities that many of us take for granted. I hope this petition—and I acknowledge the member for Sydney brought it to the House through Vinnies—does exactly that.

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (16:19): The New South Wales Government is investing more than ever before to build and upgrade thousands of social homes for people in need across the State. The Government has increased its investment in social housing this financial year by more than 80 per cent to almost \$900 million. Of this, \$812 million is going towards new or upgraded social housing and \$80 million is being invested in apprenticeships that will not only provide crucial housing sector jobs but also help deliver an extra 100 social homes. This new funding brings the Government's total investment in social and affordable housing to \$4.4 billion over four years. In the electorate of Goulburn the Government is currently undertaking two redevelopment projects to support vulnerable people in the community. Work is underway on a \$6.9 million housing development in the city's south. That project will deliver 20 one- and two-bedroom social homes in two low-rise apartment buildings on a site where five aging cottages once stood. Construction works commenced on the ground in October last year and are due for completion in mid-2022.

Early community engagement is continuing not far away from that project on a proposed development to deliver up to 14 new dwellings to replace four older existing homes. That project is in the early design phase, with the community being consulted to help shape the final built form. Subject to planning processes, construction is anticipated to begin onsite later this year and take around 14 months to complete. These two projects combined will deliver up to 34 modern and safe new social houses, and create 63 jobs during construction. Most importantly, they will help address the demand for social housing in Goulburn, getting people and families off waiting lists and into homes. The two projects are among 50 being delivered by the New South Wales Government as part of a \$400 million package to fast-track housing construction and support local communities like Goulburn throughout the State as they recover from the economic shock of the coronavirus pandemic. These latest projects in Goulburn are part of the Government's efforts to boost the supply of social housing in the State's south-east and

Tablelands. In total around 80 new social homes will be delivered in the wider region and around 140 jobs will be created to support local tradespeople and businesses.

The NSW Land and Housing Corporation is committed to delivering new social housing supply and redevelopment and 22 per cent of these properties are in regional areas. The Government continues to review social housing needs in the regions and works with local housing providers and councils so that it can build more houses to support vulnerable people and families across this State. A large number of projects that will deliver hundreds of new homes are planned or underway across regional New South Wales. This investment into much-needed social housing in the regions is possible thanks to the Government's injection of stimulus funding, along with asset recycling programs such as the sale of social housing at Millers Point. The economic stimulus measures introduced by the New South Wales Government have delivered the largest investment in social and community housing in more than 20 years, enabling thousands of social homes to be built and upgraded. The investment means that more of the most vulnerable people in our community will have roofs over their heads. It will also provide job opportunities and crucial support for businesses around the State.

Local communities also benefit from maintenance work carried out on Land and Housing Corporation properties in regional areas with 99 per cent of this work carried out by regional or local contractors. Separate to its stimulus program, the Government is fast-tracking the delivery of 100 new social homes at 42 locations across New South Wales through its medium-density housing program working with project home builders. Forty-four of these homes will be built in regional areas, delivering new, modern housing that better meets the needs of our tenants and fits easily into local landscapes. Over the next 20 years it is estimated that an additional 3.5 million people may live in regional New South Wales, meaning that there will always be demand for more social housing outside our big cities. But the Government is meeting this challenge head on, investing record amounts into the social housing sector and working with our partners to build more new homes than ever before. We will continue to deliver for our regions because the Government is building safer and stronger regional communities through its investment in social housing. I commend the member for Sydney for bringing the petition to the House. I thank the St Vincent de Paul Society for all the work that it and particularly its hardworking volunteers do.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:24): I support this petition. I thank St Vincent de Paul and all of the 13,000 people who signed it. I acknowledge the member for Sydney, who has brought it to the Chamber today. It is incredible that we are here because we all want to see an end to the housing crisis in New South Wales and an end to homelessness in New South Wales. While I acknowledge the previous members' calls for support and recognise that Vinnies would like us to all to work collaboratively towards alleviating the crisis that is occurring in homelessness and housing, we are unable to do that while we have a Liberal-Nationals Government in this place spinning the numbers and claiming to deliver investment in social and affordable housing when we know that it is not at a rate that will actually solve the problem.

As it currently stands, we have about 100,000 people on the waiting list—not applications but families and people. They are approved to get into New South Wales public housing but are unable to do so because of the waiting list being so long and the fact that we do not have enough houses. Street counts have importance and value, but with all respect we know that one does not solve homelessness by counting people who are sleeping on the street. One solves homelessness by investing in and building social housing properties so that people can have a place to call home.

We also know that the Communities Plus model currently being touted as a solution is seeing the wide-scale demolition and privatisation of public housing and public land across the State under the guise of investing in social housing. What we are delivering is nothing for the communities but is all about the "plus" for the profits of developers and investors who will gain from the large-scale handing over of public land and public housing to private developers for private properties. Members hear the numbers of increase that are spun, the doubling or tripling of the existing public housing dwellings, but those opposite talk about dwelling numbers. They do not talk about bedrooms, because what they are doing in the electorate of Newtown is demolishing family homes.

Mr Jamie Parker: And in Balmain.

Ms JENNY LEONG: They are demolishing family homes in the electorate of Balmain, and I heard the member for Maroubra talk about it the other day. They are demolishing good family homes that are currently public housing and replacing them with one-bedroom studio apartments, high-rise apartments and high-density apartments, without community support. Where do all the families on the public housing waiting list go? It is unclear to me, but they are clearly unable to return to live in the electorate of Newtown. The Government is demolishing all of the good quality townhouses and public housing under the guise of the Communities Plus model. It is about delivering "plus" profits for developers, "plus" profits for investors and nothing for the communities that need them. We are also seeing segregation by income in some of those properties. The private dwellings will be in one building and the houses will be in another building. This is a disgusting model of income

segregation. It is entrenching disadvantage and discrimination against people in our city who are poor, based on the Government's attempt to invest in social housing.

We need real investment in social and affordable housing. We need a genuine commitment to the idea of investing funds, not some profit-driven motive that will see a cost-neutral return, no money spent in the long term and the privatisation of public land along the way. We need to see a genuine recognition of real investment. I acknowledge that the people on the front line of services, like Vinnies, see the crisis every day. I will not be satisfied with the spin from any Minister in this place who attempts to talk up some new model that says we should build more overdeveloped and high-density public housing—in our electorate or across this State—as a way to solve the housing crisis. We know full well that we need new housing to solve this problem, not the demolition and destruction of existing public housing. That is the solution.

Finally, every member in this place knows that people who are desperate are currently on the high-priority waiting list for housing in New South Wales. I do not know about other members, but there are people in my electorate who have been on the high-priority list for two years, three years or six months. If someone is in crisis then no-one would think that waiting for housing for six months, two years or three years is being treated as high priority. It is a failure of this Government to deliver. If we are in this place to do one thing then surely it should be to deliver safe, affordable, habitable and secure homes for the people of New South Wales.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (16:29): I acknowledge the contribution and the petition brought to the Chamber by the member for Sydney. I very much appreciate the contribution by the member for Keira, and the work that we are doing at Bellambi is important. I appreciate the constructive way that he conducted this debate. In relation to contribution by the member for Newtown, I will take that debate seriously when she tells me what taxes we should raise and what programs we should cut to ensure her goal of not having any private construction in housing in this State.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Balmain to order for the second time. It was a rhetorical question.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: This is an important debate. We are very proud and very excited about the work that the member for Kiama and I are achieving with a \$900 million boost to public housing and bringing housing to market.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Newtown will come to order. She has made her contribution.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Housing is about social housing, affordable rentals and making sure we have homes that are affordable to the people of this State—whether in the inner city or in country towns like Nowra, Kempsey, Orange, Dubbo, Griffith or Wagga Wagga—and all of the work that we are doing across New South Wales. I am pleased that community housing providers will have another 3,000 properties across the State by 2024-25 in addition to the 3,000 homes delivered by government. Together with St Vincent de Paul, we are doing good work to improve outcomes for people across New South Wales. But it is not a binary argument. It is an argument and a discussion about how we de-intensify the social and economic challenges in the estates that the member for Keira has acknowledged.

Mistakes were made in the seventies and eighties, but we have changed that outlook. There are suburbs in western Sydney where the NAPLAN scores in local schools have been going from the bottom to the top because we have changed the way those communities exist and live together. We are putting people together that have jobs, that have opportunities, and showing there is a way to break the intergenerational welfare trap that so many people get involved in. That is driving our policy to improve communities, to improve outcomes for young children, to improve housing and to ensure that we also do what we can for housing affordability across the State. I am proud of what we do and I very much thank the member for Sydney.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Balmain to order for the third time. If he wants to have a discussion with the Minister, he should do it outside the Chamber.

Ms Jodie Harrison: I seek leave to contribute to the debate.

Leave not granted.

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

Mrs Helen Dalton: I seek leave to contribute to the debate.

Leave not granted.

Mr David Mehan: I seek leave to make a short contribution to the debate.

Leave not granted.

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

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:34): In reply: I thank members who have contributed to this debate—the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, the Minister for Water, Property and Housing, the member for Keira and shadow Minister, the member for Goulburn and the member for Newtown. I acknowledge that the member for Murray, the member for Charlestown and the member for The Entrance also wished to contribute to this debate. Hopefully, they will be able to do so at a future time because I know Vinnies is continuing to collect signatures on a petition as the need for social housing continues to grow within New South Wales. Petitions are arriving at my office in 500 lots. This matter is critically important, as we have heard from the statistics today.

A recent report by the Federal Government's National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation predicts that Sydney's housing supply will exceed demand by about 60,000 dwellings across 2021 and 2022 as a result of drops in immigration, mass exodus from the city and federal building stimulus. We have a situation where there will be a predicted surplus of private dwellings at the same time we have 100,000 people on the housing waiting list. Surely we have got something wrong and COVID-19 tells us we now need to innovate and we must get the housing mix in right. We have a unique opportunity to do so with this oversupply of new private housing and a growing waiting list of social housing.

We have many important opportunities to do this including at the Waterloo site. I know this is a concern of the Minister for Water, Property and Housing and I know that the City of Sydney is looking forward to working with the Minister towards an outcome that delivers more social housing to Waterloo. I thank all members for contributing to this debate. Their passion for an increased need for social housing is loud and clear. I acknowledge the work of all of our electorate staff to support people in social housing, which is a critical role.

Petition noted.*Private Members' Statements***COERCIVE CONTROL**

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:37): Next week public hearings for the joint select committee examining coercive control will begin. As many members have heard in this House and across the nation in recent times this committee, and work on a national level, is examining coercive control and domestic relationships, including whether it should be criminalised. Coercive and controlling behaviour is a form of domestic abuse involving repeated patterns of physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse. It is often a precursor to intimate partner homicide. I acknowledge some of the very difficult steps and component parts of this committee, those who are working on the committee and those who are contributing to that work. The evidence for the need to expand legislation to include coercive control is overwhelming and any changes will be long overdue. More than 130 submissions so far have been received by the joint select committee. They have come from individual victim-survivors, community groups, academics, researchers, frontline services, legal minds and non-government organisations.

I acknowledge and thank everyone who has taken the time to write submissions to the committee. I am a very proud deputy chair of this committee and the shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence. It is tough work and a tough area in which to work. To all of those who have facts and who are trying to pull together words to explain their lived experience, or the need for legislators to focus on coercive control, I say that we appreciate their time and effort in making their submissions. I especially acknowledge the women who testified, who, in the past, have found themselves, or who currently find themselves, in situations of coercive control.

We know that coercive control may not leave physical scars, but it does leave deep and long-lasting emotional and psychological scars. It is awful enough to have had to live this nightmare day in, day out, but to then recall such terrifying circumstances, to get it down on paper and submit it to a committee of people they do not know takes a special kind of strength. We know that they are doing that for the benefit of others and I commend them for that. They should know that their stories will be heard. I, for one, commit to listen without judgement, to bear witness to their experience and to take action. I will share the words of one victim-survivor who has made her submission publicly available:

I want to speak to shine a light on domestic violence and be a voice for women who cannot speak ... Some women are ashamed; some are worried that others won't believe them. I want to increase the awareness in the community about coercive control and dispel stigmas in the community around domestic violence, for example victim blaming from those in society who do not understand the complexities of domestic violence and situations women can find themselves in. I want the right to share my experience. ... It is important for me to continue to use my voice, my power, which was taken away from me when I was under the spell of coercive control.

Another victim-survivor shares in her powerful submission:

I wish that coercive control had been made a criminal offence before I became a victim of it because it might have saved me, my children and countless others from the path we ended up on. If coercive control was criminalised, we would be having the conversation of what is and isn't healthy in a relationship. There would be a much better understanding of the "red flags" of potential abuse and I and many others could have made the decision to walk away from a relationship much earlier on, before we became too embroiled and emotionally invested. If coercive control had been a crime, I might not have believed I was mentally ill, or overreacting, or paranoid, or imagining things, or that my mind was playing tricks on me ... I would have realised that he was deliberately manipulating my reality. If coercive control had been a crime, my children might not have watched me be carried on a stretcher and rushed to hospital in an ambulance.

I thank those voices. My aim, and that of other committee members, is to hear the views from a wide range of voices and undertake thoughtful deliberations to ensure the very best outcome—gold standard legislation to criminalise coercive controlling behaviour.

CANTERBURY-BANKSTOWN COUNCIL

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (16:42): Last week Canterbury-Bankstown Council resolved to make a submission to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] to harmonise council rates between residents and business owners in Canterbury and Bankstown, and to introduce a special rate variation on those ratepayers. The rates proposed for residents living in the former Bankstown City Council are expected to rise by 22 per cent to 63 per cent, and for businesses located in Bankstown by a minimum of 33.58 per cent over the next five years. These rate increases, if approved by IPART, are council's plan to collect an additional \$40 million every year. This large-scale rate proposal is unprecedented in my area and indeed across the State.

Over the next five years rates for residents with land values below \$300,00 will increase by \$455, while residents' land threefold that amount will encounter a lower increase of \$419.70. This will have the most affect on homeowners with lower land valuations in the former Bankstown City Council. These rate increases are being introduced at a time when our community is still reeling from a devastating pandemic, and will place families and businesses under greater financial stress. Bankstown residents are now being forced to bear the burden of this grossly mismanaged amalgamation, which saw former Canterbury Council understate its level of unfunded asset renewal requirements by \$53 million, understate its depreciation level by \$6 million annually and not disclose \$123 million of assets at the time of amalgamation.

Make no mistake, the increases are a direct result of the forced merger. That is in spite of my electorate being assured by the then Premier and the Minister for Local Government that the amalgamation of Bankstown and Canterbury councils would amount to cost savings and efficiencies, and would bring great advantages to the electorate of Bankstown. It is difficult to comprehend why such an unprecedented rate hike, which ranges from 30 per cent to 63 per cent, has been proposed. Prior to the amalgamation, Bankstown City Council's own improvement plan indicated clearly that more savings could be made if Bankstown remained an independent entity. For 40 consecutive years Bankstown City Council did not have to increase rates above IPART's benchmark, whilst simultaneously investing in community facilities.

At the time of amalgamation, Bankstown City Council was just one of seven metropolitan Sydney councils declared "fit for the future". IPART made it very clear that it was financially capable of standing alone. In my submission to the council boundary review in 2016 I emphasised that the Government's proposal to merge Bankstown City Council with Canterbury City Council would be "completely and utterly against the interests and wishes of the residents and ratepayers of the Bankstown local government area." Even the Government's own report before the amalgamation displayed the community's pushback against it. Over 700 submissions that were received were against the merger. In fact, I recall making a speech in this Chamber on 13 October 2016 voicing my community's concerns about the forced amalgamation. At the time the member for Hornsby informed me that I was the only person standing in my electorate's way to lower rates.

I now ask the Government: Where are those promised lower rates? The rate hike is a burden that businesses cannot afford, especially as lifelines like JobKeeper come to an end. Last week I read with great interest an article titled "Businesses say rate rise is last thing needed now" in the local *Canterbury Bankstown Torch*. Business owners such as Theo Kalinderis of Alliance Real Estate in Panania—which is in the electorate of East Hills—are concerned that a drastic rate rise will place businesses under added pressure. Theo suggested that the councils are "trying to dig themselves out of a hole". Equally, tenants such as Hany Potrous of Java Lava Cafe in Revesby fear that landlords will pass on the higher rates through rent increases and they "simply cannot afford an additional burden". To be clear, community consultation regarding the proposed rate increases has been woeful. The council's consultation period was held over the Christmas period—from December to 17 January—and right in the middle of Sydney's second COVID lockdown.

In its submission to IPART, the Canterbury Bankstown council recognised that there had been "a very small number of submissions"—only 147 submissions were received—despite being the largest council in the

State, with over 350,000 residents. I will oppose the council's request and I will write a submission to IPART. I hope that IPART considers my submission and the submissions from many others, and not grant that ridiculous request.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I too will oppose Canterbury Bankstown's submission.

SOLIS APARTMENT COMPLEX

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:47): I report to the House the development of particular apartment blocks in the electorate that I represent. The complex is called Solis and its address is 1-3 Bigge Street, Warwick Farm, although that location is often called Liverpool. It is on the edge of the Liverpool CBD on the corner of Bigge Street and the Hume Highway. The various websites that refer to the development say that the name "Solis" is a reference to the sun. The glib advertising material states that the vision for the complex is to "set a new benchmark for the next generation in apartment design for Liverpool". It claims that detailed planning went into every piece of space; the space is meant to work very efficiently and flexibly. Media articles report that the \$75 million project took less than two years to build.

There are 185 apartment in the two towers. One tower contains 14 storeys and the other 15. Solis was officially opened in April 2015, though I think it was finished in 2013. Solis was the Silver Winner at the 2015 Sydney Design Awards. The developer claimed the complex was of a standard that had not been seen before in Liverpool—regrettably that is not true. The particular problem that I am about to raise concerning the complex is one that is shared with several other buildings in the Liverpool CBD. On 13 February 2019 Liverpool City Council served a notice of a proposed fire safety order on the owners of the Solis complex. The proposed order related to combustible cladding and fire safety at the complex. The owners made no written response by way of representations. The proposed order, by virtue of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, became a formal fire safety order and the owners were ordered to perform various combustible cladding rectification works.

I have been advised by Liverpool City Council that the order has not been complied with and that an extension has been granted until 3 May 2021. The development consent for the construction of the building was approved by Liverpool City Council. However, the construction certificate and the occupation certificate were issued by a private certifier. Unit owners were told at the time of the service of the proposed order that to repair the building and fix the problem of flammable cladding could cost up to \$6 million. In June 2016 it was reported that a "potentially devastating class action" against a supplier of combustible cladding had been commenced. A product liability claim had been filed in the Federal Court over polyethylene-core Vitrabond panels. The lead applicants in the action were the owners of the 185 units at the Solis apartment complex. Aluminium panels with large amounts of polyethylene core—up to 100 per cent—were sold in Australia until at least 2013, despite warnings about their dangers from fire authorities as early as 2010. I note that a class action was also made against the suppliers of the cladding that was used on the Grenfell Towers.

It is not the only building with flammable cladding in Liverpool. However, Solis has an added layer of problems. It has only just come to my attention that one of the organisations that utilises Solis for accommodation is Hume Community Housing. Hume is one of those community housing providers to which the Government has outsourced some of the functions that were performed by what was once called the Housing Commission of NSW. If you apply for public housing in New South Wales and you are eventually housed, you could well end up in properties that are either owned or leased and managed by Hume Community Housing. That was certainly the case for one of my constituents who had been on the waiting list for public housing for a considerable time and was eventually offered housing in a unit managed by Hume at Solis apartments.

Applicants for public housing in New South Wales are being housed in buildings encased in flammable cladding. The resonance of that scenario with Grenfell Towers is absolutely horrifying. What on earth is Hume doing housing people in premises like that—especially as warnings were given about such cladding in 2010? Why on earth is the Department of Communities and Justice doing letting Hume do that? Surely it was not conned by the hype around the apartments or by the slick nonsense promotion blurb that I referred to earlier. Among the hype was the claim that this was a new standard of development in Liverpool—yes, it was flammable. One of the most disturbing aspects to its history is that the social housing tenant knew nothing of the existence of the flammable cladding on the building in which he lived—he was not told by Hume. The first he knew of it was when I showed him a newspaper report. One would have thought the least Hume might do is tell the tenants about that problem. Finally, I note that, according to media reports, the official opening of the complex was performed by local Federal MP Craig Kelly and Mayor of Liverpool Ned Mannoun—before he was raided by ICAC.

LAKE CATHIE REVETMENT WALL

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (16:51): This evening I convey the significant distress that has been caused to dozens of residents in Lake Cathie. Just 10 days ago residents on Illaroo Road and parts of

Chepana Street, Bundella Avenue, Kywong Street and Kalang Street received correspondence from Port Macquarie-Hastings Council about the proposed rock revetment wall. The correspondence provided answers to questions, including why a revetment wall was being investigated. The correspondence also provided individual property owners with the total cost apportioned to their property as per the recommendations of the cost-benefit analysis and funding model, which was based both on benefit shares and an upfront payment. For example, residents were asked about their willingness and capacity to pay for the wall based on the amount that was determined and identified in their individual correspondence, which ranged from \$388,500 to well over \$1 million. I wonder whether the council genuinely expected that any resident was prepared to indicate that they either were willing or had capacity to pay. Council already knew the answer, and in fact it acknowledged that in its fact sheet, which states:

We are very much aware that there was limited support for property owners to fund the revetment wall as this was the overriding sentiment of the feedback received during the public exhibition phase of the Stage 2 Coastal Management Options Study.

The process that resulted in the coastal zone management plan [CZMP] and the proposal for a revetment wall for Illaroo Road began 14 years ago, so it is not surprising that residents are both frustrated and angry that now in 2021—only 10 months from the management plan expiry date—we are discussing how the wall will be funded. In general terms, it is my strong view that the Marsden Jacob final report on the Illaroo Road revetment wall funding model is both limited and flawed. Beginning with the limitations, it is not surprising that the question asked by residents and locals from Lake Cathie was: Why were there limited discussions around the consideration that council could fund the revetment either wholly or in part with the support of State Government funding?

To understand that exclusion from the discussion, I return to the November 2013 recommendation to council that was made by the Hastings local government area Coast, Estuary & Floodplain Advisory Sub-Committee. It was agreed by consensus that, first, the council would adopt the Lake Cathie Coastal Zone Management Plan; and, secondly, landowner funding contributions to the revetment wall would be considered only as a last resort in the event that sufficient project funding was not available from New South Wales and Federal governments or council. It is interesting that the correlating agenda item and the recommendations that were made to the ordinary meeting of the council on November 20 differed from that consensus agreement; the council was omitted from any funding option investigations. Instead, the unanimous resolution stated:

That Council seek funding for the total cost of a revetment wall construction from both the New South Wales and Commonwealth governments.

That is a clear indication to me that from the outset council had no predisposition to contribute any significant funding to the revetment project, despite the fact that on 25 July 2012 in the CZMP building a revetment, combined with beach nourishment, was selected as council's preferred management option. Despite the report identifying a number of funding options, the recommendation to council—and consequently the only one presented to the community—is based on a special rate variation where the public or council benefit is transferred to the property owners, increasing their benefit to 100 per cent. The funding model and the final report is based on the premise that the private property owners, rather than the public and therefore the council, are the direct beneficiaries of the revetment wall on Illaroo Road.

The pie chart diagram on page 7 of the Marsden Jacob report indicates that the council owns 61 per cent of the protected assets. Furthermore, the public assets impacted by coastal hazards are identified in the report as car parks, electricity assets, parks and reserves, roads, road reserves, sewers, stormwater and water mains. The cost of the revetment wall is expensive: over \$10.8 million, if constructed in 2020. The estimated cost of the rock revetment wall was \$4 million, but the council has informed the affected property owners that they may have to bear a significantly increased cost because the wall design now includes access stairs, an access ramp, footpaths, seating, lighting, car parking, a new kerb and gutter, et cetera. Like the affected residents and the community, I am understandably baffled to comprehend how property owners are somehow responsible for the cost of those additions to the revetment wall. The additions are obviously to improve public access and amenity, to allow the public to enjoy the foreshore and surrounds, and are not installed solely for the private residents. The suggestion—and I acknowledge that council has not yet made a decision—that property owners should pay for works in the public domain is unprecedented. Again, that is acknowledged in the Marsden Jacob report as follows:

To inform this study, Marsden Jacob has undertaken a review of publicly available information on coastal projects both in NSW and across Australia, more broadly to assess whether they can help inform this assessment of funding options. Unfortunately, no exact NSW precedents were identified.

The report then describes the significant upgrade of the Flynn's Beach Seawall, a multimillion-dollar public domain project funded jointly by both the State Government and the council. The report describes Flynn's Beach as a highly valued beach within the local government area with important recreation and tourism value. I would argue—and I am confident it would be espoused by my fellow Lake Cathie residents—that our local beaches are also highly valued. We rightly expect similar council investment to protect them against coastal erosion and

expected sea level rises, as well as to enhance the foreshore and improve public access. I look forward to updating the House on this important issue.

DUBBO ELECTORATE WOMEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (16:56): The Government has placed a large focus on the vital role that women play in our communities, especially in regional New South Wales. I thank the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, for the work she is doing in that space. She is certainly leading by example. One of the ways the contribution of women is recognised is through the annual NSW Women of the Year Awards. I am extremely proud to talk about four wonderful ladies from the Dubbo electorate who have been nominated for awards this year. I will start with Joh Leader, who does amazing work with vulnerable youth in the region through her organisation LeaderLife.

Working in conjunction with Apollo House and other organisations, Joh gives young people a chance when, unfortunately, others may have given up on them. Often all those young people need is a bit of confidence and a belief that somebody actually cares about them; that is where Joh is a beacon in our community. She works very closely with police and has a range of groundbreaking programs that are being rolled out in Dubbo. One of her pet projects is Soil2Soul. It revolves around a lime farm at Narromine that Joh and her team are leasing. They are working on creating a sustainable model of running the farm while providing training, employment opportunities and life skills for some of the at-risk youth they work with. It is always great to visit the farm and speak with Joh and some of the young men involved.

When I was there only a week ago, I was delighted to tell the crew about a grant they had secured for \$50,000 to add value to production by making lime cordial. I am proud to be part of a Government that has provided \$180,000 worth of funding to that project over the past couple of years; I know the impact it is having on the lives of young people. Joh is a worthy nominee in the Community Hero category. While she is up against some fantastic nominees, I know she will do well and I wish her all the best. Dubbo's other nominees are in the Regional Woman of the Year category. I will start with the wonderful Grace Brennan, who lives in the western extremity of my electorate, near Gin Gin. Grace started a phenomenal movement during the height of the drought, when Buy From The Bush became a beacon of hope for businesspeople in regional parts of the State.

The social media campaign has been incredible. It has seen a \$5 million uplift in revenue and was found to have improved the quality of life of 90 per cent of business owners who became involved. The Government got right behind it, launching the "buy regional" portal, which provided an outlet for the collation of businesses and helped to point buyers from all around the world in the right direction. Buy From The Bush gained more than 250,000 followers on Instagram and breathed life into countless struggling businesses, many of which were run by women who were juggling business and family life. It also acted as a tool to connect people; many were feeling isolated as a result of the drought. Grace's original vision started at the kitchen table, but has been an incredible part of the resurgence of regional New South Wales and I wish her all the best.

While our first two nominees have changed lives, our final nominees are a dynamic duo who are capturing the essence of life in rural New South Wales through a podcast series. Lucy Samuels and Lucy Taylor—the Lucys—are behind ExtraOrdinary Outback Stories, a podcast that has already attracted rave reviews. The concept is that they hop in a plane and fly to remote areas to speak to some of the characters who make the regions a great place to live. Lucy Samuels is a qualified pilot, so she does the flying. She is also a journalist who formerly worked for Prime7 in the Central West. Lucy Taylor wrote for a number of publications including *Outback Magazine*, *Regional Lifestyle Magazine* and *Marie Claire* before moving home to Coonamble when COVID-19 hit. Nine episodes of the series are currently available on Spotify.

Those two women have told some truly remarkable stories. The first podcast featured Tye Simmonds, a motocross prodigy from Bourke who won 13 Australian championships and a world championship. He spoke about balancing his love of motorsport with life in the outback as a goat chaser. They caught up with an English astronomer, Fred Watson, who is very well known across the region and now calls Coonabarabran home; an outback wedding dressmaker who lives near Moree; an opal miner who lives 100 kilometres north of Wilcannia; Australia's most prominent outback author, the wonderful Di Morrissey; the naked farmer, Ben Brooksby; and Burra McHughes, a 23-year-old Aboriginal man from Brewarrina who is the first person from his father's side of the family to complete the HSC.

Each of those women has done remarkable things in their chosen field and that is what the awards are all about. I have had a look through the categories and the women nominated in them. I have to say that while I am extremely proud of Joh, Grace and the Lucys for all they have done, it was enlightening to read about the wonderful things the other nominees have done for their respective communities. Good luck to everyone. The winners will be announced on 10 March during NSW Women's Week at an awards ceremony in Sydney. I wish all the nominees, especially those from Dubbo, the very best.

COOGEE ELECTORATE SOCIAL HOUSING

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (17:02): I comment on the state of social housing in the electorate of Coogee, although I am sure that the Government's neglect of social housing extends to all corners of the State. Social housing is one of the most important things that a State government can provide. Social housing sees some of the State's most vulnerable residents: the elderly, those with disabilities and those who have been sleeping rough. It is often said that how a society treats its most vulnerable is the measure of its humanity. It is clear from the way the Government treats our State's most vulnerable people that it has lost its humanity. Since being elected in 2019, social housing and homelessness has been one of the biggest issues that my office has been able to assist constituents with.

In less than two years my office has helped nearly 150 constituents with social housing issues. According to 2016 census data, the electorate of Coogee has just over 1,000 social housing dwellings. That means that in less than two years, nearly 15 per cent of all social housing residents in my electorate had an issue with social housing that they felt the Government either could not help them with, had chosen not to help them with, or had already failed to help them with. I do not know how anyone in the Government could possibly think that was acceptable. Those statistics show the overall problem with the Government's approach to social housing. But to fully understand the extent and the severity of the Government's neglect, I will speak about some of my constituents who have come to my office.

In the case of one constituent, in 2015—four years prior to them coming to my office—their roof has to be replaced, but no temporary cover was put in place over the weekend. During that period rain fell twice, causing water to enter into their unit, wetting the carpet, causing black grime to run down walls, and damaging the constituent's furniture and possessions. The constituent received some assistance from the contractor, but at the time he received no help from Housing NSW—not even someone to come to inspect their property. One year later, Housing NSW came and repainted the rooms where mould had subsequently developed, but mould continued to grow on the bathroom ceiling, walls and in the cupboard, as well as in one bedroom. Chunks of material had fallen off the ceiling into the bedroom and bathroom. It took years and the assistance of my office for those issues to be examined and finally addressed.

In another case, several constituents in the same building came to my office with severe mould issues. The mould was caused by structural issues within the building, rather than through the fault of any resident. It was not until the horrific level of mould was shown on the news that finally the Government chose to act. But even when the Government acted, the Minister refused to front up to the media himself, leaving it to members of his department. Only the apartment shown on television was treated, leaving the rest of the residents in the building without any assistance.

Those two cases are not rare occurrences; they are not one-offs. They are examples that indicate the level of neglect faced by social housing residents in my electorate. Of course, I do not lay blame for these failures on the client service officers, the maintenance workers or any other hardworking public servants employed in those areas. Clearly the failures belong to this Liberal Government, which has an ideological opposition to properly run social services and an ideological obsession with privatisation and with gutting the public sector. All the stories I have shared are about maintenance issues only.

I have not even begun to address the time it takes for those on the social housing list to acquire a property. Across New South Wales over 51,000 applicants are on the social housing list. The Government has recognised that they need social housing, but it is unable to provide them with a property. What is the Government's big solution? It will provide \$812 million over four years for 1,300 new homes. That money will barely make a dent in waiting times, especially when, at the same time, the Government is selling off hundreds of millions of dollars of social housing, including social housing in my electorate.

Increasing the funding for new housing stock and upgrading older housing stock would create more well-paying jobs and apprenticeships, which are desperately needed for New South Wales to move forward through these difficult economic times. The Victorian Government has recognised that by investing \$5.3 billion to build 12,000 new homes. Whether it be maintenance issues or wait times, it is clear that this Government is entirely uninterested in solving social housing issues in New South Wales. It is content to let properties degrade and waiting times balloon, putting some of our State's most vulnerable people at risk. As the Premier did last week when answering the member for Newtown's question, this Government landlord simply hides behind regulations and platitudes while its tenants live in uninhabitable properties.

COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (17:07): A number of constituents have raised with me questions and concerns about the rollout of COVID-19 vaccinations. Some have been concerned with the timing or with the

priority order for recipients. Others have expressed concern about the safety or efficacy of vaccines produced so quickly. Another concern that has been expressed strongly is that the program should be voluntary, with the decision to accept vaccination left to each individual without any form of coercion or detriment for those who choose to not be vaccinated. Like most people in this Chamber and in the wider community, I recognise the value of vaccinations for infectious diseases. I have received vaccinations on many occasions. In 2020 I could not get the flu vaccination quickly enough, given what COVID-19 seemed to be doing. Like most parents, my wife and I ensured our children were vaccinated according to the recommended schedules.

While I have no medical qualifications, I accept that expert medical authorities in both Australia and in many other countries have investigated thoroughly the two vaccines to be distributed in Australia and have found them to be safe to use. I have no reason for doubt on that score. We know that they are being used widely overseas already. We are advised that when a critical mass of the Australian population has been vaccinated, the risk of widespread and rapid transmission of the virus will be reduced significantly, so strong reasons exist for people to receive the vaccination even if they are not in a particularly vulnerable category. I join with Australia's medical authorities in encouraging people to be vaccinated both to protect themselves, which is the immediate benefit, and to protect the wider community, especially those who are more vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19.

However, I understand the reasonable concerns of those who may wish to withhold judgement for some time or who may decide to not be vaccinated. Constituents have told me that vaccination should be their decision and not imposed on them. I agree. I believe the vaccination program will be more successful if free choice is made clear from the outset. I believe that many of those who hold concerns initially will be reassured as the months pass and the vaccines are delivered safely to millions of people both in Australia and overseas. Many people can be expected to choose vaccination in good time. As it will not be possible logistically to vaccinate everyone at the same time, I cannot see any problem in permitting those most willing to participate to be vaccinated first and allowing others time to be reassured.

There have been suggestions from some quarters that activities or workplaces may impose restrictions relating to people's vaccination status. I urge the Government to do everything possible to avoid that. Any form of coercion in relation to people's health decisions should be a last resort and considered only when absolutely and irrefutably necessary for public health. If health authorities believe that such restrictions on people's freedoms are absolutely and irrefutably necessary, they should never be imposed by unaccountable private entities, but only by government, which will have to answer to the electorate in due course and which can administer exemption and appeal processes. Of course, it is worth noting that a small proportion of the population may have medical contraindications due to pre-existing conditions that make vaccination inappropriate. They should not suffer any detriment on that basis, nor should their health circumstances be anyone else's business.

A final concern that a constituent raised with me is that people who have a conscientious objection to abortion should be able to have access to a vaccine developed without using any product arising from abortion. The AstraZeneca vaccine has been developed from a cell culture derived from an aborted foetus. The Pfizer vaccine has not. Other vaccines that have no such taint are in use overseas. Although it may be that, generally, the recipient will not choose a particular vaccine, I urge the Government to make the choice available to those with that conscientious objection. Personally, I would prefer to not receive the AstraZeneca vaccine for that reason. To maximise the voluntary uptake of COVID-19 vaccinations, the Government should accommodate that concern. Finally, I congratulate all those in Australia and around the world who contributed in any way to the development of vaccines to contain the scourge of COVID-19. It has been a wonderful achievement and is a key step on the way back to a more normal life for all of us.

WESTERN SAHARA

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:11): I raise the issue of the Western Sahara, known as Africa's last colony. I acknowledge the Australian Western Sahara Association, based in my electorate, and the fantastic work it does to support the Saharawi people. On 26 February the people of Western Sahara will commemorate 45 years of the declaration of the Saharawi republic following the abrupt withdrawal of the Spanish in 1976. We salute them on this important anniversary. Since 1963 Western Sahara has been on the UN's agenda as a decolonisation issue. The United Nations, the International Court of Justice and the African Union have confirmed that the people of Western Sahara have an inalienable right to self-determination.

In 1975 Morocco and Mauritania invaded Western Sahara and occupied large parts of the territory. Under the leadership of the Polisario, the people of Western Sahara continued their liberation war against the Moroccan and Mauritanian occupying forces. In 1979 Mauritania withdrew from the territory it occupied, but Morocco resisted until 1991 when it agreed to a ceasefire and a settlement plan proposed by the UN and the Organization of African Unity. Unfortunately, the people of Western Sahara have been denied their right to decide their own future through the free and fair referendum that is an integral part of the plan for the future of the country. The

settlement plan was based on the organisation of a free and fair referendum, which should have taken place in 1992. However, Morocco kept delaying the referendum for fear of the results.

On 13 November last year a dangerous development occurred when the Moroccan armed forces attacked Saharawi civilians who were peacefully protesting in the buffer strip located in the Guerguerat area. The Moroccan army's act of aggression, occupation of the buffer strip and the building of a new sand berm in the area was a flagrant violation of the ceasefire. It led to a new war in Western Sahara. Violations of human rights in the occupied areas of Western Sahara have increased. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have reported unrelenting, gross violations of basic human rights.

We should condemn the atrocities committed against the people of Western Sahara during the 45 years of occupation and exile. We denounce the denial of basic human rights to a peaceful and freedom-loving people in Western Sahara. We deplore the continuous detention of Saharawi political prisoners; in particular, the Gdeim Izik group who have been detained since 2010. We deplore strongly the inaction of the United Nations and the silence of some governments towards the atrocities in Western Sahara. Morocco's aggression and occupation of the Western Sahara was not simply committed against the Saharawis; Morocco attacked the very idea that the UN and international community stand for—respect of international law, human rights and international peace, freedom of speech, expression and due process, and equal rights for all. Those are enduring principles that we cherish in Australia and the same principles that the Saharawis strive for. We are very concerned about the following information that was published on the website of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in its 2021 *Market Insights* report on Morocco:

- The Moroccan Royal Navy has finalised the terms of reference for its high-speed offshore patrol vessels tender for an 80 metre OPV and encourages Austal to again make a formal presentation.
- Continuing to engage with meeting the Moroccan military's red meat tenders office following the award of a dromedary meat tender on 1 December 2020 to Australian company SAMEX.
- Ongoing promotion of Australia's capacities with Morocco's Defence and Interior Ministries.
- A South Australian firm won a Moroccan Defence department contract in 2020 to supply communications equipment. The company is looking at further opportunities to expand.

Given that the Morocco army illegally occupies parts of Western Sahara and is engaged in a war against the Saharawi people, it is important that Australia should not sell military equipment to the Moroccan regime to assist the army in its illegal occupation and war. I urge the Federal Government to put pressure on Morocco to allow the immediate holding of a referendum on self-determination; to immediately and unconditionally release all Saharawi political detainees, and the accounting for those who have disappeared; to lift the blockade imposed on the territory and allow access to it by independent media observers; and to end the plunder of the natural resources of Western Sahara.

I note the decision of former US President Trump to recognise Morocco's illegal occupation of Western Sahara in return for Morocco establishing diplomatic relationships with Israel. That was a unilateral, unprecedented decision that was contrary to international law, UN resolutions and the views of the international community on the Western Sahara. I am glad that the Biden Administration is addressing that matter. Finally, I commend the Saharawi people's resilience and steadfastness. They did not succumb to fear, nor did they engage in any untoward actions to achieve their objectives, because their cause is just and they believe in it. They want to live in freedom and dignity. We have a duty to help them achieve their goals.

SEVEN HILLS ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:16): Every year it is terrific to see so many local sporting organisations, P&Cs, charities and service providers awarded funds in the Seven Hills electorate from the New South Wales Government's Community Building Partnership grants. A few months ago the 2020 recipients were named and the list for my community had 15 projects totalling \$300,000. Those projects will not only benefit local groups and residents but also spur on small business suppliers, tradies and the local economy through the new infrastructure that the grants will create. Technical Aid to the Disabled [TAD] at Northmead was allocated \$37,715 for a new transit van with an access ramp. TAD is a terrific organisation that brings together many volunteers from across Greater Sydney to design and build products to assist those with a disability, particularly children and young people.

I can recall attending TAD some time ago, when we spoke with a local resident who had recently retired after 40 years as an engineer. He had been at TAD five days a week designing specialised tricycles and reprogramming children's cars for kids suffering physical disabilities to use. That builds a great sense of community spirit and is a testament to what TAD is all about. The Kings Langley Scouts were allocated \$35,000 for the removal and replacement of perimeter security fencing surrounding the scout hall. The 1st Winston Hills Scouts were allocated \$10,000 for new fencing and security cameras for its scout hall. I congratulate all the local

scouts on their success in applying for those grants and their constant enthusiasm through our community, particularly at the annual Australia Day function put on in concert with The Hills-Kellyville Rotary Club at Third Settlement Reserve in Winston Hills. Blacktown City Council was allocated \$90,000 in funds for multiple projects across the Seven Hills electorate. The Kids' Early Learning Kings Langley East and Kids' Early Learning Seven Hills East were awarded \$35,000 each for upgrades to their facilities.

Best Road Reserve was allocated \$20,000 for upgrades to the existing playground at Best Road Reserve. Those works include new equipment, drainage, soft fall, under-surfacing and minor reserve embellishments. That is a great outcome for the new and younger families living near the reserve. St Paul the Apostle Primary School in Winston Hills was allocated \$30,000 for a musical playground. That outdoor learning space will be built with a variety of instruments to cater for students of all ages and capabilities. Toongabbie Public School P&C Association was allocated \$29,000 to install a solar system at the school. Those funds will assist in the design, supply and installation of solar PV modules, grid connect solar inverters, mounting systems, AC and DC switchgear, cabling and cabling protection. I know those additions will incite many lessons on energy, the environment and science for the great pupils at Toongabbie Public School. Toongabbie Anglican Church is a fantastic organisation that has aided many in the community, particularly those who suffered during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The church was allocated \$18,000 for the purchase and installation of an access security and control system, along with a master key upgrade. The St Vincent de Paul Society was allocated over \$13,000 for the purchase and installation of solar panels on the roof of the Vinnies-run women's homeless shelter in Wentworthville. It is great to see those funds assisting those in need. The NBC Sports Club was allocated \$12,000 for electrical cabling and associated works to assist with its greens water pumping system. I know the seniors of Northmead and Winston Hills are particularly pleased to see that work being done. Finally, Sunnyfield Community Services was allocated over \$10,000 across two gardening projects. I thank Sunnyfield for its work with those living with a disability across western Sydney. The Northcott Society at Seven Hills was allocated over \$7,000 for a local training facility. It does a terrific job in training those with hearing impairments for employment. I congratulate it on being awarded a grant. I finish by commenting on the KU Children's Services at Wentworthville railway station, which was allocated over \$6,000 for an extension to its awnings and roller blinds to provide additional shade cloth for its outdoor learning space. Those are fantastic awards to some great groups across the Seven Hills electorate.

CENTRAL COAST COUNCIL

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (17:21): Last week I reported the findings of LG Solutions on the Central Coast Council to the House to get some facts on the table about some accounting errors that led to the unfortunate financial position of the council. As public officials we have a responsibility to ensure that when we are dealing with these sorts of things, particularly when there is a high level of community concern, we stick to the facts, that we do not create hysteria and that we safeguard the safety of staff. It has been reported to me that through some of the comments in the media and on social media, average members of council staff—the workers who are mowing the lawns, looking after equipment, working in the library or in child care—have been suffering abuse from people in the community who are angry because there will be a rate rise. Of course, no-one is happy about that, but it is inappropriate to take it out on those staff who are just doing their job and have done nothing wrong.

The administrator has said that there was no corruption involved; no-one stole money and walked away. It was just that the money that was overspent on infrastructure—the over 1,000 projects that went out into the community, which have been listed—was not spent from the appropriate funds. It is not that someone has big cars or big houses; it has been spent on community infrastructure from the wrong accounts. Let us ensure that when we are dealing with the issue we stick to the facts because, as I said, unfortunately, people get hurt if we fall into the trap of hysteria. I also talk about an issue that has been raised a lot: The amalgamation did not contribute to the disaster. That is 100 per cent correct: It did not totally contribute to the disaster that befell the council. But it did contribute in some way. If you are fair and even-handed you must acknowledge all of the facts.

I am not here to defend the financial management of the council. I am seriously angry about it. There were a lot of mistakes made and now as a community we have to pay for that. But it was said that the current Central Coast Council ran up a debt of half a billion dollars. It is easy to say that but it is not true. When the council was amalgamated, \$317 million in debt was carried over from the previous two councils. So the new council did not create half a billion dollars in debt. Half of it, or 56 per cent, was already there. The other half a billion dollars was the \$200 million that was spent inappropriately and unlawfully from the restricted fund. That \$200 million was spent on infrastructure. It was not taken away or wasted. It was spent on infrastructure. That makes up the half a billion dollars. So, yes, there is half a billion dollars of debt, but the new council did not create it all. Some of it was already there. Let us be honest and make sure that we acknowledge that fact.

The second thing about the amalgamation was this: Gosford Council had got through a very good wages outcome for their employees. So when the councils amalgamated, the wages of the Wyong employees then had to be harmonised with those of the Gosford employees. That was part of the amalgamation process. That added \$25.3 million to the wage bill, with a \$3.2 million ongoing cost. That is significant. We have to acknowledge that that cost would not have been borne if the councils had not amalgamated. It would not have happened. But the amalgamation to bring Wyong into sync with Gosford had to be borne. There is an ongoing cost of \$3.2 million. The last issue is the IT cost. I agree that they have gone overboard. They chose an absolutely ridiculous program. The current people in the council have to take that blame. Out of the \$10 million the State Government gave, the IT system alone cost \$50 million, with an \$8 million ongoing licensing fee that will now be borne by the community. Let's stick to the facts. A whole range of things needs to be considered. Let's not create hysteria.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:26): I acknowledge the excellent speech by the member for Wyong this evening in this Chamber. I acknowledge that I, like him, am keen to stick to the facts of this issue and not the hysteria that we have seen playing out in this Chamber over the past few weeks. The member for Wyong and I have met with the Minister for Local Government on multiple occasions. I thank her for her diligence and action on this. Both the member for Wyong and I made representations to the Minister to put this council into administration, which she has dutifully done. Again, both he and I are pushing through on this issue with maturity and responsibility. Both of us are ratepayers. Both of us are angry about the situation that we find this council in. The member for Wyong also articulated quite clearly that there was a severe lack of oversight, as has been pointed out by the administrator's 30-day report which, as he said, has been laid out in layman's terms. The report squarely puts the blame for this situation that the Central Coast Council has found itself in where it needs to be. Again, I acknowledge the member for Wyong for his speech, which gave no platitudes and stuck to the facts.

HOMELESSNESS

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (17:28): The Government's homelessness response to protect people sleeping rough during the COVID-19 pandemic saw over 800 people housed through the Together Home program and 19,000 people supported in hotels and motels through urgent pandemic measures. While fewer people are visibly sleeping on the streets and in parks, the systemic causes of homelessness have not been resolved and other forms of homelessness continue to grow. We now need to take urgent action to eliminate homelessness and prevent a crisis.

The leading risks of becoming homeless are financial difficulties, housing crisis and domestic violence. Domestic violence is increasingly a factor in homelessness. Almost 28,000 people sought housing assistance in the 2019-2020 financial year due to domestic and family violence and the majority of homelessness service clients are women and children escaping domestic violence—about 38 per cent of all clients. Women escaping domestic violence are less likely to sleep on the streets and will often only leave an abusive partner when they find safe accommodation for their family.

There are few crisis and temporary accommodation options catered to or suitable for their needs and there are not enough dedicated services. Analysis of economic impacts from the pandemic indicates that domestic and family violence could increase by up to 5.5 per cent in some areas of the State. We must address domestic and family violence if we are to end homelessness through a fully resourced and funded domestic and family violence sector with targeted accommodation and support. We need to reinvigorate the Government's Domestic and Family Violence Blueprint. Rough sleepers represent only 7 per cent of all people experiencing homelessness, with others couch surfing or in crisis services, boarding houses, temporary lodgings and severely overcrowded living circumstances. While the focus on rough sleepers during the pandemic is understandable and commendable given that sleeping in the public domain makes regular hand washing and social distancing difficult, other cohorts are also in unsafe circumstances and need urgent help.

Recently a limit of 28 days per 12-month period for access to temporary accommodation was restored for those who have not been sleeping rough, following months of reprieve. They do not have access to the 30-day intensive assistance long-term housing program available to rough sleepers. Given hotels and student accommodation remain empty, better outcomes could be arranged for people experiencing homelessness. The number of people sleeping rough who are on temporary visas has increased as they have no access to government assistance and no family support. The Temporary Crisis Accommodation Scheme for international students should be extended to this very vulnerable group of people. JobKeeper has been masking the true economic impact of the pandemic. When JobKeeper ends in March, unemployment rates will likely soar. The 2020 Equity Economics' *A Wave of Disadvantage Across NSW: Impact of the Covid-19 Recession* report commissioned by the NSW Council of Social Service predicts that unemployment will reach 11 per cent in Sydney's inner city and inner south by June this year.

The number of families experiencing housing stress is expected to increase by more than 88,000—more than 24 per cent—with 27,447 more children at risk of neglect. An additional 9,000 people are expected to

experience homelessness across the State. The impact on young people will be severe, with most working in industries hit hard by the pandemic. The New South Wales Government investment in the Uniting NSW, Social Ventures Australia and St George Community Housing's Foyer Central project should be expanded. This newly built campus of 53 studio apartments in Chippendale will provide housing to 18- to 22-year-olds with lived experience of out-of-home care. Foyer models exist in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia and this is the first one in New South Wales.

Ultimately, we need significant investment in new social housing stock to build at least 50,000 new properties over the next 10 years for the 50,000 households on the social housing waiting list. Building 5,000 new properties each year for the next 10 years would create 18,000 construction jobs. The State budget has limited funding for new social housing that was not already planned—approximately 1,280 properties over the next four years. Victoria's latest budget included \$5.3 billion in new social housing for 9,300 properties. Our response to the pandemic has significantly reduced rough sleeping rates, showing what can be achieved when the Government makes homelessness a priority, collaborates with NGOs and provides resources and support. It should be commended. I call on the Government to build on these achievements through a massive social housing development program and work to end homelessness.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:33): The shift away from coal has happened too late, but it is happening and at an astonishing rate. It is no longer a question of if we make the eventual exit from coal, but when. Ten years ago when The Greens were campaigning for no new coal, we were seen as the radical fringe. Now mining giants, banks, insurance companies and fossil fuel companies all agree with us. Collapsing coal prices have seen massive writedowns in value for mining and energy companies. Major lenders are one by one refusing to fund new fossil fuel ventures or provide insurance. Every State in Australia now has a target to achieve 100 per cent renewable energy. Billionaires are funding an undersea cable to export renewable energy from Australia to Asia. The United States and the European Union are considering trade sanctions against countries with no plans to achieve zero emissions. The writing is on the wall and the world is waking up. I have no doubt that in the not-too-distant future there will be criminal prosecutions for people in positions of power who knew about the climate crisis and wilfully failed to act. But there are some people in this place who are still failing us. Any politician who says that there is a future for the coal industry is lying and those lies are hurting people.

While members of the National Party might think that climate change is an issue only on the agenda of the inner-city electorate of Newtown, they are wrong. Yes, the people of the Newtown electorate are scared about what will happen if we do not act in time. But the National Farmers' Federation has also called for a net zero emissions target, because climate change threatens us all. Instead of lies, we need an open conversation about what the future holds and a plan for jobs. The truth is that there are thousands and thousands of jobs in renewable energy—in building big batteries, managing pumped hydro, manufacturing electric and hydrogen cars, making green steel, installing solar panels, harvesting seaweed for fodder, manufacturing hydrogen and loading ships for export. All those currently employed in the coalmining industry need a clear path to accessing those jobs. They need certainty, training and an end to the lies.

The climate deniers in this Parliament—and I acknowledge that there are more in the Federal Parliament in Canberra—refuse to talk about the huge number of jobs in rural and regional communities that will be generated by the rapid decarbonisation of the economy. There are now nearly 8,000 people in New South Wales employed in the renewable energy sector and the industry has seen 25 per cent growth in the past year. Both Origin Energy and AGL have announced that they are closing coal-fired power stations in the Hunter and replacing them with big batteries. Those batteries will stabilise the renewable energy in the grid and provide ongoing employment for Hunter communities. Rooftop solar installations in 2020 smashed all records again, growing by nearly 40 per cent with the fastest uptake for rooftop solar in history.

In late 2020 the Australian Renewable Energy Agency announced funding to transform the former Fassifern coalmine near Newcastle into a site for pumped hydro, providing stability to the grid and employment for workers in the Hunter Valley. In the second half of the year China, Japan, South Korea and the USA all announced net zero emissions targets. China reported a mind-boggling 71.1 gigawatts of new renewable energy installations. Already this year the Sun Cable project was approved by the Northern Territory Government—the world's biggest solar farm. That is despite Australia having no policy certainty and no market mechanisms to manage the transition. It comes despite the best efforts of members of the Federal Government, whose ideological prejudice has rendered them incapable of understanding the immense economic opportunities we have in making the transition to renewable energy.

Across New South Wales 19,000 people are currently working in the coalmining industry. This industry has been in terminal decline for many years. We need a jobs and transition plan for every one of those workers. Instead of the lies, we need a jobs plan that will employ people in regional areas to make the transition to zero

emissions as quickly as possible—not just for the people in the electorate of Newtown but for the globe and for future generations, including the student strikers who stand up and lead the way when it comes to the need for climate action. I have no doubt that in the not-too-distant future there will be criminal prosecutions for people in positions of power who knew about the climate crisis and wilfully failed to act. They will be prosecuted and held to account for the fact that they are doing damage to this planet, to the climate and to future generations as a result of their neglect and negligence.

PRINCES HIGHWAY

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (17:37): During the 2019 election campaign I stood with the Premier of New South Wales to announce that our Government will duplicate the Princes Highway, providing a safer and more reliable highway all the way to the Victorian border. That announcement was made near the intersection of the Princes Highway and Jervis Bay Road, which I identified as one of the sites that our Government should and would upgrade in the future. This intersection experiences some of the highest vehicle movements along the Princes Highway south of Nowra. Its upgrade is absolutely essential to the safety of all road users in the area.

Last year the member for Kiama, the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads and I announced a grade separation flyover for the Jervis Bay Road intersection. We were all very pleased and so was the community, which had lobbied hard for that solution. It is anticipated the intersection will cost around \$100 million, with construction likely to start next year. That could not come soon enough, with the South Coast experiencing a tourism and sea change boom. With national and at times State borders closed, New South Wales residents have flocked to the South Coast, and why wouldn't they? The South Coast features some of the most idyllic beaches and national parks our country has to offer. With a nation-leading defence industry, agriculture, manufacturing and construction, it is a most attractive place to settle. With the pandemic making flexible and remote work options the new normal, people from all over are realising that the South Coast truly offers the best lifestyle to live, work and play.

As with every project on the Princes Highway, best practice was followed to ensure the best outcome for the community. Having assessed all options, the recently announced preferred design is the safest and most reliable option, and will deliver the best results for congestion and connectivity. Along with the member for Kiama and the community, we have fought hard and have once again delivered. We will now work with Transport for NSW to finalise a plan for grade separation that provides a much safer and better outcome for our community. The preferred option will include four lanes for highway traffic, two in each direction. A bridge for highway traffic would cross Jervis Bay Road to allow vehicles on it to travel north on the Princes Highway without being held up by southbound highway traffic. Roundabouts either side of the intersection would further reduce the likelihood of accidents and provide safer connectivity with local roads and highway entry and exit lanes.

Motorists travelling from Jervis Bay Road north onto the Princes Highway and from the Princes Highway east onto Jervis Bay Road would have reliable and congestion-free access. Since 2011 our Government has invested record funding in the Princes Highway. Work continues to progress. As one drives along the South Coast, the Nowra Bridge is taking shape. The Island Point Road intersection upgrade has been completed recently. The Berry to Bomaderry bypass is nearing completion; so is the Albion Park Rail bypass, which will ensure our community will soon enjoy a safer, more reliable and quicker journey along a four-lane highway from Sydney to Jervis Bay Road.

None of those projects would have happened under Labor. Our Government has commenced work or delivered over \$2.5 billion in upgrades to the Princes Highway, with a further \$1.5 billion committed to the projects I have mentioned previously. That is a total of \$4 billion invested by this Government. On top of that is the long-awaited Milton-Ulladulla bypass, a project on which we have already commenced extensive community consultation and which is currently undergoing strategic investigation and design. There is much more work to be done regarding the Milton-Ulladulla bypass. As I have done on many previous projects, I will ensure that the community's voices are heard. At the moment they are quite disunited.

Our next steps in relation to the Jervis Bay Road and Princes Highway intersection include the environmental assessment, which will explain the potential impacts of the project and provide more detail on the proposed features of the intersection upgrade. The environmental assessment for the project will be on display for community feedback in 2021 and I will continue to keep the community updated as the project progresses. I look forward to continuing to work with the Minister for Transport and Roads, and the Minister for Regional Roads and Transport. I thank them for their huge understanding of the issues facing the South Coast, the needs of South Coast residents and the importance of the Jervis Bay Road intersection to the local community.

This all began long before 2019, in 2011. The then Premier of New South Wales, Barry O'Farrell, committed to a great deal of expenditure on the Princes Highway. We are continuing to deliver. We want to save

lives and reduce congestion. All of those things have become far more important since more tourists are travelling to our area and more people want to move to the area, so the roads are understandably far more congested than they were even five years ago. I thank the Government for its support.

MYANMAR PROTESTS

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (17:42): On Monday night I joined Sydney's Burmese community in an act of solidarity with the hundreds of thousands of people in Myanmar who are protesting against the coup that took place on 1 February. A young Burmese woman from Bankstown, Sophia Sarkis, organised the event. It was also attended by the member for Auburn, and the member for Balmain, and the member for Lismore sent some words of support. We wanted to show our solidarity with everybody in Myanmar who is fighting against the coup and for the urgent restoration of democracy. On 1 February a coup led by General Min Aung Hlaing overthrew the very recently elected civilian government of Myanmar.

The new Government was due to be sworn in that day and in doing so it has overthrown all the democratic reforms that have been achieved over the past decade. The President elect, U Win Myint, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and a number of others have been detained. The junta is now saying that it will hold elections next year. There is no need to hold elections next year as there was a democratic election last year. All this has been against a background over the past few years of increasing efforts by the military to wind back those democratic reforms. The Government elected in 2015 and sworn in in 2016 was seen as a watershed. Sanctions were lifted even though the military retained 25 per cent of the seats in the Parliament.

In 2017 when the crackdown on the Rohingya occurred and 700,000 Rohingya refugees had to flee the country, it showed through the cracks that the military was not willing to give up its old ways. It also promoted other ethnic divisions. In 2018 the Australian Karen Organisation and the Kachin Association of Australia staged a huge protest outside the embassy when the army invaded Karen State. Hundreds of thousands of Karen and Kachin people have also been displaced in the past few years. In the past few weeks there have been protests in over 500 towns throughout the country—the largest pro-democracy protests of all time. They are bigger than the protests that occurred in 1998 and bigger than anything that has happened since then. There have been huge innovations from the many young people who are involved in fighting against the coup. Many of those young people are the children of people who fought for the restoration of democracy.

Every night at 8.00 p.m. people across the country go outside and bang pots and pans. This is a way to show that their protests are ongoing, in spite of a nationwide ban on Facebook. That ban has seen Burmese people in their tens of thousands move across to Twitter. It is quite ironic that I am talking about this matter today just as Australia has been largely kicked off Facebook. The Burmese Government banned Facebook to prevent opposition organising against it and it has not worked. The protests are across all ethnic groups and all backgrounds.

Despite the disappointment a lot of people felt when Aung San Suu Kyi did not stand with the Rohingyas against the military in 2017, solidarity has grown across all those groups. Even in refugee camps across the borders in both Bangladesh and Thailand, people are standing in solidarity with the people of Myanmar. To prevent this solidarity and social cohesion, the Government has also released 23,000 non-political prisoners from jail. People fear this is to make way for political prisoners. It is certainly going to create a whole lot of disturbance. This is an absolute disgrace. I know this week a number of other members have mentioned this, but I commend Sophia Sarkis and the entire Sydney Burmese community for coming together to show their solidarity.

TRIBUTE TO RAYMOND LIONEL CLAY

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (17:48): It is with great sadness that I learnt of the passing of former Shellharbour mayor Raymond Lionel Clay on 30 December 2020, aged 94. He was a great man, a wonderful family man with a huge heart for his community and for his family. He was a loving husband of Madge and Eva; a loving father and father-in-law of Narelle, Max, Betty and Davina; and an adored Pop of Kristy and Alisha and Big Pop of Evelyn and Aiden. Ray will be missed by his sisters Pat and Pam.

Ray was a greatly respected figure in the Shellharbour local community, whom I had known for more than 10 years. He served as an alderman on Shellharbour City Council for five terms between 1962 and 1977, including a year as Mayor of Shellharbour City Council in 1976. I can recall in 2016 seeing him on the news cutting the cake at the fortieth birthday celebrations of the Oak Flats Library with the current Mayor of Shellharbour City Council, Marianne Saliba, and former councillor Helen Stewart. Ray was also involved and attended the Shellharbour City sesquicentenary commemorations in 2009 as a former mayor for the impressive 150-year milestone, along with other former mayors including my friend and former member for Kiama Bob Harrison, John O'Dwyer, Joan Vinton and David Hamilton.

In 2014 Ray raised concerns at a public meeting about the proposed Shellharbour hub and he remained active on a number of council committees over the years, so passionate was he about the council he had worked so hard to develop and the community he sought to foster not just for himself but his family, first of all, and his friends right across the Shellharbour community that he loved so deeply. Ray held a number of executive positions within the Shellharbour Sharks Rugby League Football Club. He loved the club. As a life member over the years he played a vital role in saving Ron Costello Oval from overdevelopment. Ray also spent a lot of time compiling photos, articles and documents as part of the history of the club he so admired. He was so proud to have a grandstand named after him at Ron Costello Oval in March 2013 along with fellow club stalwart Joe Murphy. Mick Galligan and former club president Peter Blaine were also honoured that day.

I know that the club will always be grateful for the valuable contribution that Ray made to this great Shellharbour institution. I know the new incoming president, John Clune, and secretary, Kirsty Carroll, will certainly share these sentiments. I also acknowledge Ray's daughter Narelle Clay, whom I have also known for many years as a good friend and also as the CEO of Southern Youth and Family Services. Ray instilled in his family the ideals of community service, of service above self and of giving back to vulnerable people in particular. Narelle exemplifies those ideals through her work with Southern Youth and Family Services. She is certainly a product of her old man.

I express my deepest personal condolences to the entire Clay family. Ray's life was celebrated in Kembla Grange on Thursday 7 January 2021. Ray was certainly somebody who loved his community. He was passionate about representing the interests and standing up for the things that mattered to him. He was feisty, he was determined and he was committed to being a strong voice for his community, serving at local government level. That passion continued even past the time he served as a councillor. Ray was deeply respected right across our community for his ongoing involvement. He was not somebody who simply showed up for elections. He was the person who wanted to be a part of organisations to make them work. He is an example of the essence and flavour of what it is to live in the Shellharbour community.

I know that I say on behalf of the entire community: We thank you for a life well lived. We thank you for your commitment to your family and to your community. You are an exemplar, a model for others to follow. I join with members of his family and friends in saying that I know, hope and pray that he will rest in peace. I also acknowledge the Lord Mayor of Wollongong, Gordon Bradbery, who attended Ray's service, and Jennie George, the former Federal member for Throsby, who also shared a heartfelt message with Ray's family. All of us in this place interact with great people in our community, people we want to acknowledge. I am sorry for Ray's passing. I know he will be missed by all concerned but he leaves a legacy of not just of a life well lived but a community well served. On behalf of that grateful community, I say to Ray: May you rest in peace.

WOLLI CREEK REGIONAL PARK

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:53): I take this opportunity to discuss the importance of nature conservation, especially in a metropolitan context. Within my own electorate I am privileged to have the Wollli Creek Regional Park. The regional park is described by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service as "a beautiful gem in the suburbs" and "a precious pocket of bushland in Sydney". Anyone who has visited the regional park will tell you that the National Parks and Wildlife Service is spot-on with its description. Accordingly, many residents in and around my electorate are passionate about preserving the natural beauty of the regional park. In particular, the Wollli Creek Preservation Society is a group of passionate and highly effective community advocates for the regional park. I thank Peter Stevens, Gina Svolos, Bushcare supervisor Pat Thomas, vice-president Deb Little and all the volunteers and supporters of the Wollli Creek Preservation Society for all their past and continued work and advocacy.

Members of the society will tell you exactly why the Wollli Creek Regional Park is so beautiful. The small stretch of metropolitan forest boasts 50 hectares of impressive bushland that includes heathland and woodland, rainforest trees, wetlands and saltmarsh. It also boasts sandstone cliffs, a creek with natural banks, extensive views, diverse wildlife and the 4.5-kilometre walking track that forms part of the Two Valley Trail. Members of the House are most welcome to walk the track. I have already invited the water Minister, the planning Minister and the environment Minister to walk the track, and my offer still stands. That brings me to a present concern that greatly troubles the members of the Wollli Creek Preservation Society and other communities in my electorate: The proposed sewerage odour control unit that is to be installed by Sydney Water next to the Wollli Bluff area at Unwin Street, Earlwood.

The odour control unit is to be installed next to the section of the Southern and Western Suburbs Ocean Outfall Sewer that crosses Wollli Creek. No-one—including me, the Wollli Creek Preservation Society and other community members in my electorate—is arguing against its installation. We all welcome that initiative. The Wollli Creek Preservation Society acknowledges its consultation with Sydney Water and has nothing but praise for Sydney Water. However, community advocates in my electorate are concerned about the present proposed site

of installation. Members of my electorate have argued that the proposed site is unnecessary and unacceptably intrusive. They have informed me that the current proposed site of installation will require Sydney Water to cut and remove native restored bushland and deface a natural sandstone structure by cutting right into it. Further, the Wollie Creek Preservation Society has advised me that if the odour control unit is installed in its present proposed location, that site will affect the amenity of the Two Valley Trail and it will be lost from the Wollie Creek Regional Park.

Community advocates in my electorate are not just complaining; they are highly educated and they have researched the issue. I acknowledge that we have met with Minister Pavey's office. I have raised the issue with Minister Pavey and Minister Kean, and I have also written to Minister Stokes. My colleagues representing the electorates of Rockdale, Kogarah and Summer Hill have also advocated strongly on behalf of their residents. During COVID we have seen an increase in the number of people who are visiting our national parks across Sydney, particularly in my area. The community has taken the initiative by recommending an alternate location for the odour control unit. It so happens that next to the Southern and Western Suburbs Ocean Outfall Sewer at Wollie Creek is a parcel of land owned by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

The Wollie Creek Preservation Society believes that it is large enough for the odour control unit. The site is desirable as it has little native vegetation, there are no sandstone structures and it will not disrupt the amenity of the Two Valley Trail. I urge the water Minister to visit the site. It is a sensible solution. I do think that we will find a solution but we must work together to ensure that we preserve what we have. I call on the Government to look at that alternate solution.

EASTWOOD BENDIGO BANK BRANCH

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (17:58): One of the best aspects of life in Australia is the endless opportunity that is afforded to each and every citizen. A fundamental truth of our society is that, regardless of heritage, religion or identity, there is a place for people in our community who work hard. As the member for Ryde, I am constantly reminded of that fact. Many have crossed borders to pursue a future here, as my family did a generation ago. That has created a wonderfully diverse and vibrant multicultural community. I was privileged to attend the recent launch of the new Eastwood Bendigo Bank branch, which is located on Rowe Street. The branch will provide multicultural financial services relevant to the opportunities that are present in the electorate of Ryde. The branch is particularly important to the local Korean community, as was exemplified by the attendance of Consulate General of the Republic of Korea, Mr Sangwoo Hong, at the launch of the new branch.

The community bank was envisaged by Korean community leaders three years ago with the aim of improving the prosperity and sustainability of the local community. That was highlighted by Chang Soo Yoon, Chairman of Korean Community Financial Services, who underpinned the importance of the branch to enhancing and growing community capital. Hard work shapes our community and creates a better future. Such people deserve our recognition and thanks. It was a pleasure to meet with and hear from incoming chairman Sang Kyun Lee and director Sunny Cheng at the launch. Jimmy Park, the emcee for the evening, is a strong community advocate who heads the Eastwood Korean Chamber of Commerce and has joined the newly opened branch as secretary. The new Eastwood branch is the result of three years of hard work by community leaders working in tandem. That will no doubt continue as the branch grows its client base and creates greater access to multicultural financial services.

New manager James Jeong was proud to introduce his multicultural team at the launch. The grassroots nature of the bank and its community support were represented by those who were excited to see its arrival and who attended the launch. Community leaders Hugh Lee and Anthony Ching celebrated with words of welcome. Both men are stalwarts of Eastwood who continually engage in community affairs across the board. In addition to the local Korean community attendees, the branch launch received support from Bendigo Bank. Community Business Manager John Carvin, Sydney Metro West Regional Manager Amanda Mahon-Paul and State Business Development Manager Denice Kelly joined us at the opening. Bendigo's charter of returning profits is well known in the area, as illustrated by the strong local reinvestments that have been made by the North Ryde branch of Bendigo Bank. Those reinvestments have stood the test of time.

The community has received funding to enhance and grow community capital. Education, sport and cultural sectors have received support in the form of sponsorships and donations for infrastructure totalling \$70,000 in the 2019-2020 year, and a total of 25 community projects were completed. Given such support, we are incredibly excited to know that members of the Eastwood community stand to benefit as the branch grows. Positive changes such as those build our community, and we owe a great deal of thanks to those who have personally supported the creation of the Eastwood branch. Local-level financial institutions such as Bendigo Bank's Eastwood branch not only support our community through increased financial services and jobs

but also provide an example that great things are achievable when local citizens collaborate and innovate. A bright future no doubt awaits Eastwood's Bendigo Bank and the community it serves.

ACCELERATING R&D IN NSW INITIATIVE

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (18:01): There is no doubt that COVID-19 has helped us to focus on what matters and to adapt to the world around us. We have been reminded that our health is paramount and that we cannot do much without it. We have also renewed our reverence for science and for the scientists who hold the key to a COVID-free world. COVID has given us the opportunity to tackle longstanding challenges like how to better accelerate research and development commercialisation. Over the past 12 months the Government has been inundated with new ideas and potential solutions to the pandemic from researchers, start-ups and industry. Research and development is a major economic lever that was called out in the *NSW 2040 Economic Blueprint* that underpins the Premier's COVID-19 Recovery Plan. Research and development can help to create new jobs, services, products and industries.

Commercialising research and development means real things to real people. It means better health treatments, safer transport services, and solutions to water and energy sustainability. On 25 January the New South Wales Premier launched the action plan titled *Turning ideas into jobs: Accelerating research and development in NSW*. The plan shows how we can turn more of our great ideas in New South Wales into jobs and new industries by helping to link the stakeholders in our innovation ecosystem. And there is so much potential—New South Wales has more top universities and start-ups than any other place in Australia and it also has great research strengths, as evidence by its world-beating COVID response.

I have appointed an advisory council of eminent leaders, chaired by David Gonski, AC, which guided the action plan. The council has recommended five priority actions. They include: launching a Small Business Innovation Research program, boosting our open data capacity, turbocharging our innovation precincts, targeting strategic support for our universities and establishing an online R&D matchmaking platform. The action plan recommends implementing those priority actions along with 16 supporting actions in an integrated way across the whole of government. To kick that off the New South Wales budget provided \$26 million to implement the Small Business Innovation Research program and to set up the online matchmaking program, which is really gratifying. The Small Business Innovation Research program will provide competitive grants for small companies to find and commercialise innovative solutions to well-defined problems for New South Wales agencies.

We are going to expand our open data. A lot of good work has been done on that front by the Minister for Customer Service. We must give innovators in our community the information they need to build new businesses and improve their decision-making. Our matchmaking platform will make sure that research buyers and sellers are linked up, and that researchers know where equipment is and can find the expertise they need. The Government also has priority innovation precincts such as the aerotropolis, Westmead and Tech Central. We need to attract national and global technology industries, and drive collaboration between start-ups, scale-ups, SMEs, universities, businesses and international investors to commercialise research into products, services and new jobs.

We are going to give targeted support to New South Wales universities through better leveraging Commonwealth research funding. There is a lot on offer, but we need to be more strategic about which pots of funding we go after and how. One of the supporting actions in the plan recommends more translational research funding. Last Tuesday I joined planning Minister Rob Stokes and the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer at the Sydney Startup Hub. We congratulated the round two recipients of the \$5 million NSW Physical Sciences Fund, which helps young people with new technologies to scale up their inventions. I congratulate four successful New South Wales start-ups: BioScout, MicroTau, Quasar Satellite Technologies and Zetifi. They are going to become new businesses in our economy with great ideas that are born of New South Wales. On 5 February I briefed members of the Business Council of Australia [BCA], hosted by Chief Executive Jennifer Westacott, AO, along with David Gonski, AC, and Professor Hugh Durrant-Whyte. The BCA was complimentary of the Government's action plan. It said:

We welcome the five priority actions identified in this plan, in particular turbocharging the precinct model that is already attracting global investment will be critical.

We look forward to working with Gabrielle Upton and the state government to get the implementation of this plan right so we can create the new jobs and opportunities Australians want.

I thank the advisory council for its input. We can and will turn more of the great ideas in New South Wales into jobs and new industries, and realise the State's potential to be a research and development leader and a world-class contributor. I commend my private member's statement to the House.

*Community Recognition Statements***BARRY AND MARION FEARNSIDE**

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (18:06): I congratulate Barry and Marion Fearnside of Condell Park, who will be celebrating their fiftieth wedding anniversary on 6 March. The Condell Park couple were married in Hurlstone Park and have lived in Cragg Street, Condell Park, for 46 years. The couple met at a youth group in Dulwich Hill. Barry had moved to Sydney nine years prior, as he had taken up an engineering apprenticeship with Qantas. He then became a pilot and is still a member of the Australian Aerobatic Academy, based at Bankstown Airport in my electorate of East Hills. He flies a Robin. He taught aviation at Padstow TAFE for many years. "Love is in the air" has been a constant in their 50-year partnership; to celebrate that wonderful milestone, what else would they do but go hot air ballooning? Congratulations to Marion and Barry on their high-flying efforts during 50 years of marriage.

IRIS FOUNDATION

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (18:07): I congratulate the Iris Foundation on being voted for by the community through the Greater Central Coast Community Funding Program. The Iris Foundation will receive \$2,000 to help cover essential operational costs, including the upgrade of digital and IT equipment. The funding will support the essential work that goes on behind the scenes to broaden the foundation's positive impact. The not-for-profit organisation works to reduce the risk of suicide within the Central Coast community by facilitating and supporting awareness campaigns, programs and partnerships that enhance connectedness and wellbeing. The demand for its school-based resilience programs and workshops has increased fivefold in 2020 as a result of COVID, with staff and volunteers working tirelessly to meet the increased demand.

JACINTA SMITH

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:08): I congratulate Jacinta Smith from Narrandera on winning the Neville Mitchell Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship was named after former Lions club member Neville Mitchell. Neville was a huge advocate for youth initiatives and involvement within the community. Jacinta was presented with her award by Narrandera Lions Club president Ros Davison for being an exemplary student and leader at Narrandera High School. Jacinta's passion for and dedication to learning has landed her a spot as a nursing student at the University of Wollongong. It is a wonderful achievement to have been honoured with that scholarship. Jacinta is one of many students within the Cootamundra electorate about to start university. It is wonderful to see so many students furthering their knowledge to gain jobs in their chosen careers. Congratulations once again to Jacinta. I wish her the very the best of luck at university.

DENNERLEY LEATHER DESIGNS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:09): From Covent Garden to the Maitland levee, Hunter Valley artisans Bob and Annie Dennerley have been crafting and selling exquisite leatherwork pieces through their brand Dennerley Leather Designs, which was established in 1975. From beautiful laptop bags to notebooks to record those special moments, handbags with a chic Parisian flair, horticultural and barista aprons, keyrings, travel accessories and more, Bob and Annie lovingly stitch patience, joy and excellence into every piece. That love for the community flows out of their riverside studio and across Maitland's CBD. Bob's familiar handmade signs, maps and messages of encouragement and support for our local business community are a feature of Maitland. Every time I see one of Bob's signs, I am reminded of the passion they both have for ensuring that our community is a thriving, artistic one, rich with cultural experiences and the positivity that Bob and Annie generate. They are generous and kind donors to many of our local charities, and we appreciate them for that. I love going into their shop to look for inspiration or to purchase a bespoke gift that is uniquely Maitland. I thank Annie and Bob for their constant inspiration.

NOAH POCIASK

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:10): I acknowledge an emerging tennis sensation in my electorate who is literally hitting aces and serve-volleying his way through the ranks to sporting success. Local boy Noah Pociask is an 11-year-old protégé of the tennis world. Ranked fourteenth in New South Wales for his age group, Noah was recently selected by the Polding team for the NSW Primary Schools Sports Association after dazzling the selectors when representing the Lismore Diocese in tennis. Noah has by no means sailed through the ranks without adversity. He explained his determination to overcome a broken finger while maintaining his training and fitness for the Polding trials. At the tournament Noah exceeded expectations by winning five matches out of six to secure his 12-month stint with the Polding team. Now training with elite tennis players on the court, Noah is determined to take every opportunity with the squad to improve his skills and abilities, in the hope that one day he will represent Australia alongside the best in the world. I congratulate Noah on his recent achievements on the tennis circuit and wish him every success for his upcoming tournaments.

BRIAN DAVIES

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:11): I acknowledge and thank Brian Davies for his contribution to frog conservation on the Central Coast. Brian, who has had an interest in frogs and improving their habitats for a number of years, was recently named FrogID Week's Top Frogger for 2020. The acknowledgment comes from Australia's biggest annual frog count, which aims to measure the health and distribution of the nation's frog species. That is no mean feat. Brian managed to record 323 submissions, resulting in over 900 verified frog records—15 different species were found on his property alone. Brian hopes to inspire interest in frog conservation and citizen science in the next generation. On behalf of the Central Coast community, I thank Brian for his dedication and for making the coast more frog friendly.

HAWKESBURY CHRISTMAS CARD DRAWING COMPETITION

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:12): I commend all participants in the 2020 Hawkesbury Christmas card drawing competition for showcasing their amazing talent. I congratulate Gabriella Lupi from St Matthew's Catholic Primary, Windsor, on winning the competition with her beautiful artwork of Jesus' birth. I also congratulate Natalie Kassis from Colo Heights Public School on achieving runner-up in the competition with her quality artwork of Santa travelling with reindeer. I extend my congratulations to the following students for their highly commended submissions: Judah Hibble from Kuyper Christian School; Janelle Joscelyne from Colo Heights Public School; Heath Barglik from St Monica's Primary School; Dylan Arnold from Kurrajong Public School; Ruby Oaklands from Windsor Public School; and Maia Laurence from Macdonald Valley Public School. I thank all the participating students and schools for their contributions, which were warmly received. I thank the parents for their efforts in getting their children's submissions delivered to me.

WILLOW GROVE

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (18:12): On Sunday I joined the North Parramatta Residents Action Group [NPRAG] and the Save Willow Grove Action Group for a Valentine's Day protest to preserve Willow Grove after the Government announced on Friday that it will be demolished for the Parramatta Powerhouse Museum. I commend the NPRAG and Save Willow Grove for their incredible work over many years, and particularly for their innovative protest on Sunday to show Willow Grove the love on Valentine's Day. We placed almost 150 red hearts on the fence with messages, as well as photos of the children who were born in the former maternity hospital. Unfortunately it was all ripped down on Monday morning by the contractors, who replaced it with signs to say that it is the Parramatta Powerhouse, and to obscure it from public view. I commend them for their hard work and urge them to keep fighting. We have not lost yet.

BELLBIRD CAFE

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (18:14): I congratulate Bellbird Cafe at Casula Powerhouse on being named one of south-west Sydney's best cafes. The competition was held by *Delicious* magazine and was endorsed by food critic Matt Preston. The competition invited people from all over Australia to vote for their favourite cafe and I was thrilled to see Bellbird being given the credit it deserves. It is described as a hidden gem by locals, and they and I can vouch for the delicious brunch and lunch options available on the menu. Bellbird Cafe uses local, seasonal and sustainable ingredients and products in its dishes—some from its very own garden. Its philosophy is to be accessible, affordable and perfect for everyone to enjoy. Once again I congratulate Bellbird Cafe on being named one of the best cafes in south-west Sydney and providing lovely food and coffee to residents of our local area.

FACEBOOK

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (18:15): This is a message to Facebook and Mark Zuckerberg. Stop behaving like a totalitarian regime and dictator. Australians will not be held to ransom by you and your company. Stop intervening in our democracy. It is unwarranted and reprehensible. Our community has endured extreme struggle, but what would you know, Mr Zuckerberg? Stop playing with people's lives. People have gone through extreme struggle and they are dying. They need information about their health and wellbeing. The COVID vaccine is about to be rolled out. People need information. We have farmers and people across our nation who are struggling and rely on your platform. We urge you to stop playing politics, be a good corporate citizen and turn back on.

COLLEEN GODSELL

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:16): I announce the North Shore Woman of the Year, Colleen Godsell. Colleen has been nominated for her decades of service to Scouts Australia and the North Shore community. Colleen has worked tirelessly for the scouts in organising funding and events. Over five years Colleen has raised more than \$1 million to preserve the Mosman Scout Hall, which is known as "The Barn" and regarded

as the birthplace of scouting in Australia, for its historical significance and community use. Colleen was recognised as Distinguished Service Award recipient for her commitment, services and passion for our local scouts. She was also awarded a Member of the Order of Australia for her significant service to youth through scouting, and through roles with educational historical preservation, Indigenous tourism and social welfare groups. Colleen has been active in our local school community, having been a member of the board at Redlands for over 10 years and only recently stepping down. I congratulate Colleen on receiving this award as the North Shore Woman of the Year and on exemplifying community service and leadership.

BARBER INDUSTRIES

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (18:17): Barber Industries recently opened its doors at Westfield Tuggerah and held a free back-to-school haircuts weekend for primary and high school aged boys over the weekend of 30 to 31 January. Over the two days, eight barbers were cutting non-stop, with people queuing out the door and around 180 boys heading back to their first day of school in style. With a long queue of young kids, the barber shop offered free drinks, chocolates and lollies to keep the mood light. The day also had a charitable component, with Barber Industries partnering with Central Coast Kids in Need to raise funds for that charity, which supports the families of seriously ill children on the Central Coast. The amount of funds raised in the donation box still needs to be confirmed, but it looks like it was very successful. The shop is considering making the back-to-school free haircut weekend a regular event to raise money. The Barber Industries team are impeccably trained and skilled in their trade and also have community spirit to raise money for very good causes.

LITTLE WINGS AND PENSURST RSL

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:18): I recognise two local organisations in my area that are working together to make a real difference in our community. Little Wings is a charity based out of Bankstown Aerodrome, in the electorate of the member for East Hills, and it provides transport to children in rural and regional New South Wales who need life-saving medical treatment. Despite a major drop in turnover, Penshurst RSL contributed \$2,000 to Little Wings in November last year to ensure that it can continue its fantastic work. This brings the RSL's total donations to the charity to over \$20,000 in five years. Little Wings chief executive officer Clare Pearson said that this funding was crucial for her organisation, which struggled to continue its work during the COVID pandemic. The club's donations have sponsored the equivalent of 14 flights, with each flight for a family costing over \$1,500. I thank Penshurst RSL club president, John Hoban, and chief executive, Chris Hendley, for continuing to give back to a fantastic local charity and I hope to see the partnership grow in the future. I congratulate both organisations.

TRISH MARINOZZI

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:19): For 15 years Trish Marinozzi has served in the other place as Chief Whip behind the Opposition Whip. As a shadow Minister in this place, I have to say that Trish has been able to wield the whip to wrangle deadlines, egos, issues and many other things that occur—although they probably happen less so in the other place. Trish is leaving to return to education, but she is such a feisty, fantastic feminist who always reminds us of the need to engage with and be inclusive of everyone in our community. I know that we will really miss her. I hope that everyone will join me in wishing Trish all the best in her new career. I hope to see her back on these benches or the other benches very soon.

PAUL LEMMON

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:20): On Australia Day a dozen outstanding coasties received annual Australia Day awards for their positive contribution to community life. I extend my heartiest congratulations to a true legend, Paul Lemmon, a Forresters Beach local who was named the Central Coast Sportsperson of the Year. Paul is in fact one of our State's most distinguished masters athletes in the ocean and pool. Paul has earned a whopping 21 gold medals across masters and pool rescue championships in the 2019-20 season alone. That is a truly outstanding achievement. Paul also serves others in our community by coaching and mentoring at Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club. He is also a fantastic librarian at Brisbania Public School. He is a wonderful, all-round great chap. It is a pleasure to know Paul personally. On behalf of the House, I congratulate Paul on receiving his Australia Day award and I wish him all the very best in his future sporting endeavours.

TOUKLEY FIRE AND RESCUE NSW

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (18:21): Fire and Rescue NSW Station 470 Toukley is dedicated to protecting our community. Toukley is a retained fire station and recently has been recruiting for new members. Most recently, firefighters were at Sporties Markets running an educational stall showing what it was like to be a firefighter. The Facebook page featured Brooke Hayes, who has been with Toukley for nearly 12 months. Brooke is a stay-at-home mum with two sons. In her spare time Brooke likes to surf, hang out at the beach, read and mow

her friends' lawns. I encourage the others in the community to become a retained firefighter like Brooke at Toukley Station 470.

SYLVANIA HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (18:22): I acknowledge the Sylvania Heights Public School P&C Association, which is a successful recipient of \$30,000 from the New South Wales Government's Community Building Partnership Program. Founded in 1952, Sylvania Heights Public School has a proud tradition of providing excellence and innovation in the education of students. Being the centre of its community, the school works in partnership with parents and community leaders to maximise opportunities for students and prepare them to love learning and be ready for the future. I am delighted that, through this grant, Sylvania Heights Public School is able to upgrade the canteen, which will provide a safer and more hygienic environment for students, as well as repair the hall stage and curtains to improve the functionality of that space. I commend the community at Sylvania Heights Public School for their dedication and passion towards primary education, including principal Clint White, P&C president Sandy Rourke, vice-presidents Angela Palermo and Taryn Mazurkiewicz, treasurer Julie Williams and secretary Merryn Develyn. I thank the Sylvania Heights Public School community for bringing the importance of this project to my attention.

JORDAN COOPER

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:22): I congratulate Jordan Cooper from Gundagai, who has been selected in the women's New South Wales Indigenous cricket team that will play a tri-series at Bradman Oval in March this year. Jordan is a very talented off spin bowler who has played representative women's cricket in the local region for many years. Most recently she has been competing in the under-19s Riverina side at the U19 Women's Country Championships where she impressed with 3-9 off three overs against the Western Division. During NAIDOC week Jordan was selected to play for the Sydney Thunder Indigenous women's team and after that exciting experience she would love one day to play in the Women's Big Bash League. I congratulate Jordan and wish her all the best with her cricket.

MUSLIM GIRLS GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (18:23): I acknowledge and welcome the Muslim Girls Grammar School, which opened in Granville this term. The school has only 68 students but has the capacity to grow to 500. On Monday I had the pleasure of meeting the principal, Linda Baird, who has moved from South Australia to lead the school and is an incredibly experienced principal. The school aims to instil in girls a very well-rounded and faith-based education that is currently not available in the local area. The school has been established in the former South Street Granville TAFE buildings, which are incredible heritage-listed buildings. I am delighted about the restoration of these buildings that were not loved by the State Government. Those buildings were built in 1909 and the Premier of the day, Wade, laid the keystone. They are beautiful and it is great to see them in use again.

MARTA CHASLE

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (18:24): I congratulate Marta Chasle, who will celebrate her 100th birthday on 10 March 2021. Marta was widowed at the age of 36 and had seven children in her native Mauritius. She was struggling there and decided to join her brother and two older children in Australia. She lived in Campsie, then moved to Panania and now resides at the Beechwood nursing home at Revesby. Marta has 16 grandchildren and 29 great-grandchildren. She is a great cook and loved to look after her grandchildren so that her children could work and create a better life. She says she loves the freedom we have in Australia and how lucky we are to have a reliable political system. I again congratulate Marta on turning 100 and hope she enjoys her very special day.

MUL CHOWK KITCHEN

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (18:25): If you want a great outdoor dining experience with live music, come to Campsie and visit the Mul Chowk Kitchen, which is owned by Govinda Paudel. I spent a lovely Saturday night with the Australian Nepalese community after the Auspali group had organised a Nepalese-Australian meeting. It is where many of our Nepalese residents and our non-residents were able to come together and support each other, particularly after a very difficult year. Many of us whose electorates include Australian-Nepalese or international students from Nepal know it has been a very difficult time. We had a great night. We had dancing. It was outdoor dining. There was great live music. Come down and have a great night. I thank the organisers.

CASULA UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (18:26): I acknowledge Casula United Football Club and welcome it to our local sporting community. Casula United is a new club, only forming last year. In that time it has grown, recruiting many players, junior and senior, male and female. It has had quite a successful season. The

club has been running preseason training for all ages over the break. It is great to see so many locals involved in the new club and at Jadine Park, enjoying being part of a team. The club specialises in football excellence and encourages players of all abilities to come and play. Once again, I congratulate Casula United Football Club on such a successful season, setting the standard with its first one. I wish the club the best of luck for the future and hope to hear more about its achievements in the years ahead.

BILLABONGS RESTAURANT

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:27): For many years now Maitland has ushered in the Lunar New Year at Billabongs Restaurant at the East Maitland Bowling Club. Over the past 25 years Jimmy, Anny, Jason, Wilson, Ly and Jenny have brought Chinese dragons and drummer troupes up from Sydney and Jimmy has even performed martial arts to celebrate the Lunar New Year, giving out red envelopes to everyone. This was a welcome addition to Maitland's cultural scene and will be greatly missed. Billabongs worked hard to change its business model over the past 12 months and continued to share its generosity with those less fortunate in our community, initiating a pay-it-forward program where people could purchase a bill for others in need. Sadly, in December 2020 Jimmy, his family and the team bade farewell to their many loyal customers. They now look at ways to reinvent themselves in a post-COVID environment. We thank them for making our community a richer, more colourful, more generous and more tasty place in over 25 years in business. Gong hey fat choy. I wish them a happy Lunar New Year.

SIMON MOORE, OAM

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:28): I congratulate a North Shore resident and a dear friend of mine and of many people here, Simon Moore, who was recently acknowledged in the Australia Day Honours. Simon was recognised with a Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to the broadcast media, particularly through FINE FM, and community organisations such as the AIDS Council of New South Wales and the Liberal Party of New South Wales. Simon, who lives in Kirribilli, has worked at FINE Music 102.5 Community Radio since 2004. After only a couple of months of volunteering, Simon was filling in for the morning breakfast show on Thursdays, when he regularly played a mix of show tunes and traditional classical music. Simon has also been instrumental in our New South Wales Liberal Party, serving in various roles over the years and only recently stepping down as my conference president. I have had many interesting times while handing out with Simon, but none will I remember so much as handing out for same-sex marriage a couple of years ago and then enjoying attending his wedding to his husband, Brian. I congratulate Simon on receiving this well-deserved award in recognition of his service to the local community.

MARK, JULIA AND KAREN VAN HUISSTEDE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:29): I pay tribute to my former travel industry colleagues, Mark, Julia and Karen van Huisstede, for their resilience, enthusiasm, energy and business acumen. I have known Julia for many years, first as a business development manager with Jetset Travelworld Group. Through her excellent mentoring, guidance and leadership, many agencies like mine grew and prospered. When Julia moved to the Hunter to marry Mark, joining Karen to operate some very successful Harvey World Travel franchises, she became a competitor in name only. The van Huisstedes are visionary businesspeople who know how to work together and collaborate. They have sponsored many community events, were major sponsors for Mai-Wel and have been active members of the Maitland Business Chamber. They have created jobs in Maitland and navigated hurdles such as the global financial crisis, consolidation in the travel industry, Ansett's collapse and much more. This week they closed their final store in the Junction after closing the Maitland store some months ago, but they are yet again diversifying their business. I know they will go from strength to strength to overcome these challenges. I wish them every success in their new online venture and thank them for their enormous contribution to our community.

ADLA COURE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:30): I give a big shout-out to my wife and much better half, Adla Coure, who is celebrating her birthday today. Adla is a school teacher and head coordinator of English who is active in our local area through the P&C Association, Rotary, the football clubs and is the newly elected president of the Peakhurst-Lugarno Branch of the Liberal Party. I acknowledge the wonderful work that Adla does with school-age kids studying English at the senior levels of 11 and 12. More recently, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Adla created the Georges River Eats Facebook page, encouraging local residents to buy takeaway from local businesses and keeping many of them afloat. Within days, hundreds of locals started sharing photos of their breakfasts, lunches, dinners and snacks, encouraging others to order at the same time. Now Georges River Eats has over 3,000 members. Adla is still working to maintain the page. This community spirit in our local area is as strong as anywhere in the State, which we already knew. I thank Adla and wish her a happy birthday.

COOKS RIVER VALLEY ASSOCIATION

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (18:31): Cooks River is home to a significant population of native flora and fauna. Local environment groups such as Cooks River Valley Association and the Mudcrabs and many volunteers have worked hard over many years to ensure that our river and surrounding vegetation is protected. Now an oil company is trying to cut a 16 metres wide gash through the middle of our beautiful vegetation along the Cooks River. For decades, the Cooks River Valley Association and the Mudcrabs have been working to revitalise this beautiful part of our city. Jo Haylen and I visited this part of our area and spoke to those groups. We acknowledge and thank them for the amazing work they do. We have also met and written to Minister Kean and others, asking that they intervene with this oil company that wants to destroy our local native fauna and flora.

SHARON ALDRICK

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:32): On Australia Day 12 outstanding Central Coast residents received recognition for their positive contributions to community life as part of the annual Australia Day awards. Tonight I particularly acknowledge and congratulate the winner of the Arts, Culture and Entertainment Award, Sharon Aldrick. Sharon lives in Copacabana in my electorate of Terrigal and is a well-known photographer and community arts worker in our local area. Sharon was commissioned in 2020 to take historically important photos of the Central Coast during the COVID-19 pandemic. I understand that they will be exhibited later this year. Sharon has served her local community through dedication to improving opportunities to access arts and culture on the Central Coast, mentoring emerging artists and artists with disabilities. This includes working with the National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association, which is a fantastic provider of dance and cultural education at Kariong. Australia Day is an opportunity to celebrate the cultures that make our community. Of course, these have been captured through Sharon's photographs, making her a very deserving winner of the Arts, Culture and Entertainment Award.

CASULA PARKLANDS PARKRUN

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (18:33): I recognise Casula Parklands parkrun for holding its first ever event in February and extend my congratulations to the 133 runners and walkers who participated. The event could not have gone ahead without the work of the volunteers who helped ensure its smooth running. It was great to see so many people involved in the launch of the day. Casula Parklands parkrun is now held every week and encourages people from the community at different levels to get involved. It is a great way for locals to be active whilst being a part of a community group. It is a free, timed, five-kilometre event, and people can choose to walk, jog, run or volunteer. It is held purely for enjoyment, and everyone can complete the course at their own pace. Once again, I congratulate Casula Parklands parkrun on hosting this event and I am sure there will be many more to come.

MAITLAND NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:34): I congratulate Sarah Adams and everyone at the Maitland Neighbourhood Centre on the work they have done over the past 12 months, particularly since COVID-19 hit. They have had back-to-school drives to provide stationery and other necessities to students, a toy drive for Christmas, and Share the Dignity bags for women leaving domestic violence. Day in, day out they provide a service to people who are experiencing homelessness and financial difficulty. They are a coordination point for everyone in our community. Even though they are based in Rutherford, they do a lot of outreach work in Woodberry, on the other side of our community. They fulfil a very important need and I thank them very sincerely for the work they do to keep dignity, health and joy in the lives of everyone in Maitland.

JAKE SCHULZ

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:35): I congratulate Jake Schulz from Temora, who is the Riverina winner of the ABC's Heywire competition. Jake's story is all about his love of dance, particularly ballet. He is the only boy in his ballet class and loves what he does. The competition is a wonderful opportunity for young rural, regional and remote people to tell their stories. Jake will head off to Canberra for the Heywire summit, where he will meet with winners from around the country, as well as politicians and policymakers. Together they will brainstorm solutions for some of the big issues facing their communities and the young people who call them home. I congratulate Jake and thank him for sharing his story.

MOSMAN HOUSE

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:36): Late last year Women's Community Shelters, in partnership with the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter and Link Housing, established housing in Mosman for women over the age of 55 in the refurbished Mosman House. The services provided at Mosman House are available to older women who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness, fleeing domestic violence or facing

financial insecurity. Mosman House provides tenancy support, onsite casework and engagement with local community services to assist these women to get back on their feet and plan for the future. I congratulate Link Housing and Women's Community Shelters, which were successful in securing funding through the New South Wales Government's Investing in Women program, which has contributed to establishing Mosman House. I acknowledge Beth Lawsen, vice-chair of the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter, who has worked tirelessly on this project. I also thank members of my local community who donated a number of new fridges and microwaves to Mosman House when the call went out for donations.

EMPIRE BAY PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:37): Since being elected in 2015, I have had the absolute pleasure of working with the Empire Bay Progress Association, a fantastic organisation made up of passionate volunteers from the Empire Bay community. I am pleased to say that they have had their annual general meeting this evening in front of a full house at the Empire Bay Progress Hall. I congratulate Carolyn Barham and her team, all but one of whom were re-elected. This wonderful organisation has done an amazing job working with State and Federal governments and councils to secure significant funding for the Empire Bay region, including \$1.8 million for the upgrade of Greenfield Road, an upgrade of the beautiful Empire Bay Hall, and a brand-new play space that I was able to provide with \$350,000 from the New South Wales Government. The Empire Bay Progress Association has done an outstanding job in delivering for the community. I look forward to working with it and the committee well into the future. Congratulations to the Empire Bay Progress Association.

Community Recognition Notices

BASS HIGH SCHOOL

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I was delighted to visit Bass High School on Wednesday 16 December, and inspect the School's recently completed new outdoor seating and tables, funded through a Community Building Partnership (CBP) grant. Bass High School received a 2019 CBP grant of \$19,000, enabling the School to construct the wheelchair-accessible table and seating units, which are made from eco-friendly materials. Bass High School has also been supported by a number of other CBP grants in recent years, which have funded the purchase and installation of new water fountains and sun shade protection to provide quality educational infrastructure for children in Bass Hill and the surrounding areas. I was delighted to support Bass High School in obtaining this funding, and would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge School Principal Mr Martin Toaetolu, P&C President Ms Nancy Turk, and P&C Secretary Mr David Fox, and commend them for their efforts in successfully applying for the grant, and overseeing the completion of the project.

LACHLAN HYDE

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I congratulate the Canterbury-Bankstown Young Citizen of the Year, Mr Lachlan Hyde, who was recognised for his volunteer work and advocacy in south-west Sydney. Mr Hyde is a longstanding member of the Australian Air League. In 2020, while the COVID-19 pandemic halted the league's usual meetings, he took the initiative to establish an "e-squadron" that could continue to participate in the league's activities virtually. Mr Hyde also volunteers his time with NSW Health as an accredited mental health first aider. I met with Mr Hyde in November to discuss another of his volunteer projects; his advocacy for the Prospect Creek, which runs through the Bankstown electorate, to be upgraded to a river and renamed the Lennox River after the nineteenth-century master stonemason who designed the Lansdowne Bridge. We are still waiting for an answer to that from the Geographical Names Board of New South Wales. The passion and initiative that Mr Hyde has displayed across these projects is commendable. Congratulations Lachlan and I wish you the best in your future endeavours.

ORDINATION OF FATHER CHARBEL DIB

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—I would like to congratulate Father Charbel Dib on his ordination on the 28th November 2020 at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Harris Park. Charbel Dib has made a huge impact on the lives of many in my constituency in various ways so his ordination into the priesthood was no surprise. Father Dib has always been active in the community helping organise community events such as the Australian Catholic Youth Festival. During his time as Assistant Chaplain he ran workshops such as "Growing herbs and Growing Faith", a spirituality and gardening workshop from the Institute for Mission, which teaches parishioners about faith and care for the natural environment. I understand Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home* inspired the workshop. I want to congratulate him, his wife Rosemary, his family and the Parish community at Our Lady of Lebanon at his ordination which I was privileged to attend. May you continue your contributions to our community and may the Lord be with you.

CITIZENSHIP

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—On 26 January, it was my honour to attend a citizenship ceremony which welcomed forty new members of the Australian family. The traditional custodians of the land, the Awabakal people, were acknowledged at the outset of the ceremony, and I wish to offer my thanks to Maree Edwards for the acknowledgment. Outgoing Lake Mac Ambassador Award recipient Rhonda Finlay also spoke beautifully. Afterwards I caught up with and heard the stories of three of our newest citizens. I would like to offer particular congratulations those new citizens who will be calling the Charlestown Electorate home—Lhubum Thar and Tenzing Kunsang from Tibet, Oliver Gaywood from the UK, Renju Jacob from India, Cristelle Maurin from France, Fulgence Mbonimpa from Burundi, Zoya Plowman from the Russian Federation and Yael Sagi from Israel. Congratulations to all of our new citizens—our country is richer because of the wonderful cultures and history which we all bring.

SHARRON CAMPBELL

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—When she started work at Kotara High School in 1975, Sharron Campbell—who retired as the school's administration and enrolment officer last year—never expected to be working at the school for more than forty-five years. She intended to stay at the school only until her youngest child had finished their education, and has remained for decades afterwards. A stalwart member of the school community and an invaluable part of the school's administrative team, Sharron told the Newcastle Herald that she did her job following a simple credo: "You treat the children as you would like your children to be treated." My children attended Kotara High, and I came to know Sharron—she has become the first port of call for many students in need and the first interface for two generations of families at the school. Sharron told the Herald that she hoped to spend more time with her husband Ian, four children and six grandchildren, as well as do more yoga, aqua aerobics, walking, charity work and travelling. I hope that Sharron gets to do all of that and more—I wish her all the best for her retirement.

MR TERRY RAE

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney)—I recently had the pleasure of presenting Mr Terry Rae with a New South Wales Government Community Service Award. Terry is a dedicated volunteer with Penrith the Penrith PCYC with an impressive 43 plus years of service to the PCYC community. Terry who is so giving of his time to young people locally has also toured as a musician with global artists such as Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland and Diana Krall. Over the years Terry's roles just to name a few have included: being the Penrith PCYC Music teacher since 1978, various committee roles, worked on club renovations, assisted with fundraising days, driver of the PCYC bus to take local RSL pensioners on outings, assisting with cooking and catering for Housie and other activities. Congratulations Terry, you are well deserving of this recognition.

YORK JEWELLERS 2021 GIVEBACK

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney)—Today I thank and recognise York Jewellers of Penrith for their support of Nepean Hospital. A family business through and through has seen Robert Ely, his wife Helen and their four sons all spend time working in the business over the years and last year, York Jewellers celebrated their 45th anniversary. Today sees their son Douglas Ely at the helm and earning numerous awards for his designs. York have not only have established themselves as Penrith's best diamond and custom jewellery store but as a store that gives back to our community. For the Month of January, they held their "2021 Giveback" where for every sale they donated \$21 to Nepean Hospital with an impressive total of \$9,933 going to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and the Children's Ward. This is a wonderful effort and I thank the community for supporting York Jewellers so they in turn can support our community.

ACBS

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I recognise the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society (ACBS) and the Mingyue Lay Buddhist Temple. The Temple is located in Cabramatta Ave, Bonngyrigg. Together with other colleagues I attended the Temple complex on 15 February. This coincided with Lunar New Year and included a tour of the Temple and an incense offering for good luck for the upcoming year. The temple is one of the largest Chinese Buddhist temples in the southern hemisphere. In 1982 there was a small fibro building on the site—which is currently used as a cafeteria. The Temple is a building of about 16000 square metres. The foundation of the Temple was laid in 1987. It was officially opened in 1990. I should particularly acknowledge Mr James Chan, OAM, JP, and Mr Vincent Kong JP both for their courtesy on the day and for the contribution that they make to the ACBS and the community generally. They are also representative of other Society members who have contributed an enormous amount of effort and support. It was a pleasure to attend the Temple and acknowledge the very positive contribution the Society makes to our community.

FAIRFIELD PLAZA FRUITWORLD

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I recently had the pleasure of visiting Fairfield Plaza Fruitworld in the Fairfield CBD. Business owner Mr Rafrid Elias has been servicing the Fairfield community for 16 years, providing fresh fruit and vegetables and canned items to the community. Providing a range of ethnically diverse foods, the business acts as a prime example of multiculturalism within our community. I commend Mr Elias for catering to the diverse community of Fairfield and also for his efforts in sustaining his business during the COVID-19 pandemic. I wish Mr Elias and the staff of Fairfield Fruitworld all the very best in their future endeavours.

POTS & THINGS, FAIRFIELD

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I recently had the delight of visiting one of the most eclectic stores in Fairfield, Pots & Things. Ms Linda Li has been running her business here in Fairfield for the last fifteen years. Linda prides herself on her large selection of homeware and cookware. I even found myself a much needed tortellini cutter while I was in the store. The COVID-19 pandemic provided many challenges for store owners in Fairfield but Linda has risen to the challenge and successfully brought her business through this difficult time. It was wonderful visiting Linda in her store, I wish her all the very best in the future.

TANYA BROWN TAREE CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—Speaker, I rise to recognise Tanya Brown who was recently named Citizen of the Year at the Taree Australia day awards. Tanya is a musician, business owner, dedicated volunteer and teacher who has strived to promote arts and culture in the Manning for many years. She's had involvement with a range of community groups and events including the Manning Valley Concert Band, PCYC Athletics, Rainbow Warriors, the Australian Children's Music Foundation, Rotary, Lions, the Manning Winter Festival, Taree Eisteddfod and Wingham Akoostik Festival. Tanya is a true asset to the Manning Valley and her incredibly humble nature was clear to see when she accepted the award saying "I know I've got this (award) because I'm often standing out the front with a microphone talking but there's so many people in the background who make it all happen". I would also like to recognise other citizen of the year nominees Allana Hancock, Dr Alison McIntosh, Rosie Smith and Dr Nigel Roberts.

MARY BROWNE OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—Speaker, I rise to recognise Mary Browne who was recently received 'The Katie Walker Outstanding Service Award' from the Country Education Foundation of Australia. Mary received this honour for her outstanding work as the secretary of the Great Lakes Education Foundation. She has been described by her colleagues as the backbone of the foundation, always willing to give her time and energy to every project from newsletters, to golf days, partnership programs and more. It is clear that Mary is a passionate volunteer who is proud to dedicate her time to the Great Lakes Education foundation to ensure that students in our area have the best possible chance at success. I again congratulate Mary on earning this outstanding service award and hope she will continue to be a valuable asset in our community for many years to come.

JAIME CLARKE CHILDREN'S PARLIAMENT

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise Castle Hill local Jaime Clarke, who recently represented the Castle Hill Electorate at the Children's Week Parliament in late 2020. Whilst the proceedings were conducted online this year, Jaime still gave a rousing speech on the need to increase access to sporting fields and soccer clubs for young women, particularly in the context of the upcoming Women's World Cup. Soccer is one of the fastest growing sports in The Hills, and access to increased facilities is important to ensure this growth is consistent and sustainable. This is why I was so glad to secure the land for four new playing fields at the Cattai Creek Reserve, such that there is regular access for young women to play the game they love. I would like to once again congratulate Jaime and wish her all the best for her future, and encourage her to keep pushing for increased access to recreational facilities.

CASTLE HILL FIRE AND RESCUE

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise Alex Scott and Jeffrey Hogan, the outgoing and incoming Fire and Rescue NSW Zone Commanders for Blacktown, Penrith & The Hills council areas. Alex served in this role for 12 years, and was extremely capable and professional throughout his tenure. The role as Zone Commander for Western Sydney includes the Castle Hill and Kellyville Fire Stations within my electorate, supporting 10 full time firefighters, 2 fire engines and an off road firefighting water tanker. Fire and Rescue NSW do terrific work in suburban areas like Castle Hill and Kellyville, responding to a wide variety of call outs, and I wish Jeffrey all the best in strategizing for the protection of the growth areas within The Hills, as well as continuing with Community Safety Activities, such as safety visits and smoke alarm

installations. I would like to once again thank both these men for their dedication to the protection of people across Western Sydney, and wish them all the best for their future endeavours.

RAY JONES

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Speaker, today I would like to recognise and congratulate Mr Ray Jones of Euston. Manager of the Euston Club for 26 years, Mr Jones has overseen the organisation's growth from a very small operation to one of the premier clubs in New South Wales. In the early days, Mr Jones sat on twenty seven committees, seeking out opportunities to promote the area and expand the Club for its members. Always passionate about town, Mr Jones' constant promotion of Euston has seen it become a well-known holiday destination for many. During 2020, Mr Jones displayed outstanding leadership and community engagement as the town faced the many challenges of the coronavirus pandemic. In his own time, Mr Jones advised local businesses as to the best way to survive and build on opportunities, always making himself available to assist locals in resolving issues, be they personal or professional. Mr Jones was also instrumental in the upgrade of the Euston Cemetery. The Euston community and I thank Ray for his many years of service and on-going support for the town.

MENTORING MEN

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—Mental illness does not discriminate by age, gender or location. Thankfully there has been a significant increase in mental illness awareness over the years, as well as a reduction in the stigma often attached to it as well. Part of the increase in awareness and reduction in stigma is down to the work of the plethora of organisations dedicated to the cause. Mentoring Men is one of those organisations. The organisation paired mentors and mentees together to provide support to those in need. It has been a successful concept and one I am glad to say is picking up momentum – particularly in my home region of Macarthur. Mentoring Men will hold a walk and talk at the Claymore Community Centre, next Thursday, February 25, from 6pm till 7:30pm. It's just one of many ways the organisation is engaging the local community and making a big difference to the lives of many. I look forward to seeing just how much Mentoring Men achieves in the Macarthur Community in the short, medium and long term. Thank you to all those at the organisation for your hard work and dedication.

PARRAMATTA RIVER CATCHMENT GROUP

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—The Parramatta River Catchment Group has been working tirelessly to make the Parramatta River swimmable by 2025, supported by the City of Parramatta Council, City of Canada Bay Council, and Inner West Council. In my electorate, Inner westies already enjoy the Parramatta River when they visit the UTS Rowing Club or walk the ever-popular Bay Run. They will soon be able to enjoy three new swim sites at Bayview Park, McIllwaine Park and Putney Park, when they open later this year. The creation of the new swim sites is a testament to the dedication and vision of the Parramatta River Catchment Group, who understand just how important it is to improve the water quality and health of the river system. The hard work of the Catchment Group has been recognised when they took out the Planning Category of the 2019 Stormwater New South Wales Awards for the Parramatta River Masterplan. I especially acknowledge Cllr Mark Drury, Parramatta River Catchment Group Chair, for his dedication to cleaning up and preserving the Parramatta River for future generations.

NEON NIGHTS SHOWCASE MAITLAND AFTER DARK

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—I congratulate Maitland City Council on its recent Neon Nights event – a creative initiative that brought people of all ages into our city centre in the evening to watch our most iconic buildings come to life through artistic projections. The two-day event received a contribution from the New South Wales Government under its 'Festival of Place – Summer Fund', and was staged as part of Council's 'Make it Maitland this Summer' program. The Neon Nights launch was held at Maitland Regional Art Gallery and featured performative lighting projections by local illustrators Sophie Brown and Melanie So. There was live music, a refreshments cart, and all in all a fabulous, welcoming vibe. Beyond MRAG, The Riverlink, Post Office, old Taylors building and Maitland Library featured artistic projections by Illuminart from sunset to 11pm on both January 22 and 23. The proximity of these projections encouraged foot traffic and support for local businesses along the way and certainly generated night-time, family friendly activity in unaccustomed places. Well done to Maitland City Council, the illustrative and projection artists, and everyone else who came together to breathe new and beautiful life into the iconic buildings of our historic city.

EMERGENCY SERVICES UNITED IN HUMANITY

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—I have, on many occasions, spoken in this place in praise of our Emergency Services personnel and the incredible service they provide to our community, often in a volunteer capacity. Flood, fire, pest – Maitland sees them all, in what seem to be all-too-frequent occurrences. But

whatever the disaster, our emergency services are there. Recently we had State Emergency Services volunteers and New South Wales Fire and Rescue crews answer the call of NSW Police to an emergency of a different kind. A Millers Forest mare named Dippy got herself into strife shoulder-deep in water and stuck in the mud of a rural property. The services converged, with the SES providing three rescue vehicles and a large animal rescue trailer, plus two SES volunteers who were experienced horse-handlers. After a three-hour operation that involved the removal of shrubs and trees, and the use of a glide and a lifting harness, the horse Dippy was safely pulled from the mire and immediately assessed by a Morpeth veterinarian. I pay tribute to all involved in this unusual rescue – for their skills and expertise, for their dedication and, most of all, for their extraordinary compassion and humanity.

LOCHLAN CONSTABLE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I would like to acknowledge 19-year-old Glenmore Park resident, Lochlan Constable who has his sights set on a Football A-League debut. Lochlan is a talented young player who began his football journey at nine-years-old with the Glenmore Park Football Club before moving to the Blacktown Spartans and then Sydney United. In his early teens, Lochlan was approached by the Wanderers to be part of the club's new Academy set-up and he has continued there to date. At just 16, he scored a goal in his first grade MPL debut and has been part of several grand final victories with the various teams has played in. The current highlight of his football career was playing 35 minutes against English side Leeds when they toured in Australia. It was this opportunity of playing in front of a Bankwest stadium crowd that has given him the motivation to push for his dreams. Although Lochlan has experienced setbacks in his career, he is confident that his training and ability will help him one day achieve his dream of an A-League debut. Good luck Lochlan! I look forward to hearing of your next great achievement.

AUSTRALIA DAY 2021 - ROTARY CLUB OF GRANVILLE

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—On Australia Day I was delighted to be able to do something a little different thanks to the heart-warming efforts of the Rotary Club of Granville. The Club went out of their way to visit hardworking front-line workers and thank them for their efforts over the last year during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has not only created unforeseen and unprecedented challenges but also showcased how hard front-line workers have worked to keep us safe. I joined Mr Renga Rajan, Club Secretary and Assistant District Governor of Rotary District 9675, to visit local police officers at Granville Police Station. The Club delivered delicious lamingtons as a thank you to those front-line officers for their hard work during the pandemic. The past year has been characterised by shutdowns, travel bans, social distancing rules and gathering limits. Throughout, NSW Police have been called on to help ensure we all play our part and multiple local staff temporarily were reassigned to tasks on borders or hotel quarantine. Accordingly, I want to thank Acting Commander, Detective Chief Inspector Simon Glasser and Cumberland Police Area Command staff for the work they continue to do in our community.

MYKAELA JAY AND TILLY JONES – SINGLE RELEASE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I wish to commend two young musicians in our electorate Mykaela Jay and Tilly Jones on the release of their new single 'Letting Go'. Released on January 21 this year Letting Go is part of Mykaela's upcoming album Mother Dearest. Mykaela is producing her new album locally in the Northern Rivers. Mykaela is currently finishing her BA in Music at Southern Cross University. She has become a well known and loved artist in our community. Mykaela has also set up a crowd fund to support the rest of her album and provides paid employment for local young musicians which has proven so beneficial in keeping young artists in our area. Tilly Jones is another incredible young woman with a long list of achievements. Living with cerebral palsy, ADHD and Asperger's, Tilly has been a trail blazer for musicians with a disability. Tilly focuses on the cello but can play five instruments. She has been featured in the Screenworks documentary, Tilly's Symphony which has seen her travel to France and compose for the Australian Chamber Orchestra. I commend these young women on their inspiring work and I can't wait to see what they achieve.

CONGRATULATIONS ELIZA O'TOOLE – FUTURE AFL PLAYER AND UMPIRE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I'd like to congratulate and commend Lismore High School student Eliza O'Toole on her appointment as an Aussie rules umpire with AFL North Coast. Eliza has been umpiring at a school level for seven years and is a talented member of the Lismore Swans AFL women's team. Eliza has plans to play for the Brisbane Lions as a professional AFL player. In a recent Northern Star article she stated that she won't be intimidated by the boys and looks to grow women's sport. An attitude and effort I admire and support. Eliza is undertaking umpiring to grow her skill set in the game and to take on a new challenge. As AFL North Coast Community Football Manager Paul Taylor says umpires like Eliza are so important to keep the AFL running throughout the season and encourages more local young people to sign up. I commend Eliza for taking the initiative. It is so wonderful to see local young people, particularly young women excelling in sport and setting

their sights on a professional career. I look forward to seeing what Eliza achieves in the future with her career. Lismore is cheering you on.

TAIT OWENS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Not many people can say that they are a professional in their chosen sport, especially when they are 9 years old. Waratah West Public School student, Tait Owens, is in year 3, and is a professional go-kart racer. He reaches speeds of up to 110kph, pulls 3.5 G forces during turns and can complete the 1200m track at his home ground at Newcastle Kart Club in 54 seconds. In 2020, Tait came second at the Newcastle Kart Club Championship Presentation and is currently ranked 6th in Australia at a National Level for cadet 9's. Tait will be competing in the Australian Karting Championships for the second time in 2021. The Championships are made up of five rounds that take place in Ipswich, Queensland; Melbourne; Seymour, Victoria; Newcastle; and Bolivar, South Australia. The first race is this weekend at Ipswich, with the second round being held in March in Melbourne. Tait also has plans to race in Las Vegas at the end of 2021 and has the chance to qualify to race at the World Titles in Italy at the beginning of 2022, provided COVID-19 permits. Good luck in the Championships Tait.

ISOBEL SOMMER

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—It takes a dedicated person to stick to one career for 60 years, and a compassionate and caring person for that career to be nursing. Isobel Sommer was trained at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney in 1961, and continued on to work at other hospitals, King George V Hospital, Concord Hospital, Royal Newcastle Hospital and settling at the John Hunter Hospital. Isobel finished her career in the Medical Imaging and Nuclear Science departments at John Hunter Hospital, which she still believed was fantastic. Nursing runs in Isobel's blood, she is a second generation nurse, and her daughter Danielle is also a nurse. Three generations of nursing. Patient care and support, training, education are just a few of the ways Isobel has contributed over the years, as well as being a part of changes in nursing practices, improvements to policies and moving with technological advances. It is evident the amount of people that Isobel has touched during her career, and that her presence at the hospital will be missed. Well done on an amazing career, Isobel, and enjoy your retirement.

Y NSW PARRAMATTA

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—I note the opening of a new Y NSW space at Westfield Parramatta. This new Y Space will be critical in engaging youth from across Western Sydney and those in the Seven Hills Electorate. The Parramatta CBD is a great location for a Y Space given youth across the Seven Hills Electorate spend much time in Parramatta; whether this is to study, work and spend time with friends in the CBD, at Westfields or in Church Street. The Y Space is an inclusive place which will allow youth from all backgrounds and identities to seek assistance across multiple areas in their lives. The Y Space is a good initiative with the potential to prevent youth crime, disengagement and poor outcomes by proactively engaging with youth from the Seven Hills Electorate and wider Western Sydney. The Y Space has qualified staff, including specialised youth workers, who will work with youth to develop life skills, employment skills and give them strategies to manage their mental, physical and social wellbeing. I know youth from the Seven Hills Electorate will benefit from being able to engage with these services.

THE MEADOWS PUBLIC SCHOOL 2021 LEADERS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—I take this opportunity to recognise many new local leaders from across parts of Seven Hills and Toongabbie at The Meadows Public School. I congratulate the 2021 captains, sports leaders and students' representative council members for being placed in these important positions to represent their school and peers. Well done the school captain Leila, vice captain Esah and prefects Nathan and Yashika. I also want to note the work of the new sports leaders from Gordon there's captain Kane and vice-captain Rettalia, Kendal's captain is Monica and vice-captain Shaza, Lawson's captain is Trinity and vice-captain Decoda and Paterson's captain Taylen and vice-captain Javin. The students' representative council is a key part of the school and I want to acknowledge its members, including Maddison of 1/2C, Legacy, Elina of 1/2O, Braxton of 1/2P, Lahtarnah of 2/3A, Zac of 3/4R, Alex of 4t, Aiden of 5/6D, Disha of 5/6H, Mann of 5/6S and Olivia of 3/6P.

THE MOUGIOS FAMILY

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale)—I would like to recognise the Mougios family, who have dedicated 30 years of hard work as premium hospitality operators and restaurateurs, as well as serving serve my local community through helping and supporting local charities and other businesses. When Bill Mougios opened the famed Bay Vista at Brighton-Le-Sands thirty years ago, he put Brighton-Le-Sands back on the map. Since then, he has grown the business to own and operate several of the best restaurants in Brighton, the fantastic Grand Roxy function centre, and now a second Bay Vista at Parramatta. Bill is always giving back, and every year invites

members of the community into Bay Vista for his free pancake day. I can't imagine Brighton-Le-Sands without Bill and the Mougios family, and I can't thank them enough for all they do for our community.

PETER KAFATARIS

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale)—I wish to pay my respects and honour the life of Peter Kafataris, a prominent member of the Greek community in Sydney and a true migrant success story. After arriving in Australia in 1963, he obtained his bookmaking licence in 1967 which was the start of his family creating one of Australia's largest bookmaking businesses, Centrebet. Centrebet was an innovator in the industry, being the first bookmaker to go online in the southern hemisphere, and following its merger with SportsOdds became an ASX listed company. Peter was married to his beautiful wife 'Ellou' for 62 years, who together raised their five children who have all gone on to be leaders in their communities. Peter was a remarkably generous and much loved man who gave an enormous amount back to his community, his family and his friends, and will leave a legacy that any of us would be incredibly proud of.

SASHA MAINBRIDGE, LIBRARY OF STUFF

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise the conservation work of Sasha Mainbridge, a founder of Mullum Cares Inc, which aims to increase demand for a local, circular economy in the Northern Rivers. Among other Mullum Cares' initiatives such as Salvage Culture, Reverse Garbage and Plastic Free July, is the invaluable Library of Stuff, whose mission is to counter the effects of the escalating consumption of cheap, low quality products and the resultant unsustainable increases in the volume of waste our communities have to deal with. A lending institution, the 'library' provides a range of good quality items that are shared among its members across Byron Shire, including individuals, families, businesses and not-for-profit organisations and schools. New products are purchased locally, as far as possible, to support and promote local businesses that stock quality goods. Borrowers reserve items they want and collect them to minimise the number of people handling the 'stuff'. The reduction in consumption and waste is significant, and I applaud Sasha's imaginative solutions to reducing her community's impact upon the environment.

AUSTRALIA DAY 2021 HONOURS

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)—I wish to extend my congratulations to all South Coast residents recognised in this year's Australia Day Honours list:

- Mr Hank Christiaan Laan, Cronulla Ulladulla/Milton, Member of the Order (AM) in the General Division for significant service to the building and construction sectors;
- Mrs Merrin Ross, North Nowra, Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for service to the performing arts, particularly to musical theatre;
- Mrs Julie Sydenham, Milton, OAM for service to the creative arts;
- Lieutenant Commander Daniel Edward Hodgkinson, Conspicuous Service Medal [Navy], for meritorious devotion to duty as the Head of Officer Initial Training HMAS Creswell and Executive Officer of the Royal Australian Naval College;
- Mr John Gregory Dun, West Nowra, Australian Fire Service Medal (Fire and Rescue NSW); and
- Mr Dennis Andrew Stannard, Sussex Inlet, Australian Fire Service Medal (NSW Rural Fire Service).

I thank all recipients on behalf of the community, we are all very grateful for their service.

ATOMIC KINGDOM

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I recognise the achievements of an Oran Park resident, James Peniata, on his new film Atomic Kingdom. This standalone action movie is about characters who are trying to clear their names after being framed for a crime they didn't commit. It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge a film that showcases the Macarthur area, being Liverpool, Camden and Campbelltown regions. I would like to commend James and his crew for this production, produced during a difficult year. In addition, I would like to congratulate James on his new film and wish him the best of luck in his future productions.

RON SKUSE

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I would like to acknowledge Ron Skuse's 32 year service to the Camden RSL Youth Club. Ron has held the role of President for many years, but has also been in charge of the sport of boxing to which he also holds accreditation for judging and has assisted in boxing matches. I would like to commend Ron on his dedication and work in providing the youth in our area with a facility that has classes for

all ages. During his 32 years Ron has put the club at the highest pinnacle to make Camden RSL Youth Club one held in high esteem within our community.

AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE SOCIETY

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Australian Wildlife Society as they opened their brand new National Office in MacMahon Street in Hurstville last year. The Australian Wildlife Society was founded in 1909 and it is an Australia wide organisation dedicated to wildlife conservation. The Society is committed to increasing knowledge, understanding and the protection of local wildlife through boosting education programs and community involvement. The new National Office has been established to cope with their increased workload in recent years and greater community outreach. While I was unable to attend the launch event, I am determined to assist the Australian Wildlife Society in the future. I strongly believe that the work that they do in protecting our precious and unique native animals is so important and I am glad to see that the community feels the same. I would like to thank and congratulate President of the organisation, Suzanne Medway, and her team for all the hard work that they have put in to get themselves to this point. This is a fantastic achievement and I wish you all the best for the future.

IESHA APTHORPE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I rise to commend a local fundraising champion in my electorate, Iesha Apthorpe for coordinating the Starlight Super Swim to raise money for critically ill children in hospital. Iesha is described as a tireless advocate for improving better health outcomes and resources in our community. Her recent campaign to raise funds for the Starlight Foundation is further evidence of her hard work and determination to provide a little bit of happiness, hope and delight to a sick child's day. The Starlight Super Swim will see Iesha take to the pool from 26th January to 24th February 2021, with her goal to swim a total distance of 60km. Inspired in loving memory of Kirra Jane Chesterfield, a much-loved family friend, the swim will raise funds to support the activities of the Starlight Foundation at the Port Macquarie Base Hospital. Iesha is well accustomed to competitive swimming, training multiple times per week while representing her State at various events since she was nine years old. She has also fundraised previously for local organisations and families in need with her latest campaign already on the road to success. I ask the community to please donate to Iesha's Starlight Super Swim.

BRONWYN LYON

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today I rise to acknowledge Bronwyn Lyon's 40 year work anniversary at Port Macquarie-Hastings Council. Bronwyn commenced with the then Hastings Council in 1981 in the Port Macquarie office as an Administration Assistant in the Engineering Division. Things were different back then – electric typewriters, carbon copies of correspondence, a tea lady and smokers in the office! Bron then became the Secretary to the Municipal Engineer and held the position until her maternity leave in 1989. In 1992, she commenced a job-sharing role with another Council employee, which was the production of the Council Business Papers, Minutes and Governance duties. Bron took over this role as Governance Support Officer full-time in 2007 and still holds the position today. Bron is a dedicated, hard-working and valuable member of Council with a wealth of knowledge on all things Council. She has a dry sense of humour, is dependable, efficient and a great problem solver implementing many time-saving initiatives in her role with Council over the last 40 years. I congratulate Bron on her successful career and wish her all the best for her future in Local Government.

OUR LADY OF FATIMA PARISH

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise today to recognise and commemorate the work of the Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Peakhurst who have unfortunately ceased the operation of their craft leisure group after 17 years. Kath Nixon and the team do an outstanding job at teaching the Catholic faith to so many men, women and children throughout the community and despite no longer offering their craft service, they will continue to do an outstanding job. Their craft services have always been loved by many and I know personally that a lot of individuals have made life-long friends and learned so many wonderful skills thanks to this program. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the organisation was committed to running online church services to keep the community engaged while providing a sense of togetherness and inclusion. This was great to see and I applaud everyone who played a part in this rapid transition that ran quite smoothly. I wish everyone within the organisation all the best for the year ahead and I hope that they can continue to deliver for our community in years to come.

GYMEA ANGLICAN CHURCH

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—As well as spiritual nourishment, Gynea Anglican Church provides important community outreach services to many Sutherland Shire residents. These include ESL courses, LIFE classes, and groups for

youth, men, women and seniors. In partnership with Anglicare, the church also operates a mobile community pantry, where visitors can make a small financial contribution and fill a bag with items from the stock available; shoppers pay \$10 for about \$60 worth of food. In addition to offering very low-cost groceries, the mobile community pantry also gives vulnerable people the opportunity to engage with friendly volunteers and feel that important sense of community connection. Beyond the Shire, church members also support the Katoke Trust for Overseas Aid, a grassroots Christian organisation funding and supporting a multi-pronged attack on extreme poverty in the Katoke area of Tanzania. I thank pastors Graham Crew and Craig Stalder and the church for their service and generosity.

CARINGBAH BAPTIST CHURCH

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—Caringbah Baptist Church (CBC) describes itself as a "church made up of many components, all working together to create a place of freedom, belonging, hope and transformation". For more than 60 years, the church has provided important religious and community outreach services. Its local projects encompass aged care, homelessness support, youth engagement, school chaplaincy and a food bank. CBC also supports global initiatives in Cambodia, India, Rwanda and the Middle East. At the end of last year, 100 volunteers were involved in transforming CBC's longstanding Christmas concert tradition into a drive-in theatre event, in order to comply with COVID restrictions. This came at a time when isolation was a big community challenge. I acknowledge all the hardworking leadership, staff and volunteers at CBC, and thank them for their selfless dedication to the wider community.

MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS 2021

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter)—I would like to congratulate the following winners of the Muswellbrook Shire Council Australia Day Awards 2021: David Roe - Citizen of the Year; Hunter Ball - Young Citizen of the Year; Brett & Linda Keeping – For services to wine and tourism industries; Wendy Hordern - For services to local health; Jacinda Dever – Commendation Award; Muswellbrook Lioness Club – Commendation Award. The recipients are to be commended for their community work within the Muswellbrook Shire and I thank them for their contribution to the Upper Hunter electorate.

THORNLEIGH SPORTS CLUB

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)—Today I would like to acknowledge the Thornleigh Sports Club and the hardworking volunteers who run this committee. Thornleigh Sports Club is made up of representatives from Thornleigh baseball, basketball, cricket, netball, soccer and softball clubs. They provide support and assistance to these local sporting clubs, with the aim to encourage more kids and adults to play community sport. At the recent AGM President Warren Williams stepped down after three years at the helm. Warren has done an outstanding job strengthening the club and sport in the local community. He has overseen changes in the financial arrangements of the club and navigated the difficulties of the past 12 months. Treasurer Graham Hiscox has stepped up to take on the role of President. Graham, who has had a decade long involvement in Thornleigh Baseball, has a passion for local sport. Nick Wilson has stepped in as Treasurer and remaining in their current roles are Vice President John Gallie and Secretary Terry Chenery. The general committee includes Carolyn Ball, Geoff Knowles, Clare Ashpole and Lizzie Symons. The AGM also saw the confirmation of Life Membership for Lachie Reynolds for his contribution to Thornleigh Cricket. Congratulations Lachie!

PETER BOUSLES

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I'd like to acknowledge a man who has personally been responsible for making sure countless Lake Macquarie residents are dressed to impress with clean and perfectly pressed outfits for more than six decades, 90-year-old Peter Bousles from Carey Bay. Peter has been at the helm of the Toronto Dry Cleaners for most of the 65 years it has been operating. He is a stalwart of the local community. Despite his advanced age, up until recently Peter was still regularly showing up for work and helping in whatever way he could. Peter arrived in Toronto from Greece in 1957 and really is a great example of how new Australians give so much of themselves to their new home. Peter's son has now taken over the family business, but it is a testament to the quality of Peter's work that some loyal customers send their garments into the business from as far away as Canada, Lord Howe Island, the Gold Coast and Cairns. I congratulate Peter on a lifetime of diligent service and care for his local community.

TRACY THOMAS

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I'd like to acknowledge the accomplishments of internationally acclaimed artist Tracy Thomas from Fishing Point. Tracy's art adorns walls all over the world. Most notably her art was reproduced on the side of an 11-storey building in Dubai's shopping precinct after she became a recipient

of the International Emerging Artist Award. Tracy has adopted a modern approach to engaging art-lovers through documenting the creation of her works on social media platforms. In fact, she often sells her art to viewers before it's even finished. Her work has been published in multiple art books, news articles and has even featured on Bargain Mansions US TV Show on HGTV. She has received several prestigious awards, including winning the 2020 Lake Macquarie Artist and Creator Award. Tracy creates her works in a contemporary abstract and impressionist style, and says that she aims to lift and inspire and to create calm, peace and interest within those who view her art. She has done her community proud with the quality of her work and her achievements, and I congratulate her on those efforts.

CENTRAL COAST PRIMARY CARE – INDIGENOUS SCHOLARSHIPS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge local not-for-profit Central Coast Primary Care on their announcement of a Scholarship Program for Aboriginal students. This organisation, based in Erina in my electorate, delivers invaluable mental health, community and Indigenous programs to support health and wellbeing across our region. Central Coast Primary Care has committed to providing financial assistance for textbooks and other learning supports, creating ongoing placement for Aboriginal students as well as prioritising Aboriginal people when engaging student placements. In particular, I would like to thank Chair of the Board Peter Coomber, CEO Michelle Bradbury and the members of Central Coast Primary Care's Board who voted unanimously in favour of the program which will give back to the local community in close partnership with critical stakeholders including the University of Newcastle and NSW TAFE. I'm really pleased this program will provide support to the Aboriginal community on the Central Coast and improve workforce diversity in this local community service provider.

CENTRAL COAST FLOORMASTER KINCUMBER

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the incredibly sense of community across the Central Coast. Today I want to acknowledge Nicole and Trent from Jorna Services, a Central Coast based support service, who began working with a family who had been living on cement floors for the past two years. Nicole and Trent sought ways to assist this local family, Speaker. Nicole and Trent were able to get a fantastic local business, Central Coast Floormaster, on board. Central Coast Floormaster gifted the family the materials as well as the installation of flooring, just in time for Christmas Eve. An incredibly community effort to help a family in need. Speaker, I also want to acknowledge some more local businesses who pitched in – out of their own pocket – to support this family in need: Kincumber Mitre 10 who donated skirting boards, Browniebrownie who donated baked treats, and La Notte Uno Italian Restaurant who donated a lunch for the family to share together. I want to again thank Nicole and Trent and all local businesses who helped.

THIRUVALLUVAR DAY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—Recently here at the Parliament of NSW, we acknowledged and celebrated Thiruvalluvar Day, which is a popular festival amongst our Tamil community across Australia. Thiruvalluvar Day comes from the ancient Tamil scholar, who wrote the Thirukkural over 2000 years ago. The Thirukkural is a classic Tamil language text consisting of 1,330 short couplets of seven words each spread across three books, containing teachings on virtue, wealth and love. It is celebrated on the fourth day of the Pongal celebrations, when people pay respect to farmers, nature as well as elders. At the NSW Parliament we celebrated the great strength and vibrancy of the Tamil community in New South Wales as well as the Tamil language. For any diaspora, language is an important part of building community and connection in a new land. It adds to the fantastic multicultural tapestry we have in Western Sydney. In the Electorate of Prospect, the Tamil community continues to be a strong part of our community and I congratulate them on celebrating Thiruvalluvar Day in 2021. Thanks to Chandrika Subramaniyan for organising the successful event and it was a privilege to be able to speak on the importance of this text.

TOONGABBIE TIGERS

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—I'd like to acknowledge one of the great local clubs in the Electorate of Prospect, the mighty Toongabbie Tigers. As a club, All Saints Toongabbie Junior Rugby League Football Club has grown significantly in the past four seasons increasing from around 270 participants to what is anticipated this season to be around 500, with a strong contingent of volunteers in support. Importantly within that time, participation for girls has grown from five percent of the club to around thirty percent and I'm sure we will see some Jillaroos out of those participants in the future. The club is incredibly community focused and I applaud their efforts to date to benefit not only their club members but the wider community within the Electorate of Prospect. They have become an NRL State of Mind club - a program that encourages our community to seek out help if they are having challenges with their mental health. I know the club is working on further ways to engage on this issue especially in the age bracket of 16-18 over the upcoming season. I wish the Toongabbie Tigers the best of luck for this season.

GREATER SYDNEY PARKS FORUM

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—On Wednesday, 17th of February I hosted the Greater Sydney Parks forum in the Jubilee Room of NSW Parliament and today, I wish to thank all those community members that engaged in this important discussion. The forum focused on the importance of our living, social and built heritage, contained within our parklands and green spaces across Sydney. These parklands include Centennial Park, Moore Park and Queens Park, which sit in and along the edge of my electorate and are visited and enjoyed by thousands of people from my community, each and every day and by over 30 million people each year. These parks are the lungs of our city and discussing how we can ensure their protection and safeguarding for current and future generations is an essential conversation. I would like to thank all of the community groups involved in the forum, the Save Sydney Coalition, Better Planning Network, Keep Sydney Beautiful, Saving Sydney's Trees, Total Environment Centre, Better Planning Network and Save Sydney's Koalas. I would also like to acknowledge the tireless advocacy work of Katheryn Grusovin, Jane Grusovin and Maria Bradley and thank them for being the driving force behind the forum.

FARWELL TO MARY DARWELL

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker, today I acknowledge the incredible work of Mary Darwell, the Executive Director of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust. After four years in the role, Mary will be stepping down at the end of February after leading the organisation through an independent review and ensuring the Harbour Trust receives support of significant new investment from the Australian Government. The Sydney Harbour Federation Trust was set up by the Federal Government to conserve the natural and built heritage on the lands surrounding Sydney Harbour. Previously Mary has served as the Chief Executive Officer of Arts NSW, where she oversaw arts and cultural strategy as well as funding. Mary has also helped lead the development of Infrastructure New South Wales cultural infrastructure strategy and led the Walsh Bay Arts Precinct initiative – a 21st century creative hub for Australia's internationally renowned arts companies. I would like to thank Mary for her time as Executive Director of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, for her energy and enthusiasm to transform the organisation to provide renewed investment into our harbour's heritage sites.

NORTH SHORE'S AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker, on Australia Day this year a number of North Shore locals were recognised in the 2021 Australia Day Honours. The Order of Australia consists of four classes and each year on Australia Day we recognise Australians who have demonstrated outstanding service or exceptional achievement. Congratulations to Mrs Judith Ingham who was awarded with an OAM, Mr Robert Bagnall who received an OAM, Mrs Patricia Shepherd who was awarded with an OAM, and the late Mrs Carol Selva Rajah who was also awarded an OAM. I also extend my congratulations to Mrs Gai Waterhouse who was honoured as an Officer of the Order of Australia, Dr Perry McIntyre who was awarded an OAM, and the late Mr Anthony Bevan who was also awarded an OAM. And finally, congratulations also to Mr Clyde Campbell who was honoured as a Member of the Order of Australia, and Mr Simon Moore who also received an OAM. Congratulations to all these recipients and thank you for all you have contributed to our local community.

STUART AUSTIN – GENERAL MANAGER WILMOT CATTLE CO

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise Stuart Austin for his contribution to the Wilmot Cattle Co in securing perhaps the first global carbon credit sale made by an Australian grazing organisation. This sale to Microsoft contributes to the international climate change solution and puts the Australian beef industry in the forefront. Added to this win are the offshoots both environmentally and agriculturally with reduced need for chemical fertilisers and improvements in soil erosion. I congratulate Stuart Austin on this carbon credit sale to an international company through the Wilmot Cattle Co. demonstrating to the world Australia's innovative capabilities. I commend Stuart for his part in once again demonstrating Australia's and in particular the New South Wales North West's participation in the global market.

2020 SHELLHARBOUR COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM RECIPIENTS

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I rise today to celebrate the 11 projects from the Shellharbour electorate that secured a share of \$300,000 in funding under the 2020 Community Building Partnership (CBP) Program, announced last November. A big congratulations to the following organisations: The Illawarra Women's Health Centre, St Luke's Preschool, Healthy Cities Illawarra, Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect), Interchange Illawarra, the Big Fat Smile Group, Mount Warrigal Public School P&C Association, St Vincent de Paul Society New South Wales, Dapto Chiefs Baseball Club, Oak Flats Falcons Football Club and Shellharbour Kiama Family Day Care. One of the best parts of my role as an MP is being able to work with so many wonderful local

community and sporting groups, to help bring their long awaited projects to fruition. I look forward to seeing how these projects make a positive difference for our local community.

ABIGAIL AND HAIN VAN EYK – SHEEP AND FLEECE JUDGING

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise the maturity and experience with sheep demonstrated by Uralla siblings Abigail and Hain Van Eyk at the recent Armidale Stud Ram Show. These students have a vast knowledge of sheep which is no surprise since Abigail at 12 years old won reserve overall sheep judge at the Show, taking out another ribbon this year and with Hain winning both the overall sheep judge and overall wool judging titles. Together they were invited to associate judge the Armidale Stud Ram Show and Hain is eligible to compete at the Sydney Royal Show this year. I congratulate Abigail and Hain van Eyk for their judging success at this year's Armidale Stud Ram Show, showing a knowledge and familiarity with sheep way beyond their years. I commend Abigail and Hain for the hard work and dedication it takes to become a proficient judge of sheep and fleece.

EDO

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I commend the incredible work of the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO). The EDO is the largest environmental legal centre in the Australia-Pacific dedicated to protecting our climate, communities and shared environment. I frequently refer constituents to their office for advice on environmental law issues, and have received exceptional feedback. I would like to recognise the EDO's expert legal advice to thousands of people and community groups who want to protect the environment. Since 1985, the EDO has improved access to justice, run ground-breaking court test cases and lead campaigns for law reform and stronger environmental laws across Australia. The EDO also works at an international level, writing submissions to international agencies like the United Nations on global environmental issues. The EDO provides help with a wide range of matters across local, state, and federal jurisdictions. Relevantly, EDO advised the 'Save Our Sirius' group, acted for the WestConnex Action Group, and conducted extensive research relating to the 'Koala SEPP' 2020 Bill debated in NSW Parliament. I congratulate the EDO on the significant contribution to environment and planning, and giving expert advice in community environmental battles against massive corporations and governments.

CASULA COLES CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—Speaker, today I rise to recognise local Coles shoppers for their generous donations to the Coles' Christmas Appeal last year. The Coles located in Casula Supermarket donated an incredible \$11364 to the Coles' Christmas Appeal, and placed fourth among Coles stores across New South Wales! It is safe to say that residents of the Holsworthy electorate are some of Australia's most generous during the Christmas period. It is so heart-warming to know that the local community is supporting such a worthy cause, after such a challenging year. The Coles' Christmas Appeal donations support national children's cancer charity, Redkite and food rescue organisation, SecondBite. The team at Coles reached out to me to extend their thanks and congratulations to residents, shoppers and the broader Coles community of the Holsworthy electorate for their generous contributions. I am proud of the local community supporting valuable charities. Once again Speaker, I would like to thank local Coles shoppers for their donations and congratulate Coles at Casula for this achievement.

WATTLE GROVE LIONS CLUB

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—Speaker, today I rise to congratulate the Wattle Grove Lions Club for their efforts in supporting vulnerable members of our community over the Christmas period. Alongside the Ingleburn Lions Club, Wattle Grove Lions set up a donation point at Woolworths Ingleburn just before Christmas, and encouraged members from the community to donate food supplies. These supplies were to be delivered to those in need during what can be a difficult time for some. Wattle Grove Lions received many donations from the local community. The food was delivered on Christmas Eve and supported many homeless people in the local community. I am so humbled to see the local community get behind such a worthy cause and support the Lions club in assisting those who need it most. Once again Speaker, I wish to congratulate Wattle Grove Lions Club for their successful food donation initiative that supported homeless people in the local area during the Christmas period. Thank you.

JOINT WOLLONDILLY CITIZEN OF THE YEAR – SHARON ROBERTSON

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—Sharon Robertson is a Helping Shining Starts Foundation volunteer and has been involved in setting up food outreaches in Warragamba, Picton and Bargo as well as a community BBQ outreach in Balmoral to help feed people in need. Sharon was the Dilly Drought Drive organiser since it started in 2018, raising over \$1 million in money and products for local farmers. She started Macarthur Storm Chasers to inform locals about storms and other local weather information and has been involved in The

Right Start Foundation for children with Down Syndrome for 10 years. Sharon is a volunteer for Society 389 Children's Charity Club and has also helped get supplies to the elderly in her area with the Lomandra Food project. She has set up community libraries at The Oaks, Warragamba, Tahmoor, Wilton, Buxton and Balmoral and supported the Riding for the Disabled to gain sponsorship to fund ongoing operations. Sharon is member of the Wollondilly Council Recovery Committee for Fires & Flood 2019-2020.

JOINT WOLLONDILLY CITIZEN OF THE YEAR – KIM HILL

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—Kim Hill has been a volunteer member of the Rural Fire Service (RFS) for 6 years with the Buxton RFS and can often be on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Kim has provided educational and training opportunities for her community and has assisted with hazard reduction processes. Kim was the driving force behind the Buxton Rural bushfire brigade project. She rallied the community to raise \$200,000 towards the construction of a memorial Fire Truck Playground at Telopea Park to honour fallen RFS Members Andrew O'Dwyer and Geoffrey Keaton of Horsley Park RFS. In partnership with Kerry O'Grady from the Picton CWA, Kim established and managed a Community Recovery Hub at Balmoral Village Hall in response to the Green Wattle Creek Fire event. Through her strength, teamwork, positive and compassionate approach Kim has been a driving force to provide access to vital services locally, linking fire impacted people to practical services and support.

ENDEAVOUR SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the wonderful Endeavour Sports High School. Endeavour Sports High School promotes a culture of academic excellence, collaboration, respect and commitment where staff and students work together to achieve their personal best in the classroom, excellence on the sporting field and a reputable standing in the community. I am delighted that Endeavour Sports High School has received \$15,527 from the New South Wales Government's 2020 Community Building Partnership Program. The funding will allow for the resurfacing of the basketball court and replacement of backboards and rings which will provide a safe and enjoyable space for students. Additionally, Endeavour Special Kids with a Disability (SKWAD) have received an \$11,123 grant from the Premier, the Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP, for the installation of all-weather shelters. I commend all members of Endeavour Sports High School for their support and dedication, including Principal James Kozlowski, P&C Committee members Barry Noble, Marea Getsios, Fiona Dell'Oro, Natalie Shaw, Rachel Palermo and Shaunagh Scott. I thank everyone at Endeavour Sports High School for bringing the importance of these projects to my attention.

ILLAWONG RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the selfless volunteers of the Illawong Rural Fire Brigade. The crew from the Illawong Rural Fire Brigade have played an instrumental role in protecting and assisting our local community and their heroic actions have not gone unnoticed. In December last year, these community-minded men and women continued to service our community with the help of Santa and his elves. Santa swapped out his sleigh for a firetruck and visited the local residents of Alford's Point, Illawong and Menai, handing out wrapped candy canes, playing Christmas carols and helping to spread the Christmas cheer. This regular routine has become a part of many local residents' Christmas traditions. I commend the crew from the Illawong Rural Fire Brigade for their tireless effort and contribution to our community. I acknowledge Captain Mark Pryor, Senior Deputy Captain Simon Delander and Deputy Captains John Koole, Scott Lepre, Gregory Last, Paul Reynolds, Peter Moore, George Kouroulis, Jenny Dolden and Peter O'Conner. I thank the volunteers at Illawong Rural Fire Brigade for their continued service and extend my best wishes for the future.

ELLY AND BECKY CHATFIELD

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains)—Sometimes in this life you meet people who make you sit up and pay attention. People whose stories move you, who inspire you and teach you a little more about life. I'd like to pay tribute to two of those people – Elly and Becky Chatfield. Elly, nothing can erase nor excuse the heartbreak of your loss as a child of the stolen generation. Mother, grandmother, artist - you are a beautiful human being. I feel privileged to have the opportunity to glimpse your journey through your art. And to your daughter, Becky, Field Officer with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, dancer, Firefighter, single mother extraordinaire – the world would do well to have more people like you in it. As the Shadow Minister for I've been fortunate enough to encounter women from all walks of life. Women who are unapologetic about who they are or what they've been through, who celebrate what it means to be a woman, who aren't afraid to be vulnerable and in doing so, show us all how to be survivors no matter what life throws our way. Elly and Becky, thank you for your grace, resilience, your dignity and your wisdom.

MR HUGH MOFFITT – SENIOR CITIZEN OF THE YEAR – GRENFELL

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Speaker, it is a privilege to announce that Mr Hugh Moffitt was presented with the Senior Citizen of the Year Award for 2020 by Mayor Mark Liebich of Weddin Shire Council. Mr Moffitt is notably a member of many local organisations including the Art Gallery Committee, an active member for the Art Gallery roster, the Historical Society and was a coordinator for the Henry Lawson Festival in Grenfell for many years. I understand he is a valued member of the community and is usually one of the first people to volunteer wherever there is a need for assistance. Mr Moffitt has shown true community spirit throughout his life and is very deserving of this prestigious award. Congratulations Mr Moffitt!

FIRST LINE EMERGENCY CARE COURSE GRADUATES CARMEL DEASEY AND RAECHAE DEIGHTON

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Speaker, I wish to extend my congratulations to Carmel Deasey and Raechael Deighton from Young along with nurses from Cootamundra, Gundagai, Narrandera and Temora who have graduated from a six-month state-wide emergency training course. Carmel and Raechael undertook the First Line Emergency Care Course (FLECC) in Corowa along with nurses from across the state. The Course along with the Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD) is aimed at ensuring high levels of emergency care to rural and remote hospitals. I am so pleased this training was available to the nursing sector in my electorate, which will have ongoing benefits to these communities. Congratulations to all the nurses who completed this training course.

WARILLA LADIES FOURS STATE CHAMPIONS

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—My congratulations goes to the Warilla women's senior fours team for winning the over 60s state championship. I congratulate team members; Vicki Turner, Maureen Murphy, Shirley Lindsay and Leone Barnett, it's quite a feat to win the district championship, which I understand you ladies did on three consecutive occasions and then to win the State championship on top of that, it's incredible. As I understand it, this achievement was not accomplished without one or two anxious moments, the first of which was the narrow win over Wentworthville Leagues in an extra end play off in the semi-final. Followed by Bomaderry in the final, where you were able to come from behind, being down 14 to 10 and finally clinching a very tough match 15 to 14. Once again ladies my heartiest congratulations. I look forward to following your exploits all the way to the finals next year.

**The House adjourned pursuant to standing and sessional orders at 18:38 until
Tuesday 16 March 2021 at 12:00.**