



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Wednesday, 17 March 2021

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 17 March 2021

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Bills

MARINE POLLUTION AMENDMENT (REVIEW) BILL 2020

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the Marine Pollution Amendment (Review) Bill 2020 with amendments. I order that consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments be set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

Announcements

BUSINESS COUNCIL OF CO-OPERATIVES AND MUTUALS

The SPEAKER: I attended a breakfast gathering this morning for the Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals. I acknowledge the contribution that cooperatives and mutuals make to our society. The member for Coffs Harbour is particularly conscious of that as he served on one before becoming a member of this place.

EDAPP

The SPEAKER: Members will recall a briefing from the Clerk and the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser last year on the revised members' code of conduct. At that briefing members were told that a new resource to help educate and inform members about the new code would be made available on a new mobile phone app. It has been mentioned in some party rooms. Since then, staff of both Houses have worked with an Australian tech startup called EdApp to produce a short course of five-minute modules with interactive questions to help MPs take in the key aspects of the revised code. This is the second course that EdApp has delivered for MPs, with the first on claims and entitlements rolled out last year. I know that a number of members have already installed the EdApp on their phones and completed some of the short lessons. If they have not done so, I encourage all members to download the app.

Representatives from EdApp are on site in Parliament today located near the lifts on level 7 to help members get started, if they have not already. They will be here from 11.00 a.m. until 12.30 p.m. today. EdApp is an effective way for members to become familiar with the requirements of the new code, which was agreed by both Houses last year. It is not compulsory as we cannot make anything compulsory for members, but please do not complain if you fail to undertake the short lessons and later accidentally breach the code of conduct. In such a case a defence of due diligence may be difficult. I counsel members to find a little bit of time to familiarise themselves with the code of conduct.

[Notices of motions given]

Announcements

BOOTS FOR ALL

The SPEAKER: I remind members that the Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans and I will be hosting a promotional event for the Boots For All organisation from 10.00 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. today in the Fountain Court. Boots For All breaks down barriers to sport participation and strengthens communities by collecting and distributing quality new and near-new sporting equipment to vulnerable Australians. Please come along to either donate some sporting gear or have your photo taken to show your support with sporting stars from the A-League, NRL, NSW Rugby and AFL. I look forward to seeing you there. I am sure the Treasurer will support this cause because he is a good man.

Bills

COVID-19 RECOVERY BILL 2021

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Dominic Perrottet, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (09:51): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This week marks one year since life as we knew it in Australia changed in ways few of us would ever have imagined, all due to a pandemic that has shaken the globe. One year ago, the States and the Commonwealth worked together to assess the emerging threat and take decisive action. The people of the great State of New South Wales rose to the challenge. When you look at what has played out in other parts of the world, our successful containment of the virus in New South Wales is truly extraordinary. It is a credit to our healthcare professionals and everyone in New South Wales who has done their bit. As a government, the effort continues to remain vigilant and alive to the ongoing threat. This was never just a health crisis. The measures necessary to contain the virus come at a substantial economic cost, but getting the health response right in New South Wales shielded the economy from economic catastrophe now crushing so many other nations.

The half-yearly budget review revealed the economic damage in New South Wales is not as severe as first feared and our recovery is moving more quickly than first hoped. That has not happened by chance. Since it first became clear that responding to the pandemic would take a major economic toll on households and businesses in New South Wales, we have acted fast to cushion the blow. Together with the Commonwealth, our Government has provided fiscal support for those who need it. We rapidly introduced critical, sensible regulatory changes to give the people of our State the freedom and flexibility they would need to adapt and survive. We knew that the best outcome, the greatest show of resilience and the best chance of recovery would depend on the innovative and entrepreneurial spirit of the people of our State, not on government programs. So we took an axe to regulations that would have stifled their ingenuity and held them back.

We maintained a constant conversation and listened to what the workers and businesses of our State needed to keep going. We made sure that red tape did not drag them down. As a result, New South Wales businesses were able to pivot to survive and, in some cases, thrive. Consumers were given more flexibility around when and how they access goods and services. Our State rapidly switched from paper processes to digital delivery. We put readily available technology to better use and pushed the limits of what new technology could achieve. Making all of this possible required a less rigid regulatory environment, and so that is what we created. These measures were necessary and appropriate to support people to continue to run businesses, do their jobs and access critical goods and services. Some of the changes have long been called for and necessity gave them a nudge in the right direction. It is amazing how many regulatory changes suddenly become achievable so quickly when it is a matter of survival.

These were not groundbreaking changes. In hindsight, many are just common sense. Allowing documents to be handled digitally instead of through physical paper processes did not just support physical distancing during the pandemic; it also updated burdensome compliance rules to reflect modern ways of working. Allowing small businesses greater flexibility to operate at home or prepare food for delivery or allowing licensed venues to sell takeaway liquor sometimes meant the difference between shutting up shop or keeping people in jobs. The changes we have implemented did not bring the world crashing down around us. To the contrary, they gave workers and business operators in New South Wales the freedom to use their common sense, apply their ingenuity, adapt and survive an unprecedented crisis. If anything, the pandemic has made it impossible to ignore the immense scope for a better regulatory environment and the obligations we have to make it a reality.

Regulation is a necessary evil. Roads without rules would be chaos. The rules help us get to where we want to get to more quickly and safely than if there were none. But over time regulations build up and outlive their usefulness. Like barnacles on a ship, they drag on progress and burn up valuable fuel. As the Austrian School economist Ludwig von Mises put it, "Progress is precisely that which rules and regulations did not foresee." I would add that they do not see pandemics either. The changes we made were necessary then; the bill before this House is necessary now. It is necessary for three reasons. Firstly, it is necessary to extend temporary support for those who need it. The damage and disruption caused by the pandemic has not gone away. Businesses that had to defer financial obligations are not suddenly flooded with cash.

To avoid undoing the success we have achieved so far, some protections that were put in place need to be extended. However, the purpose of this bill is not to keep households and businesses permanently on crutches. It is the ultimate goal for those households and businesses to get back on their own two feet. That is why the safeguards and support extended by this bill have been further refined and tailored. Existing protections will be coupled with new conditions to ensure that protection does not become a disincentive to recovery. Secondly, this bill is necessary because, even though the worst of the health crisis may be over and even though our economic recovery may have started well, the economic challenge ahead is still immense. Let there be no misunderstanding about that. Tens of thousands of people in New South Wales are still without jobs. Entire industries, like international tourism and education, remain at a standstill.

We need every shoulder at the wheel. We need every worker and every business doing everything they can to lift our State out of the economic mire. We need every ounce of imagination and effort, and that means we need as much flexibility and freedom as possible in our regulatory frameworks. This is no ordinary economic recovery. The world has changed; borders remain closed and global confidence remains shaky. The pathway out of the economic crisis may not be the pathway we expect, but we will only find it if the people of our State have the freedom to explore. Thirdly, this bill is necessary because we cannot turn a blind eye to regulatory excess just because the health crisis has passed. We have made extraordinary gains in the way we regulate our economy over the past 12 months. Our obligation now is to secure those gains and build on them to secure our future.

Without legislative amendments, however, the emergency measures we introduced—and that remain necessary—will automatically cease, starting this month. This bill therefore proposes to temporarily extend emergency measures by up to 12 months. The extensions will help with continued management of the pandemic as well as our longer-term economic recovery. They will allow businesses to keep building new business models, adapt to changes in consumer preferences and recover faster. They will be an important and complementary measure in our recovery strategy—a strategy that includes \$29 billion committed by our Government in stimulus and support measures; planning reforms for a more streamlined and timely planning system; removing the lockout laws in Kings Cross; and implementing automatic mutual recognition of interstate trade licences, which we will have committed to achieve by 1 July 2021.

By supporting flexibility and encouraging the people of our State to find new ways forward, the measures in this bill will help ensure that each element of our recovery strategy delivers the maximum benefit for the people of New South Wales. That will be essential if we are to recover strong. I now turn to the detail of the bill. The following amendments will extend several provisions for 12 months, until 31 March 2022. This time will allow the measures to be evaluated, and a decision will be made about whether to adopt the changes permanently. This bill amends the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 to extend until 31 March 2022 the period that associations can use technology to conduct meetings and for members to vote on resolutions even if the constitution of the association does not expressly allow it to be currently used.

As with the original measure, this extension does not force an association to adopt modern technologies for their meetings. If they wish to use it, then an unnecessary and potentially costly hurdle has been removed as they do not need to amend their constitution. The bill extends emergency regulation-making powers under the Community Land Management Act 1989 and Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 until 31 March 2022 and removes redundant provisions from their regulations as a consequence of the extensions. In 2020 strata and community schemes across New South Wales faced difficulties in their normal functioning, including meeting, voting and executing documents as a result of the restrictions that were imposed under the COVID-19 pandemic. The temporary regulations give all strata and community schemes the power to meet, vote and execute documents more easily, including by electronic means. Feedback to the Government about the new measures has been positive, with calls to make them permanent.

The bill will also amend the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 to extend to 31 March 2022 the period during which authorised officers can authorise mandatory questions to be answered using an audio link or audiovisual link. This will help ensure that investigations and interviews can continue to be conducted in a COVID-19 safe manner. The bill also makes equivalent amendments to extend similar provisions in the Crown Land Management Act 2016, the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, the Fisheries Management Act 1994, the Mining Act 1992, the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 and the Water Management Act 2000. The bill amends the Mental Health Act 2007 to extend to 31 March 2022 the ability to allow examinations of patients under section 27 of that Act to be conducted via audiovisual link to determine whether the person is a mentally ill or mentally disordered person who requires detention. This provision applies only where the examination could be carried out with sufficient skill or care to enable an opinion about the patient to be formed.

The bill extends to 31 March 2022 a temporary provision under section 118 of the Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave Scheme) Act 2010. This provision waives the 20-week period that contract cleaners who leave the industry must wait before they can be paid their entitlements. The extension will continue to support workers who have left the contract cleaning industry due to COVID-19. The bill also extends the power, under section 10.17 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, for the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to make an order to authorise development to be carried out without the need for any approval or consent. The Minister will have the power to amend or repeal any order made in exercise of this power. This has been extended to provide businesses with greater flexibility so that they can continue to operate throughout the COVID-19 pandemic without risk to productivity or jobs.

We are aware of community concerns about the impact of extended construction hours on residential neighbourhoods and will ensure that orders are only made with strong controls both to minimise construction

noise and to limit their application in existing residential neighbourhoods. The extension will support continued operation of a range of temporary measures that were introduced by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to help keep people safe, respond to changing needs and keep the economy moving in response to the pandemic. These include ensuring deliveries to retail premises could occur 24 hours a day, ensuring businesses could continue to operate, and supporting takeaway and delivery options for food and beverages.

The bill proposes to extend to 31 March 2022 the temporary measures contained in sections 15A and 15B of the Long Service Leave Act 1955 that provide more flexibility for employers and their workers about how and when leave may be taken during the COVID-19 pandemic. Section 15A of the Act allows an employer and a worker to reach a mutual agreement about how much notice should be given before taking a period of long service leave. Section 15B of the Act permits an employer and a worker to agree to taking leave in smaller blocks, such as one or two days a week. Amending the Act in this manner will continue to assist employers with a practical response to the COVID-19 pandemic by providing alternatives to standing down their workers.

I now turn to the amendments to extend provisions specifically for the purposes of ongoing COVID-19 management. The following measures are proposed to be extended for six months, with the possibility of extension for up to 12 months by regulation, recognising the uncertainty of the duration of the pandemic. The bill will amend section 15C of the Long Service Leave Act 1955 and section 5A of the Annual Holidays Act 1944 to extend provisions that ensure that where a worker is stood down without pay by their employer as a direct or indirect result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the worker's long service leave and annual leave will continue to accrue.

The bill amends sections 412 and 413 of the Industrial Relations Act 1996 to extend provisions that address union elections during the COVID-19 pandemic and their possible deferral if the Electoral Commission is unable to conduct the election. The bill will amend section 204 of the Retirement Villages Act 1999 to extend the period for the operation of the COVID-19 pandemic provisions. A consequential amendment will also be made to the regulation to omit the current prescribed period under clause 52B. This is necessary to protect our most vulnerable members in the community from the continued threat of COVID. The amendment will allow for the extension of orders by the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation to provide for limited exemptions to the Retirement Villages Act to facilitate adherence to the public health orders, ensuring villages can continue to operate both safely and effectively.

The bill amends the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001 to extend the power for the Environment Protection Authority to grant exemptions from the Act where reasonable for the purpose of responding to the pandemic. The bill amends the Home Building Act 1989 to extend the transitional period during which prohibitions on unqualified or unlicensed medical gas work do not have effect to 30 April 2022. It will directly assist persons, particularly those in rural and regional communities, to be able to meet the qualification requirements for the issuing of licences and certificates under the Home Building Act. This will benefit those practitioners who have not been able to make it to Sydney and Brisbane to access the training due to the public health orders and Queensland border closures.

The complementary tidy-up of the qualification requirements for medical gas work will remedy a drafting oversight to provide that applicants for licences and certificates must have a minimum of two years' experience in medical gas work, which will be able to be obtained at any time. This is a necessary change given these are new licence categories. These necessary amendments do not in any way compromise patient or consumer safety. Fair Trading and SafeWork NSW will continue to oversee the medical gas industry and persons will still need the relevant qualifications and experience in order to apply for a licence.

I now turn to the amendments to support the transition back to normal commercial and residential tenancy laws following emergency measures introduced at the peak of the pandemic. The bill amends the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 to transition out of the moratorium on evictions introduced in April 2020. These transitional measures will provide support for tenants and landlords while allowing the market to evolve to meet the changing economic landscape. In April 2020 the Government introduced measures to limit unnecessary social movement, support tenants and landlords to continue tenancies and provide time for Commonwealth support payments to flow through to tenants. The measures have largely achieved their objectives, and current economic and rental market data suggests that the economy is stabilising. While these measures were necessary at the time, if they continued then they could prevent the rental market from changing to meet new conditions.

Tenants could continue to accrue debt through their deferral of rent and this may go beyond their capacity to repay. This could ultimately make it much harder for those tenants to secure accommodation that meets their needs. With this bill, we will continue to protect COVID-19-impacted tenants while also balancing the needs of landlords. The measures in today's bill will limit the ability of landlords to terminate the tenancies of COVID-19-impacted tenants for rental arrears that were accrued in the moratorium period while supporting tenants and landlords to negotiate and agree on repayment plans. These transitional measures will be in place for six months from 27 March. The bill also makes a permanent change that will ensure any COVID-19-impacted

tenant will not be able to be blacklisted on a tenancy database due to rent arrears accrued during the moratorium. The changes will also ensure that the COVID-19 provisions continue to apply to any termination notice issued prior to 27 March 2021 under the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 and the Boarding Houses Act 2012. This will also continue for a period of six months.

Proposed amendments to the Retail Leases Act 1994 will preserve protections for eligible tenants acquired during the prescribed periods of the Retail and Other Commercial Leases (COVID-19) Regulation 2020, beyond the repeal of the regulation. The commercial leases regulation was a temporary measure that provided protections to eligible tenants throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This amendment will ensure landlords cannot take action against eligible tenants for circumstances arising during the prescribed period unless they comply with their obligations under the commercial leases regulation, including their obligations to renegotiate rent and attend mediation. The amendment will not impact landlords' rights in relation to breaches of the lease that occur after the prescribed period. Ronald Reagan once summed up what he called "government's view of the economy" as follows:

If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated just how accurate that observation was. A government's instinct will always be to regulate, but the pandemic has shown that excessive regulation is a roadblock to survival. As we continue to deal with and emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic our regulatory settings must be fit for purpose, responsive and flexible. This bill extends COVID-19 temporary measures to make that possible. Some of these measures will be rigorously tested for potential permanent adoption—an important step in securing our long-term economic future.

But the bill also takes important steps, particularly in relation to residential and commercial tenancies, to help businesses smoothly transition back to normal operations. That will be our ultimate measure of success—when the households and businesses of New South Wales are firmly back on their own feet and back on the path to greater prosperity. We have made a strong start but we have a long way to go. This bill is an important step on the journey. I thank all those involved in drafting the bill. I thank all our frontline services who are keeping us safe. Most importantly, I thank the people of New South Wales for their resilience, optimism and determination in these challenging times. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

MUTUAL RECOGNITION (NEW SOUTH WALES) AMENDMENT BILL 2021

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Dominic Perrottet, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (10:13): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

In late 2016, a few years before he passed, Bob Hawke revived his decades-old call to abolish the States. Bob is a revered character in Australian politics, but on this front I am glad he did not get his way. For the past 12 months COVID-19 has demonstrated the immense value of our decentralised, federated system of government. Australia's COVID response has been a dynamic mix of States acting in unison and acting individually. From contact tracing and testing to hotel quarantine and the economic response, every State has done things differently at various stages of the crisis. But despite the differences, the States have also worked very closely behind the scenes, sharing insights and adapting them to local circumstances and spurring one another on to better performance. Our federated system gives States the freedom to do that: to act unilaterally, to try different things, to find out what works and to then share that with other States. The pandemic has provided a clear demonstration of the value of States as laboratories of democracy, and this has helped to produce an Australian whole that is much greater than the sum of its parts.

Of course, for its many benefits, federalism also has its challenges. One of the less edifying products of the pandemic has been the eruption of the so-called border wars. Jarring border closures have shaken our sense of unity as Australians. In New South Wales we have always acted to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the people of this State. But we have never forgotten that first and foremost we are Australians, and we have always understood that it is our responsibility to accept risks and challenges that are in the national interest, even if they come at a cost. Our nation is at its strongest when the States drive their own agenda but work towards a common goal. The pandemic has reminded us that a crucial part of our Federation's extraordinary success over the past 120 years has been free movement of people across State borders. It is a lesson our border towns have learnt the hard way.

Last week I was fortunate to visit Albury, and it was great to see so many workers and businesses back up and running. But it was also clear that the border region is operating with a two-speed economy. It has been a bumper season for farmers, which is a great blessing after the crippling drought. Other local industries, like manufacturing, are also thriving. But industries that rely on interstate travel, especially tourism, remain ominously quiet, and for tradies and other workers who routinely cross the border to earn a living, the past year has been a nightmare of uncertainty and a dreary slog through permits, checkpoints and long queues. Even now there is widespread concern among the local community that the threat of border closures is crippling confidence. In border regions the distinction between one State and another is not as sharply drawn as it is in the capitals. The free flow of people across the border for work, study and community activities is an everyday occurrence. We hope that improved COVID-19 control measures and the rollout of the vaccine mean there is no longer a need for sudden, sharp border closures.

The pandemic has also brought into sharper focus the unnecessary regulatory burdens borne by cross-border workers, even without the threat of border closures. It is another example of red tape holding our people back and dragging on productivity and prosperity, and it is ripe for the clearing. That is why in last year's budget we allocated funding to support the rollout of a new automatic mutual recognition framework to enable the automatic recognition of interstate occupational licences. With this bill, we are delivering on our commitment. This is a timely and important national economic reform and the result of several years' work in conjunction with other States and the Commonwealth. Although we have had a system in place for many years to recognise occupational licences from other jurisdictions under the Mutual Recognition Act 1992 (Cth), this new framework will provide a quicker and less expensive alternative.

Under the current scheme workers still need to apply for recognition of their home licence and pay another fee to work in another State or Territory. The existing mutual recognition scheme also relies on schedules to specify equivalent occupational registrations between jurisdictions. These schedules are complex and cumbersome and have not been updated fully since 2009, meaning they are not up to date with current qualifications and licences. The Commonwealth, States and the Northern Territory have all come together and agreed to the new automatic mutual recognition scheme for occupational registrations. In December 2020 the Premier and all First Ministers, except the Australian Capital Territory, signed an intergovernmental agreement which commits signatories to implementing a national automatic mutual recognition scheme by 1 July 2021.

The core principle of this new framework is that a person can automatically perform the same activities that they are licensed to perform in their home jurisdiction in a second jurisdiction without seeking permission or paying additional registration fees. Automatic mutual recognition will make it easier and less expensive for businesses and workers to operate across jurisdictions. You only pay a registration fee when you renew your licence in your home jurisdiction. If you move permanently to a new jurisdiction, you would register with your new home authority and pay a fee then. This reform is a great example of the States and the Commonwealth working together to achieve commonsense regulatory reform with very tangible benefits for the people of Australia. It will reduce red tape associated with occupational licensees moving interstate, meaning more freedom to find work and more money in the pockets of workers. It is a simple, sensible change and it comes at an important time, supporting jobs creation as we begin down the long road to recovery from the COVID-19 recession.

In New South Wales that recovery is being supported by a \$107 billion infrastructure program over the next four years. This reform will help our State access the skilled labour we need to get the job done. It will also help States recover and rebuild from natural disasters. During the catastrophic 2020 summer bushfires New South Wales faced acute shortages in trades required for rebuilding. This reform will enable skilled workers to more quickly and easily work interstate when there is an urgent need for skills. Some of the biggest benefits of this reform will be felt in our border regions. For example, a plumber in Albury will be able to perform the same work in Wodonga without seeking permission or paying two registration fees. A New South Wales registered plumber will save at least \$357 over three years in registration fees to work in a nearby border town in Victoria.

The reform will also benefit businesses with interstate operations. For example, an architecture firm based in New South Wales and operating remotely could save around \$600 per worker through applying for automatic mutual recognition for their architects to work in Victoria and South Australia. This reform has the potential to affect millions of people across the nation. Data from New South Wales agencies indicates that there are at least 1.16 million occupational registrations held in New South Wales alone, including interstate licences recognised by New South Wales agencies. The reform will also benefit consumers and businesses by offering a more diverse labour supply and greater competition between local and interstate licence holders. The reform will deliver substantial economic benefits for the nation in the long term, improving productivity and lifting prosperity. The Commonwealth has estimated automatic mutual recognition will deliver a \$2.4 billion benefit nationally, a significant portion of which will flow to New South Wales.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic there was a dire need for Australia to embrace productivity reform. Productivity growth was slow and economic growth was stalling. With the added shock of the COVID recession, the need for productivity-enhancing reforms is now all the more urgent. In New South Wales we have been pleased to drive this body of work. This bill marks one of many productivity reforms we are determined to implement in the years ahead. Given the Federal nature of the automatic mutual recognition scheme, the purpose of this bill is to provide an updated referral of powers to the Commonwealth Parliament on mutual recognition of occupations and goods. This will enable the Commonwealth Parliament to pass the Commonwealth Government's proposed amendments to the Mutual Recognition Act 1992 (Cth) to implement a new, uniform automatic mutual recognition scheme for occupational registrations across State and Territory borders.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. The bill amends the Mutual Recognition (New South Wales) Act 1992 to replace the existing amendment referral and establish a new amendment referral. The new amendment referral will enable the Commonwealth Parliament to make amendments to the Commonwealth Act relating to the mutual recognition of occupations and goods. The Commonwealth believes that the existing amendment referrals in New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania should not be relied upon to implement automatic mutual recognition. New South Wales is leading the way by updating the referral powers to enable the Commonwealth to pass legislation to give effect to automatic mutual recognition. This will have flow-on effects for other States. Should future Commonwealth amendments not be supported by Parliament, the updated referral power can be terminated by proclamation by the New South Wales Governor.

I will now turn to the detail on the Commonwealth bill, which will shortly be introduced to the Commonwealth Parliament. The bill has been prepared in consultation with stakeholders and State and Territory governments. The bill will apply to all occupational registrations unless they are exempted from the scheme or subject to an existing national registration scheme or State-based automatic recognition scheme. The bill will retain the benefits of the existing mutual recognition arrangements and the standards of protection and public safety, while streamlining notification processes. The bill embeds safeguards to ensure that the community, the environment, animals and workers are protected. The bill provides that workers will have to meet requirements relating to insurance, fidelity funds, trust accounts or the like, as well as other requirements such as Working With Children Checks. These provisions are designed to protect the public, consumers and others.

Local laws will apply to interstate registration holders so that local regulators can take the necessary enforcement action to maintain protections for businesses, employees and consumers. A registered person will need to comply with the local laws in the second State and is subject to any applicable disciplinary actions. Workers will not be eligible for the scheme if they are subject to disciplinary action or if they have conditions on their licence as a result of disciplinary, civil or criminal action. While the intention is to keep paperwork requirements to a minimum, States and Territories can require notification for occupational registrations. Local regulatory authorities will be required to make available to each other relevant information about a registered person and prepare and publish guidance on the operation of the scheme.

The bill provides States and Territories with the flexibility to exempt occupational registrations from the scheme in certain circumstances. Exemptions can be temporary—up to 12 months—or on a longer-term basis—up to five years. Any exemptions, including reasons for longer-term exemptions, will be published on a public register. A temporary six-month exemption, which can be renewed for a further six months up to 30 June 2022, can be declared for specific occupations. This will provide a transition period for some regulators. Longer-term exemptions are only available where automatic mutual recognition poses a significant risk to consumer protection, the environment, animal welfare or the health and safety of workers or the public. Longer-term exemptions will sunset after five years and can be renewed following a review. The Government will establish a list of any necessary exemptions ahead of 1 July 2021 in consultation with relevant ministers and stakeholders.

For many years productivity reforms that require the cooperation of States and the Commonwealth have been left in the too-hard basket. The pandemic has given our nation a jolt and a reality check and it is now clear that we have no more time to lose. Our recovery from the COVID-19 recession and our long-term economic prosperity will depend on the States and the Commonwealth working together with a renewed sense of urgency to lift productivity and deliver a better quality of life for current and future generations. We can do that by cutting red tape and removing the handbrakes that are preventing people and businesses from reaching their full potential. In doing so we must take full advantage of the unique advantages offered by our Federal system of government.

The pandemic has given us a real insight into the value and strength of the States. When Australia's States are strong, working together with a healthy mix of competition and cooperation, our nation is all the better for it. Now it is up to us to drive a reform agenda that will lift our nation to greater heights. Our Government is pleased to take a leading role in setting and implementing that agenda, and with this bill we will continue to deliver. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

REAL PROPERTY AMENDMENT (CERTIFICATES OF TITLE) BILL 2021**First Reading****Bill introduced on motion by Mr Victor Dominello, read a first time and printed.****Second Reading Speech****Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (10:29):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Real Property Amendment (Certificates of Title) Bill 2021. The bill will complete the transition of the land title system in New South Wales away from a paper process and towards a digital one. Since electronic conveyancing, or eConveyancing, commenced some seven years ago, the industry has embraced its many benefits including fewer errors, no fraud and quicker processing times. Back in 2017 the Government made a commitment to move towards a wholly electronic conveyancing system and abolished the antiquated paper process. It was well known that the presence of a paper certificate of title within an electronic scheme was an issue that needed to be solved to realise a seamless transaction experience and assure the security of the system. As part of developing the proposals in the bill, the Office of the Registrar General went through an intensive 18-month public consultation process.

Consultation looked at several options to implement reform for a paperless system. Feedback from industry peak bodies for conveyancers, lawyers and the banks all supported the move to eliminate certificates of title as part of the reform. Other jurisdictions have abolished paper titles as they also move to a wholly electronic land title system. South Australia started in 2016, Queensland in 2019 and the Australian Capital Territory in 2020. I am informed by the Office of the Registrar General that Victoria and Western Australia are looking to follow suit soon. While those jurisdictions begin to transition to an electronic system, New South Wales will be the first jurisdiction to mandate a 100 per cent eConveyancing system. In doing so, New South Wales is the leader in providing a safe, secure and entirely electronic conveyancing system.

The reforms in the bill are a further demonstration of the Government's commitment to making our land title system the best in the world. Further work in this area is being undertaken to introduce effective competition in electronic conveyancing. Changes to the Electronic Conveyancing National Law are being considered by the Australian Registrars' National Electronic Conveyancing Council. We should hear more about those later this year. However, today I am here to talk about the significant benefits that the bill will bring. For most people, owning property is the largest, most significant investment they will ever make. People need confidence in the security of their real property investment. The conveyancing system and the Torrens land register provides that security.

The Torrens land register is and will always be the single source of truth of a person's interest in property. A certificate of title is a copy of the information about a parcel of land that is recorded and stored on the Torrens land register. A current edition of a certificate of title will detail information, including the name of the owner, the lot and plan number, and any registered interests that affect the land, like mortgages, easements or covenants. Conveyancing describes the process of transferring legal title from one person to another. Traditionally this involved a laborious paper process where the parties would meet, exchange documents and cheques between themselves and then lodge the paper documents at the Land Titles Office for registration.

This paper conveyancing process is largely extinct today, with close to 96 per cent of conveyancing now performed electronically. This electronic process, commonly known as eConveyancing, is conducted in a closed, secure digital environment by subscribers who are lawyers and conveyancers experienced in land law. Despite the wide use of eConveyancing, the Real Property Act 1900 still requires the Registrar General to issue certificates of title and transacting parties to account for the certificate of title, adding inefficiency and cost to an otherwise seamless digital process. In eConveyancing the certificate of title is of little value. While it was used as a practical way of demonstrating ownership of land, these days subscribers to eConveyancing, being lawyers and licensed conveyancers, have a legal responsibility to verify the identity of their clients and obtain evidence to link them to the property being transferred or transacted. The mere existence of the certificate of title does not satisfy this obligation.

The Government's move towards eConveyancing is also motivated by the benefits it brings to consumers. The reasons for this are self-evident. EConveyancing is a secure system, with checks and balances to protect against fraud. There have been no fraud cases relating to eConveyancing since it began in New South Wales in 2014, but during that time the New South Wales Government has paid over \$7 million in compensation for fraud cases involving paper conveyancing transactions. Many of these fraud cases were the direct result of an illegally obtained certificate of title. As a token of ownership, a certificate of title in the wrong hands can be a tool to commit fraud. Abolishing certificates of title will also eliminate the cost of replacement when they are lost. Around

4,500 applications for lost certificates of title are made every year, forcing owners to pay a fee for the issue of a new certificate so it can be handed over the next time the property is sold. A paper certificate of title is not suited to a digital process and has no utility in a modern land title system. The reforms in the bill will focus reliance on the integrity of the Torrens land register as the complete and accurate record of land ownership.

I will now broadly address the changes that the bill makes. Schedule 1 to the bill removes the requirement for the Registrar General to issue, and for registered proprietors or mortgagees to produce, certificates of title. References to a person applying to the Registrar General for the issue of the certificate of title or duplicate registered dealing will also be removed. In some instances, the words "certificate of title" will be replaced by the words "folio of the register", indicating that the recording will be made on the register and not necessarily duplicated on a certificate of title as is currently required.

The bill will also remove the current requirement for the Registrar General, whenever a certificate of title is cancelled, to place a notification on the Torrens land register identifying the party who has control of the right to deal, commonly known as CORD. In 2014, when the Real Property Act 1900 was first amended to initiate eConveyancing, paper certificates of title were to be gradually phased out and replaced by a CORD notification. The CORD system was essentially a consent process, introduced to mirror what happened in paper. Under general principles of land law, the person with control of the right to deal is either the registered owner or the registered mortgagee. As both the registered owner and any mortgagee have a secure, registered interest in land, there is no extra utility gained from a separate CORD notification on title. On commencement of the bill, the Registrar General will no longer be required to issue CORD or require the holder of CORD to give its consent when accepting a dealing for lodgement or registration. The Australian Banking Association supports the removal of CORD as it aligns with processes in other jurisdictions.

I have already explained why the certificate of title itself has little utility in eConveyancing. However, the information it contains can be an important tool for a landowner to quickly understand what interests affect their title. This information should continue to be available to landowners when certificates of title are no longer issued. Therefore, schedule 1 to the bill introduces a requirement for the Registrar General to issue a new document called an information notice to customers. This notice will contain the same information that a person would ordinarily receive had they been issued with a certificate of title. In abolishing certificates of title, the bill will also remove references to a court making orders for the production, issue or delivery of a certificate of title. In addition, all offences relating to certificates of title, including offences associated with wrongful retention of a certificate of title, are removed.

Schedules 2 and 3 make consequential amendments to 27 other Acts and regulations to remove references to certificates of title. Acts such as the Conveyancing Act, Crown Land Management Act and Strata Schemes Management Act will no longer reference certificates of title once the bill comes into effect. The Office of the Registrar General will work closely with those agencies that may be affected by the changes that the bill makes. Once passed, the bill allows the Registrar General to announce the date on which certificates of title will cease to be issued and will cease to have effect. This day, referred to in the Act as the cessation day, must be notified by publication in the *Government Gazette* at least three months beforehand. In consultation with industry, we will formalise the date of abolition over the next few months, with a view to eliminating certificates of title before the end of the year. This will give time for industry to adjust their processes so that the change can be made seamlessly. The proposals in the bill will not require landowners to return their certificate of title or take any particular action. Owners can keep their certificates of title if they wish or they can destroy them—it is simply up to them. All that changes is that a certificate of title will no longer be a legal document; rather, it will be a token of sentimental value.

In addition to abolishing certificates of title, the bill makes other important amendments to the Real Property Act to remove any barriers to a full digital process. Parts of the Act employ language that clearly embeds a paper process. Amendments in the bill will remove references that point only to a paper process and clear the way to allow a fully digital process. One such change is to define the word "uplift" and make it technology neutral. When a document requires amendment to fix an error, the current meaning of "uplift" means that someone must physically attend the land registry office. This is an inconvenience for anyone and is particularly problematic for regional and rural citizens. The amendments in the bill ensure that uplifting a document can be made physically or electronically.

Another important change is the way the Registrar General can accept the lodgement of a document. Currently there are only two ways permissible for documents to be lodged with the Registrar General: either in paper or electronically through eConveyancing operated by an electronic lodgement network operator, commonly known as a ELNOs. EConveyancing can handle most transactions; however, there will always be a small handful of low-volume, complex transactions that are out of scope for eConveyancing, which forces people to lodge in paper. The proposal in the bill will allow the Registrar General to offer an option for people to lodge via electronic

means if it is more convenient, such as uploading the documents to a dedicated online portal. To achieve this, schedule 1.2 to the bill replaces the current provision allowing documents to be lodged via an ELNO under the Electronic Conveyancing National Law (NSW) with a provision that also allows lodgement by any electronic means approved by the Registrar General. This is a straightforward proposal that will complement users of eConveyancing by allowing them to continue to lodge their transactions electronically.

The amendment in schedule 1.2 to the bill allows the Registrar General to approve ways of providing consents and evidence in relation to land dealings under the Real Property Act. The amendment will allow the Registrar General to approve a range of electronic methods for providing such consents and evidence to accommodate for eConveyancing. Other consents that are required by legislation will remain. For example, an easement will still require the registered owner's consent as well as the consent from registered mortgagees and any registered lessees. Other amendments to clear the way for a digital process are found in schedule 1.1 to the bill. For example, where a document needs to be substituted for another document, the Act currently requires it to be lodged in paper form. The bill removes a reference to the Registrar General requiring a dealing to be lodged in paper form and replaces it with dealings to be lodged in a way approved by the Registrar General.

The acceptance of eConveyancing by industry has been pleasing. There was some pushback initially and that is understandable. The traditional paper process had existed for 150 years and changing established practices takes time. The Government began a program of mandating in 2017, seeking to gradually make it compulsory to lodge electronically by mandating dealings in tranches. EConveyancing is now the normal way to conduct land transactions. Users of eConveyancing, such as lawyers, conveyancers and banks, no longer want to run dual processes when dealing with land transactions. The call from industry is very much to fully embrace digital and close the paper-based system.

On this note, I thank the stakeholders consulted and involved in the drafting of these bills—in particular, the Law Society of New South Wales, the Australian Institute of Conveyancers, the Australian Banking Association, PEXA, Sympli Australia and NSW Land Registry Services. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the following people from the Office of the Registrar General for driving this important reform: Jeremy Cox, Leanne Hughes, Robert Goncalves, Sandrah Mikha and Blake Garcia. I also thank my wonderful staff, Emily Wooden, Priya Pagaddinnimath, James Camilleri and Matt Dawson, for their policy advice and hard work in bringing the bill to the House.

In fact, my staff and the team at the Department of Customer Service have been on this journey for many years. I am quite proud to be here to see the last nail in the paper coffin when it comes to eConveyancing. In many ways this forms a great part of the e-property network. Whether it is ePlanning, e-construction, the strata hub, eConveyancing or digital twins, in New South Wales we are truly creating a place for e-property to be a world leader. In fact, we are already a world leader. But by the time this rolls out within two years, we will truly be the dominant force in e-property around the world, and a place to come and see how it plays out.

The Real Property Amendment (Certificates of Title) Bill 2021 will ensure that the land title system will be governed by contemporary laws which are flexible and balanced. It retires redundant paper processes and embraces a digital future which is faster, more efficient and more reliable—and amen to that. An efficient and secure land title system generates greater returns for the property and financial sector, which supports the New South Wales economy. The benefits will flow on to the people of this great State, with the confidence that New South Wales continues to have a world-class land title system. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2021

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mrs Shelley Hancock, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (10:50): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Local Government Amendment Bill 2021. This bill brings together a series of important reforms to the Local Government Act 1993 that deliver on the Government's commitment to strengthen our system of local government in New South Wales. It is fair to say that our communities need to be able to rely on their local councils now more than ever. As local leaders and service providers, councils are continuing to play a critical role as we manage our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, recover from multiple natural disasters and drive new economic activity. It is a timely reminder of the value of the work our councils perform and the

importance of making sure the system of local government as a whole supports their continued performance and sustainability.

I am therefore proud to advise members that the bill before the House features a range of sensible reforms to strengthen that system to ensure it continues to be fair and equitable for both councils and ratepayers across the State. It also provides a foundation for further improvements over time, for the benefit of both councils and the ratepayers they serve. The measures in the bill deliver on the Government's commitments to strengthen the rating system. On 18 June last year the Government issued its final response to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] local government rating review. The purpose of the review was to identify how to improve the equity and efficiency of the rating system in order to enhance councils' ability to implement sustainable fiscal policies over the long term.

The Government's response reiterated our commitment to maintaining a rating system that protects households and property owners from excessive rate rises yet allows councils to deliver the services and infrastructure communities expect. Importantly, however, it is committed to providing greater flexibility within our rating system. Following the release of the Government's response I released an exposure draft of the rating measures in the bill, together with a consultation guide to explain the proposed changes and assist interested individuals and organisations to provide feedback. While that followed many years of extensive public consultation by both the Government and IPART, I wanted to ensure that communities had a further, final say about the proposed reforms and that they are implemented in a fair and reasonable way. I am pleased to advise that over 215 written submissions were received during the consultation period and have been taken into account in finalising the bill.

I will now outline the key features of the bill. Councils are under increasing pressure to provide growing communities with the services and infrastructure they need. This is a particular concern in areas of Greater Sydney and regional New South Wales that are experiencing high levels of population growth. In December last year I commissioned IPART to recommend a new methodology for setting the rate peg each year that would align councils' general income to population growth. At present IPART does not take into account the differing impacts of population growth on councils in setting the rate peg—that is, the percentage by which a council's general income may increase each year.

The Government has therefore accepted recommendations made by both IPART and the NSW Productivity Commissioner to change how the rate peg is calculated. As this is a complex issue, IPART has been asked to consider how best to achieve this objective without negatively impacting the income of councils who are not experiencing high population growth. To ensure that any new methodology approved as part of this review process can be implemented, the bill proposes to put beyond doubt that more than one rate peg could be applied—such as a different one for each council—if that is required. I look forward to receiving a final report on this review from IPART by the end of September this year.

From 2017, ratepayers of newly formed councils have received the benefit of a freeze of their council's existing rates path. This provided each of these councils with time to bring together the legacy arrangements of the former council areas and begin to achieve efficiencies. It also provided time to talk to their communities about what they wanted from their council and what they were prepared to pay. In 2019 these councils were provided with the option of a further year to allow for this process to occur. Ultimately, 17 councils took up this option, so that the rates freeze will now end on 30 June 2021. Without the measures in this bill, these councils will need to create a single harmonised rate structure in a single year, commencing on 1 July 2021. Each council is responsible for creating its own structure, which sets out what different ratepayers will pay over the coming year. These councils have advised that, in practice, this will lead to immediate and significant rate increases in some parts of some council areas.

Given this, the bill features a series of measures that provide these councils with greater flexibility as they prepare for 1 July 2021. Firstly, it will provide all councils with greater flexibility to create new rating categories and subcategories. For councils that still need to harmonise their rates, the bill would enable councils to choose to keep different rates for farmland, based on their location. It would also allow separate residential rates to be set in urban areas like Greater Sydney and the Central Coast. To help limit the impact of these changes, the bill proposes to allow these councils the option of gradually changing to their new rating structure over a four-year period for residential, farming and business rates. The four-year period has been undertaken after much consultation with the sector. This measure sets a reasonable limit to how long some ratepayers are subsidising others.

Councils that take up the gradual harmonisation option will need to apply no more than 50 per cent of the total increase in rates for each rating category over the period in any one year. They will be required to advise ratepayers in advance over how many years the harmonisation will take place and what the effect will be in each of those years. Under the bill, those councils and communities that do not wish to gradually harmonise over a

four-year period would still be able to harmonise their rates all at once or over a number of years, set at a maximum of four. This is a fairer and more equitable system.

Measures in the bill would also provide all councils with the flexibility they need to distribute the rating burden in a fairer and more equitable way amongst ratepayers. These measures acknowledge that local communities across the State are incredibly diverse and that a one-size-fits-all approach to an area as complex as council rates is unlikely to meet their needs. All councils would also be permitted to create more flexible residential, business and farmland rating subcategories to enable them to set fairer rates that better reflect access to, and demand for, services and infrastructure.

A key measure is to add a fifth rating category, which would be a new rating category for environmental land. This is designed to capture land where meaningful development is constrained by geography or regulation that imposes significant restrictions on use of the land, such as conservation agreements. While it is a matter for councils, it is anticipated that these properties will benefit from lower rates than apply to farms and businesses. The bill will enable this category to be implemented in future by proclamation and for regulations to be made that set out in more detail what kinds of regulatory restrictions are relevant and what factors councils should take into account in deciding whether a parcel of land falls under this rating category.

As I indicated earlier in relation to those councils harmonising their rates, the bill would allow all councils to create different rating subcategories for residential land in contiguous urban areas. This would extend the current provisions of the Act, which only enable councils to subcategorise residential land where there are separate centres of population. I understand that councils in rural and regional areas with separate towns and villages are already relying on this power to create different rating subcategories. Councils in larger regional areas and Greater Sydney are, however, not able to do so. This would provide councils with greater flexibility to distribute the rating burden in a fairer and more equitable way amongst ratepayers.

Importantly, under the bill, councils in urban areas would only be able to set different residential rates between different areas if there is, on average, different access to, demand for or cost of providing services and infrastructure in those areas. A limit will also apply so the highest rate structure for a subcategory of residential land is no more than 1.5 times the average rate structure across all residential subcategories. To exceed this limit, councils would need to seek ministerial approval. Further, the bill specifies that to take up this option, councils would be required to use geographic names published by the Geographical Names Board to objectively define different residential areas to which apply different residential rates, or another method prescribed by regulation, rather than being enabled to simply draw "lines on a map". The bill also enables the Minister to issue guidelines that must be followed by councils in creating these rating subcategories.

I am also pleased to advise members that the bill provides similar flexibility for councils to set different rates for different types of farmland based on the location of the different farming properties. This would apply in addition to the current grounds for creating rating subcategories, based on intensity of land use, "irrigability" of the land or economic factors affecting the land. While some regional and rural councils are able to rely on these existing factors, it is inflexible, subjective and difficult to apply in many local government areas in an equitable way. The proposed measure would allow councils flexibility to more fairly distribute the rating burden by creating rating subcategories that better reflect productivity, are easier to assess and may be more likely to reflect access to council services by landholders.

Again, as I indicated earlier, this measure would be an option available to assist councils with rates harmonisation. For example, councils may choose to maintain current farmland rates across their former council areas, in consultation with their communities. Again, if a council chooses to create rating subcategories based on location, it will need to create subcategories by using geographic names or another prescribed method, not by drawing lines on a map. The bill also includes amendments that would give councils the choice to set different rates for business land based on whether it is predominantly used for industrial activities. Activities which may be prescribed as industrial include, for example, manufacturing, warehousing, abattoirs and works depots. Under the Act, councils may only create different business rates according to whether business land falls within a "centre of activity".

This is essentially, therefore, limited to location rather than based on the activities taking place on each property. It also means that, where businesses are not clustered together, they are most often only charged a general business rate. This measure recognises that parcels of land where these activities take place typically have different access to, demand for or cost associated with providing council services and infrastructure. It also recognises that those parcels of land may or may not be clustered together within a local government area. Councils are increasingly entering into arrangements to jointly fund infrastructure projects with the New South Wales Government and the Commonwealth. This is no surprise given the significant financial investment made by the New South Wales Government over the past decade in our local government sector.

In fact, the New South Wales Government has invested over \$11 billion into the local government sector since 2011. Currently, to generate additional revenue to contribute to these projects, which may be a condition of the project going ahead, councils are applying to the IPART for a special variation. This imposes a high regulatory burden that extends time frames and can deter councils from helping to deliver projects that benefit their local communities. The Government is committed to establishing an equitable and effective funding framework for infrastructure associated with development and ensuring that growing communities have adequate and effective infrastructure needed to support that growth. With that in mind, the Government has included in the bill a measure that would allow councils to levy a new kind of special rate for infrastructure jointly funded with other government entities.

The Government has therefore supported IPART's recommendation that councils be able to levy a new type of special rate for new infrastructure, where it is of clear benefit to the community and is funded jointly with other levels of government. Under the Act, a council can already levy special rates in addition to ordinary rates on any subset of rateable land in its area to meet the costs of delivering additional works, services, facilities or activities to ratepayers. This is limited, however, to local government functions. The bill would clarify that special rates may be levied to pay for goods, services and infrastructure that are not covered by chapters 5 and 6 of the Act if the purpose of the special rate is to co-fund or contribute to infrastructure or services funded jointly by another level of government. Under the bill, income from this special rate would not form part of a council's general income under the rate peg and councils would not need to seek IPART's approval before levying the special rate.

Under the bill, before levying a special rate a council will need to consult its community about anticipated benefits of the project and special rate, anticipated total project costs, council's contribution to those costs, the contributions to be made by others, the total special rate that would be levied, and how—and for what period—the rates are to be levied. Councils will also need to provide information in their annual reports on project outcomes; actual costs to council of this project; costs reported by other parties, where available; and the total revenue generated by the special rate. Where this differs from a council's initial estimates an explanation is to be provided. This is a key reform that will allow the general income of councils to grow as the communities they serve grow and will ensure that local communities that wish to do so can participate more readily in these kinds of projects.

Landholders with certain types of conservation agreements currently receive an exemption from rates over the land subject to the agreement. While this provides a key incentive for conservation, as part of its review IPART recommended that the Government remove it, as many landholders still benefit from council services and infrastructure. Instead of removing this exemption, the bill would provide for a fair approach that better targets the exemption in future. First, those lands that have existing conservation agreements and currently benefit from this exemption will continue to do so. Secondly, in future those landholders that enter into "in-perpetuity" agreements and do not receive regular financial assistance from the Government will continue to benefit from the exemption, so long as the agreement was not the result of regulatory action. Other landholders will instead be rated under the new rating category for environmental land. While the bill only sets out these arrangements at a high level, it allows for regulations to be made that provide further detail about those agreements that will continue to attract a rates exemption.

The bill would also change current exemptions for special rates levied for water and sewerage services. Some councils are responsible for providing water and sewerage services, particularly in regional and rural areas. To fund these services, in addition to regular service charges councils may choose to levy special rates. However, I am advised that very few, if any, councils take up this option, preferring to fund their water and sewerage services based on service charges. Under the Local Government Act, councils are prevented from levying special rates for water and sewerage for the whole or part of a range of specific types of property. Councils are also able, but not required, to choose to exempt other types of land from these types of special rates, including, for example, public reserves, hospitals and charities.

In its review of local government rating, IPART found that it may not be appropriate for some parcels of land that fall within the above list to be exempt from paying special rates for water and sewerage as they would receive these services for free with significant private benefit. The Government has therefore accepted IPART's recommendation to allow councils discretion to choose whether to exempt these properties from special rates. This measure is included in the bill, although again I note that these special rates are no longer generally used in New South Wales. The Government will, however, provide any necessary guidance to councils levying special rates about how best to exercise their discretion in relation to whether to continue to exempt specific types of land that were previously required to be exempt from these special rates.

The bill also limits the capacity of certain ratepayers to postpone rates because there has been a change in the permitted use of their land that has increased the land value and their rates have increased as a result. Councils

are required to write off any rates and accrued interest postponed after five years. As part of its review, IPART recommended that the Government remove this provision entirely. IPART argued that it does not acknowledge that the ratepayer's asset has increased in value, that it is a disincentive to develop land and that it does not promote growth and urban renewal. After further consultation with councils and communities, through the bill the Government proposes to keep this provision but to further limit who is eligible to postpone their rates. This reduces the potential significant financial impact for some owners of properties when there is a change in the permitted uses of their land and reduces the cost burden on councils and other ratepayers.

Under the bill, a ratepayer in these circumstances who is an owner-occupier and who would face hardship as a result of paying the higher rates attributable to rezoning can apply to council for a postponement of the portion of their rates that has increased because of changes to the permitted use of their property. To ensure fairness, the bill proposes that those ratepayers that currently benefit from such an arrangement, or have applied to do so, continue to do so under the current provision after the reform comes into effect. Finally, in relation to rating reform, the bill provides for councils to sell occupied properties to recover rates and charges after three years rather than five years. Again, this reflects IPART's recommendation that a reduced period will bring New South Wales into line with other States and will reduce costs and delays currently experienced by councils in recovering outstanding rates. These costs are ultimately borne by other ratepayers.

Under the Commonwealth Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act 1992 councils are not required to make superannuation contributions for councillors because councillors are not employees of the council. Councillors are elected to an office in the council and the council is not their employer. Since I have become Minister, Local Government NSW, mayors and councillors have consistently raised with me the lack of superannuation for councillors as a significant concern, along with the need for greater councillor remuneration generally. There is a strongly held view by many in the local government sector that councillors are denied the financial benefits like superannuation that are received by other workers, including council staff. They also argue that the lack of superannuation is a key reason women and younger people do not stand for election in local government.

More must be done to break down the barriers women face when seeking elected office, particularly at the local government level. The Government is committed to removing those obstacles and is working with the sector—including Local Government NSW, Women for Election Australia and the Australian Local Government Women's Association—to encourage greater participation of women in our councils. The Government has also removed a number of historical policies that discourage women from running for office. For instance, we have mandated the reimbursement of childcare expenses and are seeking views from the sector to retain elements of virtual council meetings. Providing councillors superannuation payments is another measure designed to increase the diversity across our councils. This morning I was pleased to receive, via a letter sent to me, a report on this issue from Local Government NSW. It is important that we recognise the high workload and responsibilities of many of our councillors in New South Wales and the significant contribution they make to their communities while juggling work and family commitments.

The bill contains measures that will address the financial sacrifice many make in order to undertake their civic duties. Under the bill, councils will be given the option to make payments for councillors into a complying superannuation fund nominated by councillors from 1 July 2022. These payments will be equivalent to the amount under Commonwealth superannuation legislation. The superannuation payments will be made in addition to the fees currently paid to councillors as determined by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal. If their council chooses to make these payments, councillors will still be able to opt out of the receipt of the payment or agree to a reduced payment—for example, because receipt of the payment will affect their eligibility for another entitlement, such as a pension. I acknowledge the significant work of Local Government NSW, as well as Mr David Shoebridge from the other place, in lobbying for this important change and their coordinated efforts in supporting me to increase diversity in the local government sector.

The bill also contains a number of miscellaneous provisions that address existing legislative anomalies, improve the efficiency of countback elections and improve voter participation at council elections. The bill contains an amendment to allow the time frame for the receipt of postal votes at council elections to be prescribed by regulation. Currently the Act requires postal votes to be received by 6.00 p.m. on the Monday following election day to be counted. With increasing numbers of electors casting their votes by postal vote, this has resulted in many electors being disenfranchised. The amendment will allow the time frame for the receipt of postal votes to be adjusted by regulation in response to changes to Australia Post's delivery schedules to ensure that electors who vote by post are not disenfranchised.

After the next council elections, councils will have the option to fill vacancies in the first 18 months of their terms by a countback instead of a by-election. The bill contains an amendment to allow greater flexibility in the appointment of returning officers for countback elections. The amendment will improve the efficiency of the

administration of countback elections. The bill also contains amendments to address anomalies in the legislation relating to the terms of office of chairpersons of county councils and joint organisations of councils. These amendments extend the terms of chairpersons of county councils to two years to align them with the terms of mayors elected by councils, and align the terms of chairpersons of county councils and joint organisations with the electoral terms of their member councils by providing that their terms will automatically expire on the date of the ordinary elections of their member councils.

In conclusion, the bill before the House features a range of sensible reforms to strengthen local government in New South Wales. It also provides a foundation for further improvements over time for the benefit of councils and the ratepayers they serve. Importantly, the bill provides for greater rating flexibility, making rates fairer and helping councils cater for population growth and infrastructure costs. The bill provides for well-reasoned, sensible adjustments so that councils can be more sustainable over time. Whilst some will want us to go further, these sensible adjustments to the rating system are the first step to help ensure that councils have a stable and reliable revenue base to deliver services for their communities and that ratepayers pay a fairer contribution.

The bill is the result of widespread and long-term community consultation with the sector. Generally speaking, the majority of those in the sector support all the provisions in the bill. I thank the staff of the Office of Local Government for carrying out the consultation process, which was pretty complex. We went back and forth with all those in the sector who had anything to say about the provisions that we were intending to introduce. I thank members of the local government sector, in particular. They have been fantastic in providing feedback on the proposed provisions. I thank my ministerial staff and advisers, particularly Luke Sikora, who has worked very hard. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

CIVIL LIABILITY AMENDMENT (CHILD ABUSE) 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) (11:17): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Civil Liability Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2021. The bill enacts two significant reforms that remove legal barriers to provide a clear pathway for access to justice for survivors of child abuse. First, a new part 1C will be inserted into the Civil Liability Act 2002 to give the courts the power to set aside certain agreements that settle child abuse claims where it is just and reasonable to do so. Secondly, part 2A of the Civil Liability Act will be amended to ensure that a person who suffered personal injury as a result of child abuse sustained while in custody is not limited in terms of the damages they can recover for that abuse under the Act. The bill builds on the New South Wales Government's reforms in 2016 and 2018 to allow greater access to justice for survivors of child abuse in line with the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in its *Redress and Civil Litigation Report*.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse had a profound impact across the country. Over the five years of its inquiry we learnt about the thousands of children who had been sexually abused in institutions where they deserved to be safe. The Government has continued to learn from the findings of the royal commission and from the brave survivors who came forward and told their stories, and who continue to tell their stories. The royal commission considered the extent to which survivors of child sexual abuse have achieved justice under the existing civil litigation systems in Australia and whether reforms are required. The evidence gathered by the royal commission and reported in its 2015 *Redress and Civil Litigation Report* demonstrates that survivors have not had the same ability to access compensation as other injured persons and often find the process of civil litigation to be difficult and traumatic.

In 2016 and 2018 the New South Wales Government implemented an extensive package of reforms in response to the royal commission's findings. The 2016 reforms included retrospectively and prospectively removing limitation periods for child abuse claims and introducing an updated Model Litigant Policy and Guiding Principles for Civil Claims for Child Abuse. In 2018 the New South Wales Government implemented a suite of reforms that included, first, a requirement that a proper defendant be appointed for cases brought against unincorporated organisations, removing what was known as the Ellis defence; and, secondly, two new prospective statutory liabilities for child abuse. New South Wales was one of the first jurisdictions to announce that it would

join the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse. New South Wales was the first State to refer powers to the Commonwealth to enable the redress scheme to be established.

The 2016 and 2018 reforms completed the New South Wales Government's implementation of the recommendations of the *Redress and Civil Litigation Report*. Together, those reforms removed significant barriers to seeking civil justice for survivors. The royal commission's *Redress and Civil Litigation Report* made no recommendations relating to giving the courts the power to set aside settlement agreements for previously settled claims. The bill goes above and beyond the royal commission's recommendations. It builds on the New South Wales Government's 2016 and 2018 reforms to allow survivors who entered into certain settlements before those reforms to have the same access to justice as those who brought a claim after the reforms. Prior to the 2016 and 2018 reforms, many survivors entered into settlements that they identified to the royal commission as inadequate or far too low and that they felt forced to accept due to legal technicalities. In particular, many of those settlements were made in relation to claims that were impacted by the expiry of the limitation period for the claim or where there was no proper defendant to sue.

The royal commission found that when negotiating claims there was often a significant power imbalance between the survivor and the defendant created by the nature of the trauma suffered by the survivor. Many settlement agreements entered into by survivors might now be considered unjust or unfair, particularly where those legal barriers have been removed following the New South Wales Government's reform to civil liability in 2016 and 2018. If those legal barriers had not existed at the time of the settlement, those survivors would have been in a better negotiating position and may have negotiated a higher settlement amount. However, generally, people who entered into those settlement agreements would be prevented from seeking any further compensation for the abuse by terms in their settlement agreements that released the responsible institutions or persons from liability. That type of release is common across personal injury matters, including child abuse claims. The ultimate effect of that is survivors who entered into settlement agreements prior to the reforms may be unable to benefit from the removal of the legal barriers to civil litigation, which occurred in 2016 and 2018.

The 2018 amendments in relation to part 2A of the Civil Liability Act also serve to ensure that survivors of abuse who sought compensation would not be limited by the operation of part 2A. However, as that amendment operates prospectively only, victims of child abuse who were abused while in custody prior to 26 October 2018—the date of the 2018 Act's commencement—remain restricted by the part 2A limitations. Survivors of child abuse in custody have, in some cases, been significantly limited in the damages they can recover due to the operation of part 2A, despite otherwise having strong claims. The damages awardable under part 2A are capped by what a claimant would have been entitled to receive under the Workers Compensation Act 1987 at the time the injury arose. In some cases, this equates to no damages provided for purely psychological injury.

The application of part 2A has led to inconsistent outcomes between claimants who experience comparable abuse at different times or in different institutions. The reforms will ensure that claimants are treated consistently with other historical abuse claims. The aims of the bill being introduced today are, first, to allow survivors who entered into settlements before the 2016 and 2018 reforms to have the same access to justice as those who brought a claim after the reforms; and, secondly, to ensure that survivors whose claims have been historically restricted by part 2A of the Civil Liability Act are no longer subject to such restrictions. Similar reforms regarding setting aside unjust settlements have been introduced in Western Australia, Queensland, the Northern Territory, Victoria and Tasmania. Those jurisdictions' reforms provide a framework to allow people to sue responsible institutions in cases where they were previously impeded from doing so. Most of those jurisdictions' reforms relate to settlement agreements for claims that were impeded in particular by limitation periods.

The effects of the legislation in those jurisdictions is similar in that they all provide the courts with the power to set aside historical settlement agreements, particularly for claims that were previously statute barred—that is, prior to the removal of the limitation period. The exact wording of new part 1C for the Civil Liability Act differs from other jurisdictions in various ways, and each of the other jurisdictions' legislation differs from the others. A key aspect of part 1C that differs significantly from the other jurisdictions is that it clearly articulates that the courts may set aside settlement agreements for claims that were either impacted by the expiry of the limitation period or where an organisation was not incorporated and there was therefore no proper defendant to the cause of action, or both, if just and reasonable to do so. New South Wales will be the only jurisdiction that has explicitly articulated in the legislation that the courts may set aside settlement agreements that were impacted by both of those legal barriers or by the legal barrier of the absence of a proper defendant alone.

By doing so, this bill ensures that it is clear to survivors, their representatives, potential defendants and the courts the types of settlements that are covered by the reforms. This avoids the parties to an application to set aside an affected agreement needing to engage in lengthy arguments about whether the settlement agreement is one that can be set aside. The consultation process for these reforms in New South Wales appears to have been the most extensive out of all jurisdictions that have introduced reforms to give the courts the power to set aside

past settlement agreements. A discussion paper was released for public consultation in March 2020 on possible reforms. To ensure it reached a wide number of stakeholders, the discussion paper was released on the Department of Communities and Justice website, as well as the New South Wales Government consultation platform "Have your say". The discussion paper was also directly sent to a large number of stakeholders, including survivor groups, religious institutions and multi-faith non-government organisations, children service providers, legal stakeholders and the insurance industry.

Some 33 written submissions were received from stakeholders in response to the discussion paper. Stakeholder submissions, in particular from survivors and their supporters, have informed the development of part 1C. Survivor submissions on these reforms reiterated what survivors had told the royal commission about their experiences in negotiating their claims prior to the 2016 and 2018 reforms, and helped inform the criteria adopted in part 1C to help guide the courts' decision-making. Survivor submissions also made clear that the reforms needed to cover all the various ways that institutions and other defendants settled claims, not just those that were commenced in court. That includes negotiations undertaken by survivors directly with the responsible institutions, along with institutions' privately run redress schemes.

Targeted consultation was undertaken on the draft bill from November 2020 to January 2021. This included providing a draft bill to a large number of stakeholders, including survivor groups, religious institutions, multifaith non-government organisations, children service providers, legal stakeholders, the insurance industry and all other stakeholders that made a submission on the March 2020 discussion paper for comment. The response to the draft bill was overwhelmingly supportive. Some 30 confidential submissions were received on the draft bill, the vast majority supporting the bill. I now turn to the detail of the bill. The bill seeks to enact a new part 1C of the Civil Liability Act to allow the courts, if just and reasonable, to set aside certain settlement agreements for past child abuse claims. The bill also seeks to amend section 26B of the Civil Liability Act to ensure that the provisions of part 2A of that Act do not apply to claims relating to child abuse.

Proposed new section 7A inserts two defined terms into part 1C of the Civil Liability Act. Each of those terms relates to substantive changes to the Act, which I will cover in context. New section 7B describes the object of part 1C. This is to provide a way for a person to seek to have an agreement set aside if it has settled a claim for child abuse against the person and there were certain legal barriers to that person being fully compensated through a legal course of action at the time of the agreement. Under part 1C, "child abuse" includes claims of sexual abuse, serious physical abuse and other connected abuse perpetrated in connection with the sexual abuse or serious physical abuse of a person while they were a child. This is consistent with the definition of child abuse adopted in section 6A (2) of the Limitation Act 1969, which provides that there is no limitation date for these claims. Adopting the definition of child abuse used in section 6A (2) of the Limitation Act in part 1C is the best option for ensuring this part applies to as many settlement agreements as possible and claims that were previously impacted by the expiration of the limitation period or where there was no proper defendant. This definition is the broadest available as it includes connected abuse.

As these reforms work to extend the same access to justice for survivors as that granted by the 2016 and 2018 reforms, adopting the Limitation Act definition will ensure consistency in applications when assessing claims that were impacted by the expiry of the limitation period for a claim or where there was no proper defendant to sue. The bill defines child abuse as abuse perpetrated against a person when the person is under 18 years of age—that is, sexual abuse, serious physical abuse and/or abuse that is perpetrated in connection with sexual or serious physical abuse. The threshold for the removal of the limitation period is the sexual or serious physical abuse of a child or young person under the age of 18 years. If that threshold has been met then other forms of abuse connected to the threshold abuse, such as psychological abuse or minor physical abuse, can be considered in determining the claim. This ensures that the court can consider the whole context of abuse when determining the substance of the claim.

Connected abuse can be perpetrated by the same person who perpetrated the threshold abuse or by another person. To avoid doubt, the bill makes clear that both the threshold abuse and connected abuse must have occurred when the victim was under the age of 18 years. The royal commission's recommendations are limited by its terms of reference to child sexual abuse; however, its final report suggests that governments could enact reforms covering other types of abuse. This broader approach recognises that many children who have been maltreated experience multiple forms of abuse. For example, a perpetrator of sexual abuse may also use physical violence, grooming and psychological manipulation to prepare a child for sexual activity or to ensure that a child does not report the abuse. The evidence demonstrates that non-sexual forms of abuse, such as serious physical abuse, can be equally as traumatic as child sexual abuse. The key determinants of worse outcomes for survivors of child abuse are not the kinds of abuse but include factors such as the frequency and duration of abuse, the co-occurrence of multiple forms of abuse, the development stage of the victim, and whether there was a close emotional relationship with the abuser.

The definition in the bill is thus broad enough to cover the types of abuse associated with trauma, serious injury and delayed disclosure but not so broad as to cover trivial, accidental or other conduct that on its own is unlikely to cause trauma. To avoid being overly prescriptive, the bill does not exhaustively define what constitutes "sexual abuse" or "serious physical abuse". Rather, the bill requires courts to determine whether abuse has occurred, having regard to the circumstances of each individual case and the ordinary meaning of the terms. The term "child abuse" should be interpreted in a beneficial manner. Sexual abuse of a child has been defined by the royal commission as:

Any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards.

This includes sexual activities that do not involve physical contact with the victim, such as acts of exhibitionism and exposure to pornography. Serious physical abuse should capture non-accidental physical contact with a child that could cause injury. It may consist of a series of relatively minor episodes over a period that causes the conduct to become serious as well as serious, one-off conduct. The bill is not intended to capture conduct that on its own would not amount to serious physical abuse, such as a one-off physical altercation between two minors, the reasonable restraint of a violent child, reasonable corporal punishment where a defence of lawful chastisement was available at law at the time of the incident, lawful medical treatments conducted under previous policies and medical negligence claims. Connected abuse could include psychological abuse where a child is manipulated to feel complicit in the abuse, where a child is threatened to prevent them from reporting the abuse, or where a child is coerced into covering up the abuse. It would also include "grooming", which is defined by the royal commission as:

... actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child, to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

Connected abuse could also include minor physical abuse that does not meet the threshold of serious physical abuse, such as minor physical assaults. New section 7C to be inserted by the bill allows settlements to be set aside as if they were an affected agreement. This includes those that occurred before, first, section 6A of the Limitation Act 1969 commenced and at the time of the agreement a limitation period applying to the cause of action had expired; or, secondly, part 1B of the Civil Liability Act 2002 commenced and at the time of the agreement an organisation that would have been liable under part 1B for child abuse, had the part been in force, was not incorporated.

Part 1B was inserted in 2018 to remove the "proper defendant" defence. New section 7C (1) (b) has been included to ensure that survivors whose claims were impacted by there being no proper defendant before part 1B commenced now have a pathway to a related settlement agreement set aside so that they can seek further compensation. New section 7C has been drafted differently from similar provisions in other jurisdictions' legislation that brought about similar reforms. It has been drafted in this particular way to ensure that it expressly and clearly captures agreements for all claims that were impacted by the expiration of the limitation period or where there was no proper defendant to the claim. Under new section 7D (1) a person who is unable to bring a claim because of an affected agreement will be able to bring proceedings relating to the claim and to apply to the court to set aside the affected agreement. New section 7D (1) has been drafted in this way to ensure the most straightforward process is adopted for applications to set aside a settlement agreement.

New section 7D (2) gives the courts the discretion to set aside an affected agreement if they consider it "just and reasonable" to do so. The overwhelming majority of stakeholders who responded to the March 2020 discussion paper supported adopting a test in New South Wales that was consistent with the majority of other jurisdictions. This test was adopted by Queensland, Victoria, Western Australia and the Northern Territory in their reforms. Adopting a "just and reasonable" test allows the courts in New South Wales to apply broad principles to their decision-making and to take into account relevant factors. This test is supported by the criteria that the court may take into account in new section 7D (3). The criteria in new section 7D (3) constitute a non-exhaustive list of factors that the courts may consider when determining whether to set aside an affected agreement.

The courts are not required to take all or any of the criteria into account. The criteria include the amount paid to the applicant under the agreement, the bargaining position of the parties to the agreement, the conduct of parties other than the applicant or the parties' legal representative in relation to the agreement, and any other matter that the court considers relevant. New section 7D (3) will allow the courts to weigh a number of factors relevant to either party when determining whether it is just and reasonable to set aside an affected agreement. It is important that these criteria be non-exhaustive as the courts will be best placed to consider the factors in each application and the circumstances relevant to the affected agreement that might make it just and reasonable to set it aside. The criteria have been informed by the royal commission's findings and stakeholder feedback on the March 2020 discussion paper. Stakeholders identified a number of factors relating to their bargaining position and other parties' conduct that they felt contributed to the unjustness of the settlement. This included in some cases a lack of legal

representation, the plaintiff's physical and mental health at the time of settlement, and the defendant's conduct during negotiations.

It is important that the criteria are non-exhaustive as the court will be best placed to consider the factors in each application. The role of the criteria is to provide guidance for the courts when exercising the discretion to set aside a settlement agreement while not limiting a court's power to exercise this discretion and to consider the factors it deems relevant to the case presented. New section 7D also includes an exception to section 131 (1) of the Evidence Act 1995. Section 131 (1) of the Evidence Act provides that evidence is not to be adduced of a communication or a document "in connection with an attempt to negotiate a settlement of the dispute". This new section 7D exception has been included in response to stakeholder submissions to ensure that section 131 (1) does not prevent relevant evidence from being used in an application to set aside an agreement.

Under new section 7E, to give effect to a court's decision to set aside a settlement agreement, the courts will also be able to set aside related court orders, judgements and other contracts or agreements giving effect to the settlement. However, new section 7E (2) (a) expressly provides that a court must not set aside a deed of release signed in acceptance of an offer under the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse or an agreement taken into account as a relevant prior payment in the accepted offer. This is because under the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Act 2018 of the Commonwealth, the responsible institution is released from civil liability when a redress offer is accepted.

As the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Act 2018 is Commonwealth legislation, it would override part 1C of the Civil Liability Act. On this basis, proposed new section 7E (2) (a) has been included to ensure clarity to those considering whether a settlement agreement can be set aside. New section 7E (2) (b) also expressly precludes defendants to proceedings that have been settled from applying to set aside a settlement agreement, including a settlement under which one defendant indemnifies another or an insurance contract. This is to ensure an application to set aside a settlement agreement can only be brought by survivors and their representatives. These are the people the reforms are intended to benefit.

New section 7F sets out the effect that setting aside a settlement agreement has on a number of things. New section 7F (1) provides that a court may set aside an affected agreement or anything else under part 1C only to the extent that it relates to the applicant. That is because in some proceedings, known as class actions or representative proceedings, there is more than one plaintiff. Class actions or representative proceedings can be settled by all of the plaintiffs and defendants signing one settlement agreement. It is therefore very important in the interests of certainty that if an applicant who settled their proceedings as part of a class action or representative proceedings applies to have a settlement agreement set aside, it is only set aside with respect to that applicant and does not undo the agreements between any other parties that are covered by the one document.

New section 7F (2) provides that an affected agreement and anything else set aside under part 1C—such as a related agreement, judgment or orders—is void to the extent that it relates to the applicant. This provision effectively means that once an affected agreement is set aside, it is no longer enforceable against the applicant or any other party including the defendant. New section 7F (3) provides that an amount paid, including legal costs or disbursements or other consideration given under the affected agreement, cannot be recovered from the applicant but may be taken into account by a court when determining damages in proceedings for a cause of action to which the affected agreement related. It would not be in the interests of justice for an applicant to be able to apply to have an affected agreement set aside and then to have to repay the amount paid under the agreement while they pursue further compensation.

However, the courts will have the discretion to take the amount into account when awarding final damages. This is ultimately to avoid what is known as double compensation, which is where a person receives more than what the court has determined to be the appropriate amount for damages. It is important that the courts have the discretion to take the amount paid under the set-aside affected agreement into account but are not required to do so. In determining an application to set aside an affected agreement, the courts will consider the circumstances of each case and will be best placed to determine whether the amount paid under the affected agreement should be deducted from the final amount awarded for damages. This is consistent with each of the other jurisdictions' similar reforms.

I now turn to new section 26B of the Civil Liability Act 2002. It provides that part 2A of that Act does not apply and is taken never to have applied to an injury arising from child abuse. This retrospective application will ensure that the restrictive provisions in part 2A do not apply to any claims relating to child abuse that occurred in custody, regardless of when the abuse occurred, ensuring equal access to civil remedies for survivors. Part 2A was introduced in 2004 by the Civil Liability Amendment (Offender Damages) Act 2004. Part 2A of the Civil Liability Act 2002 limits the damages that a person can recover for personal injury sustained while that person was an offender in custody. That includes limits on the damages recoverable for personal injury as a result of child abuse sustained while the child was in custody prior to 2018.

Where a claimant's permanent impairment has been assessed as being below 15 per cent, the claimant cannot be awarded damages either for economic or non-economic loss. If a claimant's permanent impairment has been assessed as being above 15 per cent then their claim for non-economic loss is capped by what they would have been entitled to receive under the Workers Compensation Act 1987 at the time the injury arose, which in some cases is nil for purely psychiatric injury. These limitations mean that the application of part 2A may lead to inconsistent outcomes between claimants who experience comparable abuse at different times or in different institutions and may lead to harsh results for some claimants who, despite having an otherwise strong claim on liability, are unable to recover any damages or are only entitled to lower damages due to the operation of part 2A.

New South Wales courts must apply the relevant provisions of part 2A in accordance with the law. It is clear at the moment that if a claimant is an offender in custody as defined in the Civil Liability Act 2002, the provisions of part 2A must be followed in calculating damages available. New South Wales is the only Australian jurisdiction with this restriction in place. No other jurisdictions have specific offender-in-custody restrictions on damages available for civil liability. The bill will bring New South Wales into line with other States and Territories in relation to child abuse claims. Those other States and Territories do not differentiate between child abuse that occurred in or out of custody.

New section 26B inserts two definitions into part 2A of the Civil Liability Act 2002. A "child" is defined as a person under the age of 18 years, which is largely consistent throughout New South Wales legislation. Under new section 26B, "child abuse" means sexual abuse or physical abuse of a child but does not include an act that is lawful at the time it takes place. This is consistent with the definition adopted in part 1B of the Civil Liability Act 2002, which was introduced in 2018 and prospectively amended the Civil Liability Act to ensure that nothing in part 2A places any restriction or limitation on an award of damages made in relation to child abuse claims. As new section 26B will extend this amendment to apply retrospectively, adopting the definition in part 1B of the Civil Liability Act will ensure consistency in applications when assessing claims relating to child abuse that occurred in custody.

The bill will introduce part 16 of schedule 1 to the Civil Liability Act 2002, which will allow the setting aside of settlements, judgments and consent orders impacted by part 2A. As the reform is retrospective, individuals with claims that were previously limited by the part 2A provisions will be able to have their claims reassessed without the restrictions in place. A survivor of child abuse that occurred while in custody may commence proceedings as if an earlier judgment or settlement affected by part 2A had not occurred. The court may set aside the earlier judgment or settlement if it decides that it is just and reasonable to do so. The savings and transitional provisions adopt the definitions currently applied by part 2A of the Civil Liability Act, including the definition of child abuse and the definition of offender in custody.

This bill is the culmination of extensive consultation and consideration. The New South Wales Government's reforms in 2016 and 2018 were important in providing a clear pathway for access to justice for survivors of child abuse. This bill builds on those reforms. It clearly and unambiguously provides that the courts may set aside settlement agreements for claims that were either impacted by the expiry of the limitation period or where an organisation was not incorporated and there was therefore no proper defendant to the cause of action, or both, if just and reasonable to do so. The bill goes beyond the royal commission's recommendations by ensuring that those survivors who came forward and gave evidence about the unfair and unjust settlements that they had entered into prior to the royal commission have a pathway to justice.

I thank the following team from the Department of Communities and Justice for undertaking policy development work in this area: Stephen Bray, Katy Wood, Celia Barnett-Chu, Alexandra Cassar, Deirdre Bole, Alison Bell and Paige Davis. I thank the drafter of the bill, Deputy Parliamentary Counsel Mark Cowan, who was involved in drafting the 2018 reforms to the Civil Liability Act 2002 too. I thank Sean Robertson from my office, who has been involved throughout the process. I particularly thank the survivors and survivor groups who have advocated for these historic reforms. I have spoken on many occasions in this place about the incredible bravery and the enormous courage shown by the survivors of institutional abuse, the bravery they showed in telling their stories to the royal commission and the bravery they continue to show in advocating for survivors and for a better, safer community for our children in which they can fully thrive. The bill is designed to provide greater access to civil justice for survivors and it would not have been possible without their advocacy and their bravery.

I apologise to those whom I do not name and thank explicitly, but I would like to thank, among others, Beyond Abuse and its CEO, Steve Fisher; the Care Leavers Australasia Network, or CLAN, and Leonie Sheedy; Survivors & Mates Support Network, or SAMSN, and Craig Hughes-Cashmore; Ellis Legal and John Ellis; End Rape on Campus and Nina Funnell and Anna Hush; Bravehearts and Hetty Johnston; Fighters Against Child Abuse Australia; Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia; Domestic Violence NSW; knowmore; and the Women's Legal Service NSW. The bill is an historic bill that builds on the foundations of previous reforms in

response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Budget

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2020-2021

Debate resumed from 16 March 2021.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (11:56): Yesterday in my contribution to debate on the budget I was talking about agritourism, so it is great to have the planning Minister here today. In the budget we talked about what we were doing to help the regions, and agritourism will be a game changer in Wollondilly, the Southern Highlands, Newcastle, Port Stephens and other rural areas. It will allow farmers to earn passive income from running events. We are tearing away red tape. That is the great thing about being part of a conservative government: We are getting rid of red tape and we are letting the regions blossom. The New South Wales Government is focused on supporting our regional businesses in manufacturing, agritourism and the agricultural sectors to help them to recover quickly and return to growth, while also positioning regional economies to further specialise in innovation and technology-focused industries.

Our investment in regional New South Wales will support the economic recovery of the communities and businesses in regional New South Wales; provide vital assistance for communities following the drought and the 2019-2020 summer bushfires; reinforce a targeted approach to drought resilience and water security; improve road and rail connections between regions and cities to enable faster movement of goods and improve access for visitors; assist businesses to expand, establish, invest and create more jobs in the region—agritourism, as I have mentioned again—and protect and improve the environment and local character of New South Wales' regional communities. Highlights of the New South Wales Government's new and existing key regional investments are included in the budget. I have had many discussions with the planning Minister about keeping that green belt in certain areas around New South Wales.

In planning, we are striving to keep Wollondilly, the Southern Highlands and those regional areas as circuit-breakers from the CBD so that people can come out to our electorate, pick fruit and enjoy the region. We are talking about that regularly. The areas of Wollondilly and the Southern Highlands are very similar to the Thames Valley in England, which is an hour outside London. That is the sort of vision that I have for my region and I know that members who represent neighbouring electorates hold similar visions. In terms of drought relief, from mid-2017 to 2020 New South Wales experienced one of the worst droughts on record. It continues to cast a long shadow across our regions. As of October 2020, 12 per cent of the State remained in drought. That has presented significant challenges to the agricultural sector. The New South Wales Government is standing by its farmers, their families and rural communities and it has committed approximately \$4.5 billion in drought assistance and water security support.

Drought assistance in New South Wales provides ongoing support for farmers while helping to accelerate recovery for producers who have seen conditions improve. Existing New South Wales Government support includes: \$1 billion for the Farm Innovation Fund to provide concessional loans and greater drought resilience; \$1 billion for the Safe and Secure Water Program to provide safe, secure and sustainable water and wastewater services to regional New South Wales; \$170 million for the NSW Drought Stimulus Package to fund shovel-ready infrastructure projects; waiving heavy vehicle charges for eligible primary producers; deferring or extending instalment plans for drought-affected customers who are having difficulty meeting payroll tax obligations; and waiving the Local Land Services rates and other government charges.

The New South Wales Government has provided \$310 million in additional funding since the 2019-2010 half-yearly review. That includes \$116 million to continue the Emergency Drought Transport Subsidy; \$99 million in assistance for eligible primary producers, including waiving Local Land Services rates, Western Lands lease rents, wild dog fence rates and meeting vehicle registration costs; \$28.5 million to continue water licence fee waivers to domestic, general and high security water users; and continuing health and wellbeing programs including the farmgate counsellors program, Aboriginal wellbeing services, the Royal Flying Doctor Service and Far West drought support programs. It is also important to note that the New South Wales Government has committed \$4.4 billion to those affected by bushfires.

My own area was heavily affected by the bushfires. They first hit us in November 2019 up at Oakdale in the Burratorang Valley. Hundreds of thousands of hectares of bushland was burnt. We will never forget that dreadful day on 19 December when it hit Balmoral, Buxton and Bargo. We lost two very brave RFS fighters. As I said earlier, the New South Wales Government is committing \$4.4 billion in bushfire recovery support. That includes the restoration and futureproofing of assets against natural disasters while also providing important

stimulus and resilience to communities that were impacted by the 2019-2020 bushfires. The New South Wales Government has created a \$1 billion bushfire infrastructure package to clean up and repair roads, bridges, schools and other State assets that were affected by the fires. The package will also be used to repair fencing destroyed by bushfires and upgrade critical communication networks used by emergency services workers.

The other day at Wollondilly Shire Council I met with Endeavour Energy, which replaced hundreds of power poles throughout bushfire-affected areas on the South Coast and Wollondilly. That was a huge project and I thank workers for their tireless efforts. They worked nonstop to get power back to our communities after we were affected by the bushfires. Some of the initiatives that are supported by the bushfire infrastructure package include: \$217 million to continue the rollout of critical communications infrastructure; \$190 million for local infrastructure projects and additional agricultural research stations to stimulate local economies and improve the resilience of regional communities and industries; \$100 million to replace, repair and build resilience in New South Wales Government infrastructure impacted by the 2019-2020 bushfires; and \$46 million to the forestry industry for urgent infrastructure repairs, nursery expansions and to replant the forest.

Other things that it includes for local communities is \$540 million committed in partnership with the Commonwealth to drive economic recovery under the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund, including establishing a \$250 million grant program for regional areas; \$335 million in support for more than 20,000 businesses affected by bushfires through the small business recovery and support grants; \$209 million to re-establish boundary fences adjoining Crown land that were destroyed in the fires; \$110 million to support 1,800 farmers through the primary producer recovery grants; and \$10 million to provide 200 recovery pods and temporary accommodation for families who lost their homes during the fire.

Over 8,000 people have been provided with emergency accommodation since November 2019 and there are a couple of people living in those pods in my electorate. They have been doing it tough. For instance, in Bargo Jenny Webb, who with me has been a strong advocate against the Tahmoor mine expansion, lost her home on 19 December. Now she faces an expansion of the coalmine going directly underneath her home and will suffer mine subsidence due to that. I will also address the House on fostering economic growth and prosperity. The New South Wales Government has allocated funding to health and economic stimulus measures designed to support the people, businesses and communities of regional New South Wales.

This includes a \$1.8 billion commitment for regional New South Wales from the \$3 billion Jobs and Infrastructure Acceleration Fund to accelerate economic recovery and create new jobs, with \$300 million to support accelerated delivery and \$500 million through Fixing Country Bridges to better connect regional and rural communities. In my area of Wingecarribee shire at the southern end of my electorate, Wingecarribee Shire Council was successful in obtaining two grants for bridges in Bowral and Mittagong. I recently visited the one in Mittagong. There is \$198.8 million for businesses in regional New South Wales from the small business support fund, ensuring that businesses receive the support they need to keep operating. There is an additional \$300 million to recharge the Regional Growth Fund—bringing it to a total of \$2 billion—to support growing regional centres, activate local economies and improve services.

There is \$50 million for Resources for Regions round seven, supporting the ongoing prosperity of mining communities in regional New South Wales by providing economic opportunities, improved local amenity and positive social outcomes. Wollondilly was successful in round seven. Wollondilly Shire Council was included in the funds, which assisted the redevelopment of the Tahmoor Sportsground that the New South Wales Government had already given funds to as part of the City Deal. With those funds, Wollondilly council was able to support the Active Transport (Walking and Cycling) Program. The Government has allocated funding for the concept design, community consultation and detailed design of the missing link in a shared parkway between River Road in Tahmoor and Wonga Road in Picton, near Picton High School.

The allocation will also allow the construction of the first stage in this financial year. It is 200 metres of shared parkway in front of Picton High School and Argyle Street at the intersection of Wonga Road. It will be wonderful for kids to be able to ride their bikes to school by way of active transport. I would also like to address the House on better connecting our regional cities and regions through a pipeline of investment and job creation opportunities. In 2020-21 there is \$335 million for the continued delivery of the New Intercity Fleet to provide a new, state-of-the-art fleet that will offer a new level of comfort and convenience for customers who travel between Sydney, the Central Coast, Newcastle, the Blue Mountains, the South Coast, the Southern Highlands and other regions.

In 2020-21 there is \$43.3 million for the continued delivery of the regional rail fleet. My area of the Southern Highlands line is not electrified. There are diesel services at the moment. The new rail fleet coming on board in the next few years will allow diesel trains to put the prongs up, go on the grid and run on the electrified line once they get to Macarthur station. The Southern Highlands line has always been an issue; there are only so many slots at Central station for diesel trains. Having trains that can flip from diesel to electricity will allow those

trains to go through the City Circle and come back, which will make the logistics a lot easier for those running the transport system. There is \$13.5 million in 2020-21 for the continued planning and delivery of the 16 Regional Cities Program, which will boost bus services for key regional centres.

One of the great announcements in the budget was the continual funding for Bowral and District Hospital. In this budget we received \$6.2 million for stage one of Bowral and District Hospital; the whole project is \$68.7 million. We received \$4 million as part of a \$55 million project for stage two of the project. The Berejiklian Government has a high priority to provide first-class health facilities and services. The redevelopment of Bowral and District Hospital is ensuring that that priority is being delivered. It is a direct result of the Government's ability to provide a strong economy in New South Wales. Residents of the Southern Highlands area will benefit from better health care as a result of an additional injection of funds for the continued redevelopment of the hospital. During the recent election campaign I was able to secure \$55 million on top of the already committed \$68.7 million, and this budget will provide further facilities and services at that hospital.

The total redevelopment of the hospital is in the order of over \$120 million. That expenditure on the redevelopment of Bowral and District Hospital represents the largest infrastructure investment in the Southern Highlands in a generation. The additional \$55 million will go towards the construction of additional wards and upgrading sterilising and medical imaging facilities following the completion of the \$68.7 million stage one, which is now open. It is a magnificent hospital; the birthing suites are magnificent. The staff at Bowral and District Hospital are extremely passionate and hard working, and now they have a hospital to go with that. It is a great hospital. Only last week we had the official opening with Brad Hazzard, and it was a great event.

The New South Wales Government is investing more than \$8 billion in health infrastructure over the next four years, which is incredible, including record investment in regions so that patients can receive high-quality care closer to home. In addition to the new facilities, the South Western Sydney Local Health District—which Bowral hospital is part of—will benefit from an extra 822 staff members, including 114 doctors, 52 nurses and midwives, 69 allied health workers and 110 hospital support workers. Across New South Wales the Liberal-Nationals Government will deliver 5,000 new nurses and midwives over the next four years, which is the largest workforce boost in the history of Australian health care. About two years ago I turned the first sod on the first stage of Bowral and District Hospital. The construction went very well.

As I said, we opened the hospital the other day. It was my first role as a member of Parliament after being elected in March 2019 and it was a great honour. Stage two of the redevelopment of the hospital is currently being planned and taking place. Clinical, administrative and community inpatient levels will ensure that further redevelopment of the hospital reflects what the community needs. The Southern Highlands community is growing. As members may know, more than 40 per cent of residents in the Wingecarribee area are aged over 65, but since COVID there has been a boom in the regions. A real estate agent in the Southern Highlands area will be lucky to find stock. If people had a second home in the Southern Highlands, it is now their first choice; they are moving out of Sydney and coming to the regions. The upgrade and redevelopment of the Bowral and District Hospital infrastructure is incredibly important.

On roads, Wollondilly got \$44 million for the development of a final business case and detailed design for Picton Road to be upgraded to a motorway standard between the Hume Highway and Mount Ousley Road. Picton Road is one of the most dangerous stretches of road in New South Wales; we have had many fatalities. [*Extension of time*]

Last year I gave a speech in this House about Picton Road. I started off by saying, "I'm as mad as hell, and I'm not going to take it anymore!", the famous words of Howard Beale from the movie *Network*. Having to see another fatality on this road sickens me to death and drives me insane. We have lost so many young kids on this road. We have lost professional truck drivers. It is extremely dangerous. I am working with the members for Wollongong and for Keira. We are all working as one. We put politics aside to get a dual motorway for Picton Road. For people who do not Picton Road near Wilton, Wilton will be a new town. About 15,000 new homes will be constructed there. This road is incredibly important. Picton Road at the moment has just over 20,000 movements on it a day, of which 25 per cent is freight. It is increasing by 5 per cent each year. It is an incredible piece of infrastructure to bring south-western Sydney and the Illawarra together, so it is extremely important.

Wollondilly received \$23.1 million for upgrades to Appin Road, which is another dangerous road, linking Wollondilly to the Campbelltown region. There is a lot of work going on there. There is also \$5 million for improvements to Menangle Road. In education, Wollondilly received \$46.3 million of the \$112 million upgrade to Picton High School. I had a tour of the high school recently with some media. It will open in term 2. It is spectacular. Picton High School is like a second TAFE college. It has motor mechanics workshops, metalwork shops and woodwork shops. They have brought together seven different buildings in the school. There are also studios for recording so that local artists can get in there on the weekends and record their music. No doubt the

former member for Epping, my father, would love to be in there with his band, singing away at Picton High School. That is going to be very exciting.

Wollondilly also received \$4 million for an upgrade of Wilton Public School, which will be upgraded to the tune of about \$30 to \$40 million. Wilton Public School is near where the new Wilton town will be, where 15,000 homes will be built. At the moment Wilton Public School takes about 550 students. It will double in size over the next two years to be able to take 1,100. That is incredibly important, and is all part of the \$18.9 billion investment for capital funding for schools, which is the largest investment in school infrastructure in the State's history. Also announced in the budget and beginning in the next few weeks is the Dine & Discover campaign. I encourage everyone to get the Dine & Discover vouchers and head down to the Southern Highlands. You can go to Newcastle. You can go to Port Stephens. You could head up to Myall Lakes and spend up big and support local businesses. One of the highlights in the highlands is Gumnut Patisserie. Everyone would have sampled its pies and cakes. We had Pie Time here in 2019.

Mr Stephen Bromhead: Let's do it again. Bring it back.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH: We are going to bring Pie Time back to the New South Wales Parliament. When you come to the wonderful electorate of Wollondilly you can go to Thirlmere. I know that the member for Newcastle knows where Thirlmere is. The Thirlmere steam museum has one of the greatest collections of steam trains. You name it, we have the Governor's carriage and the Governor-General's carriage. It is a wonderful museum. We have the Thomas the Tank Engine day, which is always a big thing for the kids. Every March—we are not doing it this year, but it is coming back next year—is the steam festival at Thirlmere, which attracts about 35,000 to 40,000 people over that weekend. I am very proud of the funding we achieved for the Thirlmere steam museum to rejuvenate the Picton-to-Mittagong loop line, which has not been used for 44 years. It extends from Picton all the way to Mittagong, but we have the funding to go from Thirlmere to Colo Vale.

What is so important about that? At Hill Top there is the deepest rail cutting in the Southern Hemisphere. It is quite epic. I encourage everyone to head down to Hill Top to check it out. I hope that in the next two years we will be hearing "Toot-toot. All aboard" and seeing steam flying out of the Thirlmere steam museum and heading to Colo Vale. That project is so important. Buxton and Balmoral were hit the hardest in my region during the bushfires, and this will lift the morale of those communities. We will be able to have markets there with our great new changes to agritourism, which I have mentioned about 10 times in this speech, which our good Minister has provided. It will be great when we bring that whole area alive again. That line went out of use only 44 years ago. We are bringing it back.

I will also touch on investing in our people and their future. This is a budget to increase the skills of the New South Wales workforce for today and tomorrow. The New South Wales Government is committed to supporting people on every step of their career ladder, from those leaving school to working parents and job seekers who are looking to retrain or upskill. The New South Wales Government will invest \$318.6 million over two years in the Skilling for Recovery training package to help jobseekers who are looking to retrain or learn new skills and support school leavers entering the workforce for the first time. This training program will deliver on the New South Wales Government's commitment under the Commonwealth JobTrainer Fund to offer more than 100,000 low-cost or fee-free places for training for individuals in New South Wales, with a focus on school leavers disadvantaged by the pandemic.

Through the Skilling for Recovery program, the New South Wales Government will significantly increase the intake of apprentices across Transport for NSW. It will also provide \$80 million in support for apprenticeships and cadetships in the community housing and construction sectors. A further 300 traineeships will be created across New South Wales public sector agencies. Finding smarter ways to train the New South Wales workforce is critical to lifting the State's productivity. The New South Wales Government will invest \$57.4 million over four years to create the landmark Trades Skills Pathways Centre to address skills shortages in the New South Wales economy and support employment for women. It will also develop new pathways to trades qualifications, deliver more flexible training and make trades a better option for women. The centre will adopt recommendations from the productivity green paper to find better and smarter pathways to skilled trades to match our modern economy.

We also have a focus very much on female employment to help women return to the workforce. The New South Wales Government is introducing grants of up to \$5,000 for training and support. The care economy comprises early childhood, community services, social housing, aged care, disability care and personal support. This sector has a large proportion of casual female workers who have been particularly hit hard by the recent recession and COVID-19. To assist in revitalising this sector, the New South Wales Government will provide \$17 million for upskilling, mentoring and job-matching for people working in the care economy to improve recruitment and retention of care workers, and meet the long-term needs of the State's older citizens, those with a disability or those requiring care. There will be up to 20,000 places to train people working in aged care to support

the growing needs of the sector and \$2.5 million to develop a strategic business case for a TAFE centre of excellence for aged care.

Success in education is about more than just how much money is spent. In addition to resources, the New South Wales Government will drive quality outcomes for all students. Some of the measures are an investment of \$337 million over the 2021 school year to deliver intensive tutoring for up to 290,000 students in New South Wales schools, supporting students to recover lost time learning as a result of the COVID-19 shutdowns in early 2020. We all remember that. Homeschooling a six-year-old and a nine-year-old was lots of fun, let me tell you—and as some of my colleagues will know. We are using \$120 million to extend the existing free preschool program to the end of 2021. This funding will support 44,000 three- to five-year-olds attending community preschool in over 700 community and mobile preschools across the State.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (12:24): I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to debate on the Budget Estimates and Related Papers 2020-21. When the Government delivered its budget in November last year my community certainly took note. The opening line in the local newspaper, the *Port Stephens Examiner*, stated:

There was little joy for Port Stephens residents in the 2020-2021 NSW Budget delivered by Treasurer Dominic Perrottet on Tuesday night.

Mr Nathaniel Smith: Don't be so down.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: That headline summed it up perfectly. I note the interjection from the member for Wollondilly. He said, "Don't be so down." There is good reason our local paper stated there was little joy for the people of Port Stephens in his Government's budget. Once again we saw a budget that, for a start, delayed the Nelson Bay road duplication, which is desperately needed to save lives. It is needed to make our community safer. It is needed to prevent residents and visitors from sitting parked on the road for hours during peak holiday season so that maybe our visitors will want to come back. For the sixth year in a row the project time line was pushed back by this Liberal-Nationals Government. People in Port Stephens will not forget former Liberal Premier Mike Baird standing on the side of Nelson Bay Road in 2015 and promising a full duplication by 2019. The Liberal-Nationals Government made that promise but it never, ever delivered on it.

Each year my community would remind the Government of its promise and, as the local member of Parliament, so would I. Members will see dozens of speeches, motions and questions from me on this important project on the parliamentary record. All members in this House know that by 2019 nothing at all had been done to duplicate Nelson Bay Road. A single roundabout was upgraded during the 2019 election to make it look like the Government had done something, but it solved none of the problems and not one inch of the road has been duplicated. My community was clearly promised a full duplication of Nelson Bay Road by 2019, but all we got was a single roundabout. It was a blatant lie and a broken promise—pure and simple.

Despite that, no doubt knowing it was a sore point with my community, before the 2019 election the now Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, made a new promise. She stood in the same spot on the side of Nelson Bay Road where Mike Baird had stood and promised to duplicate the road from Williamtown to Bobs Farm only. She said it would take about two years to complete, meaning completion by 2022, but to this day not a single inch of that road has been duplicated. In this current budget the project was delayed yet again. Straight after the commitment was made the Government has not even bothered to back it in. That is how little respect this Government has for my community. For the people of Port Stephens the duplication of Nelson Bay Road is priority number one, but for this Liberal-Nationals Government it seems Nelson Bay Road is only ever a priority during an election.

Yes, I know it is a tricky project, but in the time since my community has been promised the duplication this Government has blown out budgets starting and completing a few other tricky projects around the place—WestConnex, NorthConnex, the George Street light rail and Newcastle Light Rail—but not in Port Stephens. They were all fairly tricky projects. The Government cannot use that as an excuse for not progressing something that it promised us six years ago. Once again in this Chamber I call on the Government to deliver on its promises and allocate the resources needed to get this project underway. This is about saving lives. Another perennial issue facing my community is the desperate need for a public high school in Medowie. This is another of these pearls that I have spoken about in this Chamber many, many times.

Every day more than 1,000 high school students are bussed out of Medowie and the surrounding towns, sitting three to a seat without seatbelts and standing in the aisles along 80-kilometre-per-hour roads, yet this Liberal-Nationals Government continues to say there is no need for a public high school in Medowie. As of this year, Medowie has a wonderful independent Christian high school and a beautiful new Catholic high school, but still no public high school. This is a town of 10,000 people, folks! The situation facing local families in Medowie and surrounding communities is plainly absurd. There should be a local public high schooling option that does not involve our children spending half their mornings and afternoons on school buses. Some 10 years ago—this

is sounding a bit familiar—the Liberals promised to make a public school in Medowie shovel ready. In 2010 the former Liberal member for Port Stephens, who resigned from the party and Parliament in disgrace because of corruption investigations, called this "one of the most important issues in my electorate".

But the Liberals have done nothing ever since. Worse still, they now have a secret plan to expand the schools in Raymond Terrace to avoid ever building a public high school in Medowie. Worse again, they do not even provide enough buses to transport our kids safely to the schools where they are meant to go. It is so bad that I have spoken to families that have made the choice to pay for their children's education because they do not want to expose them to the stress of the bussing arrangements—standing in the aisles or at risk of not even getting on the bus. Once again, this Government's failure to deliver on its promises to my community significantly impacts on people's lives. But this issue is not going away. The land owned by the Department of Education since 1983 still sits vacant. I am never going to give up on this. Medowie desperately needs a public high school and I will continue fighting for one.

Another issue that deserves scrutiny is this Government's failure to provide affordable social housing for families in Port Stephens. The lack of affordable and social housing is leading to families in Port Stephens becoming homeless or being at serious risk of homelessness. This issue scares me more than any other. When people in our community become homeless they are more likely to lose their job. They are more likely to remain unemployed. Their kids are more likely to skip school and miss out on valuable lifelong opportunities. Their health and mental health suffers. Their hope and dignity is taken away. Of course, local rates of crime increase and so too does people's fear of crime. It is a cycle that we want to avoid. Increased homelessness and the despair that comes with it affects everyone in our community, yet Premier Gladys Berejiklian and her Liberal-Nationals Government are not doing nearly enough to address this problem, let alone fix it. Because of their inaction, local families in Port Stephens are being left at risk.

Whenever these issues are raised with the Government its members insist on regurgitating the same old tired lines. "Look at how great we are", they say. "We have the largest number of social housing dwellings in the country." Of course we do! New South Wales is the largest State in the country. We have the biggest city in Australia. The population of Sydney alone is as large as all of South Australia, Tasmania, Western Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory combined. Beyond Sydney, our smaller cities such as Newcastle, Wollongong, the Central Coast, and Tweed Heads are all larger than some capital cities in other States. Of course we have more social housing dwellings than other States—but that is just a distraction and an excuse. It does not help the 50,000 desperate families on the waitlist in New South Wales right now. To tell those 50,000 families that they should suck it up because we have more social housing than any other State is appalling.

In Port Stephens I have met with our local service providers. They are all saying the same thing: We desperately need more social housing. In fact, we have a dire need at every level of housing, from emergency housing for women and children escaping domestic violence to interim housing, social housing and affordable housing. Services like the Port Stephens Family and Neighbourhood Service contain hardworking, passionate, dedicated and caring people who spend their days helping our most vulnerable families survive. They are not political. They do not want to get involved in politics. But I know that they are at breaking point. They simply cannot end the cycle of poverty, abuse, addiction and harm if their clients are homeless. Many of the families they are supporting have nowhere to go; absolutely nowhere.

The exodus from Sydney to the regions on the back of COVID-19 is making matters much worse. With the tightest property market we have ever seen in Port Stephens, with property prices soaring and rentals unaffordable to most people it is only increasing the problem that existed pre-COVID, and that is the lack of investment in social housing. Yet Liberal Ministers in this place, and members of the Liberal-Nationals Government, have come in here and spoken about their incredible budget as if money is raining down like confetti. The families struggling to survive in my community are not seeing it. People in Raymond Terrace, Anna Bay, Karuah, Tanilba Bay and other towns in my electorate are crying out for support and more investment. I am crying out on their behalf. But it is not sinking in. These people are despairing, yet the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services responds by saying that they are lucky to live in New South Wales. What a thing to say to people who have nowhere to live.

We all know that social housing is an issue that will only ever touch the lives of a small number of people in our communities. But we are talking about people, we are talking about families and we are talking about kids. They deserve to live with dignity. They deserve to have opportunities. How can kids survive and thrive at school if they are sleeping in a car? How can they break the cycle of poverty and disadvantage if they are too worried about their next meal instead of engaging with their education? The continuing failure of this Government to support vulnerable people and vulnerable families affects us all. Right across the State, we see the poor priorities of this heartless Government playing out. Its developer mates are getting richer and richer, while our communities are being screwed over time and time again.

In Port Stephens, we have seen an explosion in seniors' housing over recent years. You cannot blame people for wanting to move to Port Stephens, and we welcome them all. But none of the important infrastructure to support our ageing community is being provided. The Government's planning policies—its seniors' housing State environmental planning policy—allows hundreds and thousands of new seniors' dwellings to be built without a single new bed in the local hospital, without a single extra dollar for community transport and without a single additional footpath to connect these new residents to the rest of the community. We do not have the ambulance services we need now, let alone for the people who are planning to come to us. We do not have the police services we need now, let alone for the people who are coming to us. We certainly do not have the public transport services that we need. People in my community are constantly talking to me about the lack of essential services, while more and more houses are built.

In Port Stephens and across the Hunter region developers are getting richer and our communities are getting poorer. And this Government is doing nothing about it. Recently I met with Doreen Bradley, OAM, who is a well-known resident and community advocate on the Tilligerry Peninsula. She has been fighting for a new police station in Tanilba Bay for decades. Prior to the last election, the Liberal Government promised \$1.5 million for a new police station on the Tilligerry Peninsula. I joined my community in welcoming the announcement. But it was only after the election that the Government's true plans were revealed. Instead of building a \$1.5 million police station at RAF Park in Tanilba Bay, where flat, vacant land is available to the Government for free, it decided instead to spend \$500,000 to buy a residential house in Lemon Tree Passage, bulldoze it and install a demountable police station on the land.

Doreen Bradley and our community were promised that the new police station would be built in RAF Park. But now the Government defends its ridiculous decision-making by saying the vacant site is not suitable. It is large, it is free and it is flat, and it sits beside the ambulance station, and the RFS station, which was built only a couple years ago. The problem with this Government when it comes up with this spin to cover itself is that it forgets that local people are not stupid. People in Tanilba Bay know that the vacant land is perfectly suited for a police station. If this large block of land is unsuited to emergency services, why are the ambulance station and fire station there already? It is spin to get the Government out of its stupid decisions. In the context of the budget, it is a complete waste of taxpayer money. At least one-third of the entire budget is going to be eaten away to buy and demolish a perfectly good residential house, at a time when we desperately need to keep all the housing stock we have. If that were necessary I am sure we would all cope, but it was completely unnecessary and it is a complete waste.

I cannot move on without mentioning the complete debacle that went on in Tea Gardens, where the poor community now has a sauna tacked onto its beautiful old heritage police station. The demountable police station that has been attached to a heritage police station at a cost of \$1 million to the taxpayer is now the laughing stock of that community. It is at the point where tourist groups are shown the police station because it is such a joke. Our police, working hard in our communities every single day, deserve so much better than what this Government delivered. It promised the world and delivered what is now known as the "Tea Gardens Swedish Sauna". It is a complete joke and people cannot believe it could possibly have cost \$1 million. To top off the whole debacle, it has been realised recently that there is no adequate disability access to the redesigned building. So a ramp was created at the front of the police station. Where does the ramp go to? It goes to a curb and no footpath. There is nowhere for the ramp to go to and for people with a disability to access the police station. A ramp was built at cost, again, to nowhere. The decisions of this Government are seen by the community for what they are—a complete joke.

Another of the very serious issues facing my community, like everywhere else, is mental health. I do not think there is anyone in this place or in our communities whom we represent who does not know someone who has experienced or is experiencing mental health issues. The lack of mental health services in our community is raised with me time and time again. Despite all the rhetoric from the mental health Minister and this Government, and despite all we know about the mental health impacts of COVID-19, the locals in Port Stephens have nowhere to go. There is no psychiatrist in the area. There are very few services that you can pay for and there are no public services. The only place people can turn up to is the hospital. Recent media reports revealed a 25 per cent increase in children aged 17 and under presenting to emergency departments with self-harm. From those of us living in the regions, this comes as little surprise. Yet it appears to have taken the Minister by surprise, who said that she desperately wanted to target the mental health problems facing young people as she feared they would worsen. Forgive me if I struggle to take her seriously on this. Here is why: It is because we have been raising the alarm bells for years and getting no support.

When we got no support from the Government, one of my community groups got together, organised itself and created its own youth mental health service. It is not funded by this Government at all; it is supported by community donations. Late last year I was contacted by the operators of that service to be told that they were struggling to continue to provide the service, despite an increase in need for it, because COVID had prevented

them from holding fundraising activities that enabled them to survive. On the back of that conversation, I wrote to the mental health Minister asking for an urgent meeting with me and the group that runs the service. I sent my letter on 25 November. I got an acknowledgement of receipt of the letter on 2 December, but after three months of not even receiving a response to my letter requesting an urgent meeting, I raised the matter in this place because of that unresponsiveness. [*Extension of time*]

Only after I raised that matter in this place did I receive a response from the mental health Minister. That response was dated 10 March after an urgent request for support for a youth mental health counselling service in my electorate. The Minister has stated that she realises there is a problem with youth mental health in communities, but she said in her letter that she was unable to meet with me or with the group running the youth mental health service. I do not call that responding to community need. I do not call that responding to the crisis that exists in all of our communities. I would hate to think this Government is pork-barrelling funding for mental health services based on where its members' electorates are located.

Debate interrupted.

Committees

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 27/57

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:45): As Chair: I address the House on behalf of the Legislation Review Committee regarding the twenty-seventh digest for this Parliament, tabled on 16 March 2021. In the digest the committee examined the eight bills introduced in the last sitting week. The committee also commented on four statutory instruments. I draw the House's attention to some of the issues raised. The COVID-19 Legislation Amendment (Stronger Communities and Health) Bill 2021 amends a number of Acts and regulations to extend the operation of temporary provisions introduced because of the COVID-19 pandemic until 26 September 2021 or, alternatively, to a date not later than 26 March 2022, as prescribed by the regulations.

The committee noted that the bill allows a number of Acts to be amended by regulations in respect of the repeal date of certain provisions. Unlike primary legislation, regulations are subordinate legislation and are not required to be passed by Parliament. While either House of Parliament can pass a motion disallowing a statutory rule, the statutory rule may operate for some time before that occurs. The committee generally comments where statutory rules operate to amend primary legislation. However, the committee noted that the bill only seeks to extend the operation of existing measures that are part of the Government response to the COVID-19 pandemic and does not seek to implement new measures. The committee also recognises that a flexible repeal date for those provisions may be desirable, given the ongoing risk of a COVID-19 outbreak. In those circumstances, the committee made no further comment.

I turn to the Racehorse Legislation Amendment (Welfare and Registration) Bill 2021, which is a private member's bill that was introduced in the Legislative Council and examined by the committee. The bill makes a number of amendments to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 and the Thoroughbred Racing Act 1996, and introduces a number of strict liability offences that prohibit certain activities and practices within the horseracing industry. Some offences carry substantial maximum financial penalties—ranging from 25 penalty units, which is \$2,750, to 300 penalty units, which is \$33,000—and six months' imprisonment, or both. The committee generally comments on strict liability offences as they depart from the common law principle that mens rea, referring to the mental element or intent, is a relevant factor in establishing liability for an offence. The committee noted that strict liability offences are not uncommon in legislation and regulatory frameworks to ensure compliance with safe practices, particularly the protection of animal welfare. However, as the strict liability offences may result in a high financial penalty or imprisonment, or both, the committee referred the issue to the Parliament for consideration of whether the provisions are reasonable in the circumstances.

I turn to some of the statutory instruments dealt with in the digest. The Children (Detention Centre) Amendment (Disclosure of Information) Regulation 2020 amends the Children (Detention Centres) Regulation 2015 to insert new provisions about when the Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice can disclose information about "relevant persons". Those relevant persons include detainees, juvenile inmates, juvenile offenders on parole, individuals subject to a children's community service order or community clean up order, and individuals being supervised by Youth Justice NSW as a condition of bail. The committee noted that the regulation may impact on the privacy rights of affected individuals, whose personal information may be shared among domestic and international arms of government, and law enforcement agencies.

However, the committee acknowledged that there may be a public interest in allowing such sharing of information. In doing so, the regulation may increase support for relevant persons and amplify the cooperation between various governments and law enforcement agencies to properly manage, supervise and support young offenders. Also, the committee noted some safeguards in the regulation—for instance, the requirement that information be "reasonably necessary" for the relevant purpose for which it is disclosed. In the circumstances, the committee made no further comment. The Fair Trading Amendment (Code of Conduct for Short-term Rental Accommodation Industry) Regulation (No 2) 2020 establishes a code of conduct for participants in the short-term rental accommodation industry and provides for the enforcement of that code.

The committee noted that the regulation sets out a number of strict liability offences relating to breaches of the code, which carry significant maximum monetary penalties. As noted previously, generally the committee comments on strict liability offences as they depart from the common law principle that a mental element is required to establish liability for an offence. Generally, the committee prefers that offences with large penalties are set out in primary, rather than subordinate, legislation. As I mentioned earlier, strict liability offences are not uncommon in regulatory settings, and the maximum penalties under the regulation are to be imposed by a court. However, given the substantial penalties attached to the offences, the committee referred the matter to Parliament for consideration. That concludes my remarks on the twenty-seventh digest for this Parliament. I commend the digest to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:50): I make a contribution to debate on the Legislation Review Committee's Legislation Review Digest No. 27 of this Parliament, which records the committee's work undertaken on 16 March 2021. On that day we considered eight pieces of legislation: the Cannabis Legalisation Bill 2021, the COVID Legislation Amendment (Stronger Communities and Health) Bill 2021, the Government Sector Finance Amendment (Government Grants) Bill 2021, the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Ministerial Code of Conduct—Property Developers) Bill 2021, the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Aquatic Animal Recognition) Bill 2021, the Public Health Amendment (Vaccination Compensation) Bill 2021, the Resource Legislation Amendment (Welfare and Registration) Bill 2021 and the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Amendment (Plastic Reduction) Bill 2021. The committee commented on all of those except for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Aquatic Animal Recognition) Bill 2021. The committee also considered 12 regulations and commented on four of those.

I draw members' attention to one of the bills. Of course, I draw members' attention to the entire digest, but I will speak to only one of the bills, the Cannabis Legalisation Bill 2021, a private member's bill that was introduced into the other Chamber by Ms Cate Faehrmann, MLC. The objects of the Cannabis Legalisation Bill 2021 are to legalise cannabis or cannabis products produced and distributed under the licensing scheme established by the proposed Act, legalise cannabis grown for personal use in particular circumstances and establish the New South Wales Cannabis Authority. The bill contains a number of other provisions and changes, including amendments to the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985, the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 and the Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008.

The committee identified a number of issues that it felt compelled to comment on, including strict liability offences relating to the unlawful growth, distribution, sale, advertising and consumption of cannabis and cannabis products in certain circumstances. The committee generally comments on strict liability offences as they depart from the common law principle that mens rea, or the mental element, is a relevant factor in establishing liability for an offence. That is of particular concern where significant penalties are attached to an offence. In that regard, the committee noted that for an individual the penalties under the proposed bill range from two penalty units, which is \$220, for consuming cannabis in a public place, to 100 or 500 penalty units, which is up to \$55,000, for supplying cannabis to a minor, depending on whether it is a first or subsequent offence.

The committee noted that strict liability offences are not uncommon in regulatory settings to encourage compliance. The committee also acknowledged the public health and public safety objectives of many of the offence provisions. The committee understands that many of the offences contained in the bill relate to conduct already prohibited, in broader terms, in the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985. The offences in that Act also have heavier penalties attached, including imprisonment. However, given the large number of strict liability offences included in this bill and the range of penalties attached, the committee felt compelled to refer these to Parliament for its consideration. The committee also noted there are a number of broad and ill-defined elements in offences, and referred them to Parliament for further consideration. I refer members to proposed section 14 in the bill in that regard. The committee also noted that the bill contains limitations on the duty to give reasons by government authorities under new section 44, and it draws those to the attention of members. They are my comments on the digest. I thank my fellow committee members for their attention to their work, and I thank the staff who support us.

Report noted.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE**Report: Examination of the Auditor-General's Performance Audit Reports February 2019-July 2019**

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (12:55): As Chair: In accordance with its legislative responsibility outlined in section 57 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, the Public Accounts Committee resolved at its meeting on 22 October 2020 to commence an examination of the Auditor-General's performance audits from February 2019 to July 2019. The process for these examinations included inviting a submission from responsible agencies 12 months after the tabling of the audit; referring agencies' submissions to the Auditor-General for comment; and, where the committee determined that further information was required, inviting agency representatives and the Auditor-General to a hearing to provide additional information.

The report reviewed 10 performance audits covering the period from February 2019 to July 2019. They were: *Workforce reform in three amalgamated councils; Governance of Local Health Districts; Managing growth in NSW prison populations; Well-being of secondary school students; Domestic waste management in Campbelltown City Council and Fairfield City Council; Biosecurity risk management; Development assessment: pre-lodgement and lodgement in Camden City Council and Randwick City Council; Contracting non-government organisations; Managing native vegetation; and Ensuring contract management capability in Government—Department of Education.*

The first four of those audits were subject to a public hearing held on 20 November 2020, while some written clarification of matters was sought in regard to the reports on workforce reform in three amalgamated councils, the wellbeing of secondary school students, domestic waste management in Campbelltown and Fairfield city councils, development assessment in Camden and Randwick city councils, contracting non-government organisations, and ensuring contract management capability in government—specifically, in the Department of Education. With some exceptions, the committee is generally satisfied that the responsible agencies are implementing the Auditor-General's recommendations while identifying areas where more action is required. The committee noted that the respective agencies should be commended for their effort given the disruption and additional challenges resulting from last year's bushfire emergency and the COVID pandemic.

That said, the committee has made a total of four recommendations to New South Wales Government agencies. They seek to address the pressures of long-term growth in the New South Wales prison population in the context of criminal justice reform, the public release of native vegetation maps to assist landholders in the management of our ecosystem and make general improvements to reporting systems. I trust that the insights and recommendations deriving from this examination produce useful improvements for those agencies, and therefore to the public overall. I am pleased to present this report and thank the Auditor-General, Margaret Crawford, and Audit Office staff for their assistance in this inquiry.

I also wish to thank my committee colleagues—the Deputy Chair and member for Mulgoa, the member for Albury, the member for Heathcote, the member for Keira and the member for North Shore. Of course, it goes without saying—but it should be said—that I thank the committee secretariat, and I particularly note Mr Bjarne Nordin. Without the knowledge and expertise that the secretariat brings to these things it would be a trial for even the most experienced committee members to progress such complex matters. I thank the secretariat staff for their support throughout the inquiry process. I commend the report to the House.

Report noted.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge guests of the member for Lake Macquarie, who are currently watching question time live in the McKell Room. I welcome Heritage College Lake Macquarie Principal Simon Dodson, senior captains Shem Carroll, Ben Flint and Jessica Brown, and primary captains Josiah Egginton and Kaylee Keywood.

Announcements

ST PATRICK'S DAY

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge that I would not normally wear this tie, but today is St Patrick's Day.

Mr John Barilaro: It's National Party green.

The SPEAKER: Indeed, it is National Party green.

Ms Jenny Leong: It's a beautiful colour.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, but I am not defecting.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: PRECEDENCE

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I seek leave to move a motion to suspend standing and sessional orders to give precedence on Thursday 18 March 2021 to general business (notice of motion) No. 2006 [Central Coast Council Amalgamation] standing in my name after consideration of general business (order of the day) No. 1.

The SPEAKER: The motion of which notice has been given will be considered in accordance with the relevant standing orders.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: PRECEDENCE

Mr DAVID MEHAN: I seek leave to move a motion to suspend standing and sessional orders to give precedence on Thursday 18 March 2021 to general business notice of motion (general notice) No. 2044 [Central Coast Council Amalgamation] standing in my name after consideration of general business order of the day (general order) No. 1.

Leave not granted.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: PRECEDENCE

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I seek leave to move a motion to suspend standing and sessional orders to give precedence on Thursday 18 March 2021 to the general business notice of motion (general notice) given by me this day [Central Coast Council Amalgamation] after consideration of general business order of the day (general order) No. 1.

Leave not granted.

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: PRECEDENCE

Ms LIESL TESCH: I seek leave to move a motion to suspend standing and sessional orders to give precedence on Thursday 18 March 2021 to general business notice of motion (general notice) No. 198 [Central Coast Council Amalgamation] standing in my name after consideration of general business order of the day (general order) No. 1.

Leave not granted.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: To clarify, leave was not granted to the member for Wyong.

The SPEAKER: Order! I clarify that the motions of which the members have given notice will be considered in order with the relevant standing orders. The relevant standing orders require leave and I note that leave was not granted.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: Mr Speaker, you allowed that to go through in the first place.

The SPEAKER: I did not allow it to go through; I said it would be dealt with in accordance with the relevant standing orders. I am clarifying now that the relevant standing orders require leave to be granted, and it was not granted.

Question Time

LANDCOM

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:23): My question is directed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. The Minister's former boss John Brogden, CEO of Landcom, failed to disclose to the Landcom chair, the board or the Minister that he is close mates with the CEO of Bradcorp before Landcom paid it more than one-quarter of a billion dollars for land at North Wilton. Does the Minister believe that is acceptable?

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

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (14:23): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. In relation to the issues she raises, ultimately the performance of the CEO is a

matter for the board. I see no issues in the matters she has raised. I have considered them and I understand that the valuation of the land she speaks of is worth considerably more today than—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

Mr ROB STOKES: I am being entirely relevant.

Ms Jodi McKay: My question was not about the value of the land; it was about his failure to disclose—

The SPEAKER: I do not need to hear any further. The Minister was being relevant. The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat. The Minister has the call.

Mr ROB STOKES: As I was saying, as you would expect in relation to land dealings, I should not have a role to play as the portfolio Minister. That is a matter for the CEO and the board.

Ms Jodi McKay: This is about disclosure.

Mr ROB STOKES: In relation to disclosures, obviously my expectation is that all of the disclosures are appropriately made.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will remain silent.

Mr ROB STOKES: The issues that the Leader of the Opposition is raising are matters for the board. I understand that the board is entirely satisfied but, frankly, she has the opportunity to raise questions through this process where I can obtain the view of the board in relation to the matters raised. But in relation to those matters, I think my view is very clear: Those relevant disclosures need to be made to the board. My understanding is they have been. If the member has any further questions, I would be very happy to entertain them on notice. That is all I can really add in relation to that matter. But while I have time, why don't I talk about something? If we are talking about jobs, I think the job that is under particular question at the moment is the job of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Michael Daley: Rob, do not do it. You are no good at it, mate.

Mr ROB STOKES: Well, it just depends. I am wondering where the member for Maroubra might end up in the reshuffle that I understand is happening on Monday. But, nevertheless, I will return to the issue germane—

The SPEAKER: As members know, I am a little bit more tolerant of interjections when there is a cross-attack being made, but I still need to be able to hear the Minister.

Mr ROB STOKES: In terms of the administration of Landcom under the Landcom Corporation Act 2001, members will find quite clearly that the CEO reports to a board and those disclosures are relevantly made to the board. It is my understanding that relevant disclosures were made. If the Leader of the Opposition has further questions that relate to the specifics of what particular declarations were made, by all means she can put them to me on notice. I do not have that information.

Ms Jodi McKay: They were put to him at budget estimates.

Mr ROB STOKES: Can you please just let me answer? I am being entirely relevant. I have answered the question to the best of my ability in relation to the information that has been provided to me.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

Mr ROB STOKES: The Leader of the Opposition is asking in relation to a declaration that is not relevant to be made to the portfolio Minister. The declaration she is asking about is a relevant declaration that needs to be made to the board if there is a material conflict, which I understand is at the base of her question. I am not even sure if you can make the premise that there is a material conflict but, nevertheless, all relevant interests need to be made through the appropriate process to the board. If the member has any particular questions that she would like to put to the board, I am more than happy to do that. But if she is asking in relation to my knowledge of events, I have been very forthcoming in relation to the declarations made. They are to be made appropriately to the board. My understanding is that they have been.

JOBS GROWTH AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (14:28): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Government will help students and workers secure the jobs and skills of the future?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:28): I thank the member for Terrigal for his question. I know how much he cares about job creation, especially on the Central Coast. Recently I was able to visit the Central Coast region, speak to local community stakeholders and community members, thank them for

their job during the trying times and also discuss the future of the region. It has enormous potential. Those opposite are concerned about their prospects in that region because unfortunately each of them got up today to talk about the council, which was controlled by the Labor Party.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Swansea to order for the first time. The member for Swansea will remain silent.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It was a Labor council that, frankly, failed its residents, because every time I went there to look at progress on State Government funding or projects that were associated with local government that we provided funding for, the council was dragging its feet. Other areas of the State—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I make this point because a number of our colleagues may not be aware of what is going on. I will just simply explain that a Labor-dominated council failed its residents and the Minister for Local Government took the appropriate action in putting the council in administration. Getting onto the very important topic about jobs and skills for the future that the member for Terrigal asked me about, I am very pleased to inform the House that the New South Wales Government asked Professor Shergold and Mr David Gonski to undertake a review of how we can improve skills development and tertiary education in New South Wales. Because as we come through the pandemic, and as we know the challenges of disruption in workplaces will only increase, we want to make sure our State gives every opportunity to people who want to study a trade or a course and that they have the appropriate skills to be able to do that into the future.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am pleased to advise the House that in the very near future I will be, along with Minister Lee—Dr Lee is a former TAFE teacher himself—making this report public. The report is very significant in terms of the future of jobs and skills and tertiary education in New South Wales. One of the report's recommendations, I am pleased to say, which the New South Wales Government has announced today, is the establishment of what we call Careers NSW.

[Opposition members interjected.]

I note the interjections from those opposite, but many students, graduates and adults, irrespective of their age and their background, want to upgrade their skills or want advice on their next career move.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Careers NSW will give them that opportunity. I thank Dr Lee for overseeing the process. I also thank Minister Dominello, as the pilot will be run through Service NSW. This will ensure that everybody who wants to will have access to better pathways and information, and access to professional advice. The service will be able to connect people to accessible and quality career guidance. It will also match people to the skills they have and give them suggestions on the way forward. I am very pleased to say that the advice will be provided by professional career advisers—people who specialise in this. It will be a pilot model initially, which we will establish by the end of the year, and we are hoping that the full rollout will be conducted by the middle of next year.

This is a revolutionary and important change in the way we support our citizens in getting a new job, changing careers, or getting the advice they often might have to pay a lot of money to get. This service will also be available to parents. If parents want to support their children, or if students or graduates want advice in any sphere, they will be able to go through Careers NSW. As I said, I am very pleased. The pilot will be up and running by the end of the year and we expect the full rollout to occur by the middle of next year. It will also provide everyone initially with access to online services. You will be able to speak to somebody through an online process.
[Extension of time]

Careers NSW will also target highly credentialed volunteers from major industries who have got the experience and the know-how. This will close the gap, because many emerging industries such as advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity and construction really do need the input from industry and experts who actually hold those jobs and are going to be hiring the prospective employees to be able to provide that type of career advice. It is about matching people to the experts and making sure that advice is available. But it is not just about getting our State through the challenges of a pandemic; it is about setting our citizens up for the future. We know that because of the digital age, because of technological change and because of unexpected shocks that might come our way, there is a greater demand for people looking at other options in their careers. We know how

important it is for people to have meaningful work and, as the Liberal Party and The Nationals are the parties for the workers, we know how important it is to make sure that happens.

In particular—and I do not think there is any dispute on the point I am about to make—I know that all of us in this place have high regard for both Professor Shergold and David Gonski. The work that they have done is absolutely outstanding and I urge every member in this place to read the report when we do release it and to really gather the comprehensive steps we can all take together to provide vital skills. There is not one single solution but there are multiple solutions that will ensure that every citizen has the opportunity to reskill, to get the best career advice they can and to make sure they have access to meaningful work. Of course, this is in conjunction with our record infrastructure pipeline and the other jobs initiatives we have done during the pandemic.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Also, as was evident in the most recent unemployment figures, New South Wales has the lowest unemployment on the mainland. But we know how important it is for us to keep creating jobs as the parties for the workers, the Liberal Party and The Nationals.

LANDCOM

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:35): My question is directed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. I refer to evidence given to estimates on Tuesday 9 March 2021. When asked about the disclosure, Mr Brogden said, "I disclosed that matter to our executive general manager [EGM] for legal and compliance." He did not disclose the conflict of interest to the board.

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Health and Medical Research will remain silent.

Ms JODI McKAY: Again, what action will the Minister take?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (14:36): I am not quite sure what the Leader of the Opposition is getting at here. She has outlined that—

Ms Jodi McKay: You said he disclosed it to the board. He did not disclose it to the board.

Mr ROB STOKES: The Leader of the Opposition has made an assertion that there is a material—

Ms Jodi McKay: You said he disclosed it to the board. He did not.

Mr ROB STOKES: Can I answer your question? You are implying—your premise is—that there is a material conflict. I will leave that to one side; I am not necessarily accepting that premise. Then you have just outlined that he has disclosed that conflict.

Ms Jodi McKay: Mr Speaker—

Mr ROB STOKES: No, you have asked your question. It is my turn now. Let me lay out some facts. Your premise is that there is a material conflict. You have said that. Your next statement was effectively that there was not a disclosure, but now you have got up and said there was a disclosure. It seems that your implication is that the disclosure was not made at the appropriate level. Ultimately, that is—

Ms Jodi McKay: Mr Speaker—

Mr ROB STOKES: I am trying to answer the question.

Ms Jodi McKay: You said it was disclosed to the board. It was not.

Mr ROB STOKES: You can quibble on things if you want. My understanding—let me be very clear; I have to start again—is your premise is there was a material conflict that needed to be disclosed. You have then implied—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The Leader of the Opposition has the opportunity to ask a supplementary question, but not to also ask intermittent questions throughout the Minister's response. The Leader of the Opposition will remain silent. The Minister has the call.

Mr ROB STOKES: You have then suggested that the disclosure was not made. You have now told me the disclosure was made. I have articulated that my understanding was that the disclosure was made. You have now actually agreed with me in relation—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Before I hear the point of order, I remind the Minister to direct his comments through the Chair rather than encourage the Leader of the Opposition to respond. The Leader of the Opposition rises on a point of order.

Ms Jodi McKay: The question was: What action will the Minister take? The Minister indicated the disclosure was made to the board. It was not. Under the code of conduct, he is supposed to make the disclosure—

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

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. He is supposed to make the disclosure to a superior. He did not. The Minister said it was made to the board. He did not follow the code of conduct. What action will the Minister take?

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that the Minister is being relevant, but I remind the Minister to direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr ROB STOKES: It is very hard, Mr Speaker. I am being goaded. There is an allegation that there was a material conflict and I am not necessarily convinced that is the case. Nevertheless, we will put that to one side.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Strathfield to order for the first time. I have asked that she remain silent.

Mr ROB STOKES: I am only suggesting that because I do not necessarily accept the premise of the question. Nevertheless, then there was an allegation that the disclosure was not appropriately made. My understanding is that the disclosure was appropriately made. The Leader of the Opposition is now saying there was a disclosure made, so I am now confused as to whether there was or not. My understanding is that the appropriate disclosure was made. The Leader of the Opposition's subsequent question seems to confirm my understanding that an appropriate disclosure was made.

The SPEAKER: That is enough. The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

Mr ROB STOKES: Nevertheless, I am very happy to take the matters the Leader of the Opposition is referring to on notice and provide an answer at a later time because there seems to be some technical legal point she is seeking to get to. I am very happy to answer questions on that. As members would anticipate, those disclosures are not made to me. I am the portfolio Minister; I am not the board. It is a State-owned corporation administered under its own legislation by its own board. Disclosures by the CEO would not be made to me in any event. They would be made to the board. My understanding is they have been, through the appropriate process set up under whatever guidelines the board has established to manage those sorts of conflicts.

If the Leader of the Opposition has alternative information or an alternative view, I am very happy to answer whatever questions she has on it. But, on my understanding, she has just confirmed to this House the very thing she was asking me about—which was that a disclosure was made. I would have thought that was the appropriate course to take. If she has any further issues she wants to raise with me, I am more than happy to answer whatever questions she has.

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:41): I ask a supplementary question. Before I—

Mr Brad Hazzard: Is this because you read the paper?

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

Ms JODI McKAY: I am happy to share page 58, the evidence of who he disclosed it to. The CEO of icare failed to properly disclose a commercial arrangement involving a family member who lost his job and, given Mr Brogden hid his long-term close friendship with the Bradcorp CEO and did not make the appropriate disclosure, what action will the Minister take?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (14:41): I now withdraw my earlier offer to provide further information because I do not think there is any need to provide more information here. I think the Leader of the Opposition has got herself horribly confused about a matter relating to the relationship between a board and the CEO. If the board has any concerns about the manner in which disclosures are made, that is a matter for the board. The board has not communicated any concerns to me in relation to this matter. Of course it is open to it to do so, as the relevant portfolio Minister. It has not done so. Frankly, my duty here is of course to listen to members of Parliament. But internal governance matters within the board and senior leadership of Landcom are ultimately matters, quite appropriately, for the board because the CEO is engaged by and reports to the board.

If the board has the same concerns as the Leader of the Opposition, its members can raise them with me through the appropriate processes. They have not done so and that is why I am not necessarily accepting the premise of the question. Surely if they had those concerns they would have raised them with me. If they do have those concerns, I urge them to raise them with me. At this point, they have not.

FIXING COUNTRY BRIDGES PROGRAM

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (14:43): My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on the rollout of the Fixing Country Bridges program and how it is supporting jobs and skills in the region?

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (14:43): I thank the member for Tweed for his question. It gives me an opportunity to bring some good news to this House and to cheer everyone up because I know those opposite have had a pretty rough week. I also thank the member for Tweed for the opportunity to go to his electorate last week, where I announced that he was going to receive \$660,000 to replace the Ophir Glen Road Bridge as part of our Fixing Country Bridges Program. That is typical of the bridges that we are replacing right across the State. The bridge is a single lane and it is at the end of its life. Now it will be replaced with a two-lane concrete structure. That is pretty important for those families. There are 25 farms on the other side of that bridge and that is their only access in and out. It now means that in times of floods that bridge will not be taken out.

We are creating hundreds of those stories right across the State. In fact, when I was up in the north I could not find someone who was more happy than the Mayor of Kyogle, Danielle Mulholland. I will read out what she said shortly. Kyogle has the largest number of timber bridges here in the State. It will see 84 bridges replaced through the Fixing Country Bridges program; \$40 million will be invested in that local government area. This is about creating a safer and stronger regional road network here in New South Wales. The very happy Kyogle mayor said that to have 84 bridges in one hit is "incredible" and "a huge leap forward". She also said, "This is something we hoped would one day happen." The Northern Rivers just loves that program and *The Daily Examiner* also loves the program. It said that this was the New South Wales Government's "Oprah moment" because, guess what? The member for Ballina gets a bridge—in fact, she gets four. The member for Clarence gets a bridge—in fact, he gets 34. And so it continues right down the coast: 10 bridges for Lismore, 11 bridges for Coffs Harbour, eight bridges for Port Macquarie, 13 bridges for the mid North Coast and a bridge for Port Stephens—Port Stephens gets a bridge as well.

Now we go west, and I acknowledge the member for Northern Tablelands, the Minister. He can tell that this program will make a big difference over the range. In his electorate funding will replace the last timber bridge in the Inverell Shire. Over in Glen Innes the decaying Furracabad Creek Bridge has been closed for two years. It will be replaced with an investment of \$1 million. The closure of that timber bridge has essentially cut the locals in two. Now they must travel an additional 30 kilometres just to get to work, to go to the shops or even to go to medical appointments. It also impacts on school bus operators, on emergency service vehicles and on heavy vehicles in that area. Through this particular program we will see more than 420 bridges being replaced, and that is just in round one. Those are the projects that have been announced. They are starting in the coming months and they have to be delivered in the next two years.

The new program will also see councils share their skills, resources and knowledge to deliver bridges right across our State. For example, Coffs Harbour City Council will employ two additional bridge apprentices. They will share their bridge experts with Clarence, Walcha and Armidale councils. Kyogle Council is increasing its bridge crews from two to four with a focus on local employment. Tamworth Regional Council is supporting Gunnedah Shire Council with its bridge design and engineering. Councils in the southern region are joining forces to deliver 54 bridges. All up, we expect that will support thousands of jobs. There are maintenance costs every year that are associated with most of those timber bridges. For example, Lithgow is receiving \$5 million to replace three timber bridges. Every year it costs that council \$120,000 to maintain those timber bridges. Now that \$120,000 can be reinvested back into community projects that are needed in the local area. [*Extension of time*]

I thank the member for Tweed. I know that he wants to hear more. I never thought that I would be an inspiration to the Opposition, but clearly I am because as I have started demolishing bridges they have started burning bridges with the unions. I have started replacing bridges and now they want to get rid of their deadwood. I mean, the parallels are just uncanny!

Mr Ryan Park: There is one person over there who does comedy and it ain't you, dopey. It ain't you.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Really?

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: It is under Standing Order 129 or Standing Order 73. You pick, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I remind the member for Keira that if he wants to take a point of order he should do it the right way.

Mr Ryan Park: Sorry.

The SPEAKER: Does the member seek to take a point of order?

Mr Ryan Park: Yes. I take a point of order under Standing Order 129 or Standing Order 73. It is stupid, it is irrelevant and it is not funny.

The SPEAKER: The Minister has been relevant for the full five minutes. I will give him a little bit of leeway. I will be careful of Standing Order 73.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I am making sure that key infrastructure is up to the job and those opposite are just trying to find a leader who can actually do the job. Some of the timber bridges that we are replacing are falling apart and the rot has set in, which must sound very familiar to that side. But thanks to the Liberal-Nationals Government we are investing \$500 million through our Fixing Country Bridges program to fix those aging timber bridges. Those timber bridges are fast disappearing from the bush and, before long, members opposite will disappear—much like Country Labor. Mr Speaker, I can promise you this: On this side of the House, we will continue to fix those country bridges, but nothing can fix Country Labor.

The SPEAKER: Quiet! I call the member for Keira to order for the second time.

ROADS PROJECTS AND JOB GROWTH

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (14:51): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government's massive investment in free roads projects is creating local jobs?

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Blue Mountains to order for the first time. I call the member for Blue Mountains to order for the second time. I have called the member for Blue Mountains to order on two occasions sequentially for not listening.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (14:52): Today is all about jobs. I understand there happens to be—

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: —a thing called a reshuffle happening on Monday in the Opposition. It reminds me of Mad Monday, when people dress up in clown suits and act drunk. We would not know the difference with that lot. I have to ask: When is the good old member for Keira going to swipe left in that Labor leadership Tinder game that those opposite are playing? Here is the big moment for the member for Keira.

Mr Ryan Park: I am not swiping left.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I have never been on it but the point is that they are worried about their own jobs while we are worried about jobs out in the community. It is very pleasing to see the investment that we are making in the roads network across the State, particularly given the Transport budget is generating 130,000 jobs over the next four years.

Ms Trish Doyle: How are those ferries going?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We can talk about the jobs that are created in Port Macquarie with those ferries all afternoon. I would happily do that with the member for Port Macquarie. We are investing—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being serious. Members will remain silent.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We are investing \$21 billion in the road network between now and 2024 against a backdrop where we have seen congestion as an economic cost to the State surpass \$9 billion. Certainly in terms of the 130,000 jobs that have been created through the Transport agency budget, we know that—

Ms Liesl Tesch: Keep the guards on the trains—jobs.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Are you seriously trying to be promoted or what? You're boring. You're really boring. We will just keep going. Anyway, the point is that with those jobs being created, a lot of the projects, particularly in the free road network, are being invested in local communities around the State. I am going to give you some examples of that. We are investing very heavily in Picton Road. I particularly acknowledge the member for Wollondilly in relation to his advocacy. There is \$44 million going immediately into safety improvements, and that translates into local contractor jobs working on that project. On King Georges Road—hooray for Coure!—there is \$50 million to ease congestion on King Georges Road. At the M12—very pleasingly, in partnership with the Commonwealth—in terms of western Sydney I note that there are 2,000 direct and indirect jobs associated with that project.

At Sydney Gateway there are 1,000 direct and 3,000 indirect jobs. Investments are happening right around the State. It was very pleasing to stand there and announce a \$224 million upgrade to duplicate Memorial Avenue. In the Macarthur area the list goes on: There was \$206 million allocated to the Spring Farm Parkway, \$152 million spent upgrading Narellan Road and \$76 million on Campbelltown Road. There is pinch point money going in at Narellan to Campbelltown, funded under the \$225 million Pinch Point Program. There is \$320 million from the Government for the Northern Road, delivering great jobs to Bradfield, that magnificent new city that we are seeing in Sydney's west. At Bringelly Road \$102 million has been contributed. Heathcote Road—

Mr Ryan Park: Let's give him 10 minutes extra. Let's give him 10 minutes.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I will come back to your opposition on Picton Road if you want, Ryan. Sorry to break it to those opposite, but \$291 million has gone into Heathcote Road. And of course I love the Labor Party that much that we are actually going to invest in Newcastle. I know where Crackers has been for the past 12 months, if he is not here. The Newcastle Inner City Bypass gets \$450 million and great local jobs there. The bypass is going to generate close to 1,000 jobs in the Hunter. At Mamre Road—in the electorate of my good friend the member for Mulgoa—significant investment is going in there.

At Pennant Hills Road we have seen enormous benefit to that roadway as a result of the opening of NorthConnex. The bottom line is: When you invest \$21 billion in the road network, of course we can generate great local jobs across the board. In closing, to those opposite with their reshuffle I say: Please leave Chris in transport. You got him confused. On the radio the other day he said he was the shadow Minister for roads. Chris is doing a great job in transport. I did note that the defence of Chris on radio was not that heart warming, but he is a great guy.

RIVER CLASS FERRIES

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (14:57): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Roads. Today we learned that the engines in his imported River Class ferries stall when the driver has to throw them into reverse in an emergency. The vessels are unsafe, unreliable and unfit for passenger service. When will the Government stop buying cheap junk from overseas and start buying quality vessels from local shipyards? It is about jobs, Premier! It is about local jobs, Premier, not jobs in Indonesia and China.

The SPEAKER: We will wait for silence.

Ms Gladys Berejiklian: I think members should speak to each other with a bit of respect, Mr Speaker.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (14:58): Dear oh dear. First of all, there was a statement made by my learned friend from Swansea on the front page of *The Sydney Morning Herald* this morning that was factually incorrect. It is not unusual; it is to be expected. She just got up and attacked one of the world-leading builders of ferries based in Port Macquarie, called Birdon.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Nice try.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: No, no, no. You have not bothered to go and pick up the phone to them and find out that Transdev had commissioned them to build those ferries.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Which they didn't. Where were they built?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Here we go. You don't like this.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Let me get some facts on the record to help you with your education, because it is somewhat lacklustre.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Then why aren't they in service?

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: You described the work of 54 workers up at Port Macquarie as "cheap junk". Well, I am going to put that in the local paper up there.

Ms Yasmin Catley: No. It's the junk that you bought.

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Swansea that she is on three calls to order. This is her last warning.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I might go to Swansea and repeat the exercise there.

Ms Trish Doyle: Says the Minister for Incompetence.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Blue Mountains to order for the third time. This is her final warning.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The fact of the matter is that the design work is coming out of Birdon in Port Macquarie and you are in here playing these silly games. Let us get some facts on the table: There are 54 staff employed in Australia—

Ms Trish Doyle: Point of order—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: —working on the River Class and second-generation Emerald class fleets.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

[Interruption]

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

Ms Trish Doyle: Mr Speaker, would you ask the Minister for Incompetence to direct his comments through the Chair?

The SPEAKER: I will ask the Minister to direct his comments through the Chair. I also remind the House that, as the Premier appropriately pointed out earlier, members should show other members a degree of respect, which is not being shown by the Opposition.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Anyway, the point I would make is that the Labor Party and the Maritime Union of Australia—who are hand in hand, depending on which leader they are backing—have absolutely gone out to the community this morning without accurate information. The bottom line is that anybody who has taken the time to talk to Birdon at Port Macquarie would learn the truth. There are great jobs, and do you know what?

Ms Yasmin Catley: They are at Balmain and they've been there for seven months!

The SPEAKER: Order! If either the member for Blue Mountains or the member for Swansea says another word, they are out. That is final—not a word.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Well, I'll pack my bag.

The SPEAKER: The member for Swansea will leave the Chamber. She will remain out of the Chamber overnight.

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

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: Seriously, she is a regional MP. Yesterday the member for Baulkham Hills behaved in a way that we did not think was very reasonable either and he did not receive any punishment. It has to be reasonable.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Let me make this crystal clear—

Ms Jenny Leong: Point of order: I raise the fact that your response in relation to the member for Swansea was very harsh compared with your response to the Minister for his outrageous and offensive comments yesterday. I would like you to reconsider.

The SPEAKER: Thank you. I have made my ruling. The Minister for Transport and Roads will continue.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I want to make this clear: The work that is being done in terms of the new vessels procurement is being managed through Transdev by Birdon in Port Macquarie—a great regional company.

Ms Trish Doyle: You're the party for overseas workers.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Could you please be quiet?

Ms Trish Doyle: No.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Okay, don't be.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: More than two-thirds of the materials used for construction are sourced in Australia in relation to the new River Class vessels. What is particularly galling is the fact that the member for

Swansea could go on the front page of *The Sydney Morning Herald* this morning and say that the design happened overseas. That is a disgraceful slur against a regional—

Mr Clayton Barr: Your Premier said we can't build trains here.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Check your facts, sunshine.

Mr Clayton Barr: Where were you on that day?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Come on, peanut. Come on down.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Do something about your leader, you peanut. You're up there in the peanut gallery. You're a peanut.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr David Elliott: She's just keeping an eye on you, Chair.

The SPEAKER: I place the member for Baulkham Hills on three calls to order. He went straight to three; I am on my feet. The member for Cessnock will not make another sound. You do not have to go, but it is a good move. The Minister will continue.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I have no time left. You did not stop the clock, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: I did stop the clock.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Did you?

The SPEAKER: I am asking for some guidance from the Clerks about roughly how much time is left. Minister, I am happy to give you 10 seconds if you want to wind up.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I can't even draw breath in that time. The only point I would make is to those 54 staff up at Birdon: Thank you. You are not producing trash.

CROWN RESERVES IMPROVEMENT FUND

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (15:04): My question is addressed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing.

Ms Trish Doyle: He is standing right next to her. It looks like a marriage proposal!

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: Will the Minister update the House on the latest round of the Crown Reserves Improvement Fund and how this is supporting New South Wales communities?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (15:04): I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Blue Mountains. How dare she say anything today with those green stockings! I wish her a Happy St Patrick's Day.

Dr Marjorie O'Neill: How dare you insult the Irish!

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I was laughing at the green legs. It is hilarious. But I say to the member for Blue Mountains that you are getting benefits from this fund. Your communities and your trusts are getting benefits, so you should not criticise.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will not goad the member for Blue Mountains. She will direct her comments through the Chair.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Some \$107 million is going to our showgrounds and our Crown reserves to improve infrastructure across New South Wales. That is delivering jobs and opportunities, and we should all be pleased about that. We should all be proud of that because it is an incredible 200 per cent increase in funding in one year achieved through the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer realising we needed to create jobs during COVID. They got their heads together in about April of last year and got this money out the door, which has created around 38,000 jobs across the breadth of New South Wales. From Tenterfield to Tumbarumba, we are improving showgrounds. We are improving town halls. Whether it is the member for Myall Lakes and his community's Burrell Creek Youth Association or elsewhere, they are amazing projects that are making a real and very sound difference. We are focused on the jobs of people of New South Wales outside this Chamber. We are creating employment. The Treasurer—

Ms Trish Doyle: Overseas workers.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: That is not true. How dare the member say that. How dare she criticise an investment that I was about to talk about in the electorate of Coffs Harbour, which the Treasurer saw. We visited a new community hall. We saw the dancing. We saw the fun. We saw the community working together with the member for Coffs Harbour.

Mr Dominic Perrottet: That was where we were attacked by those koalas.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Yes, that was where. It is a great project—an absolutely brilliant project. Never in the modern history of regional New South Wales have we seen such vitality, excitement and energy. COVID is delivering that opportunity to see what is in the regions, and we are now investing in that infrastructure and those important community facilities. Members may have been to some of the showgrounds after the fires. Whether it is at Kempsey, Wauchope or Dorrigo, there are showgrounds where people went during those fires. We are reinvesting in those showgrounds so that they can be great facilities not just during fires but also during the annual shows, the horse-cutting competitions, the camp drafts or the pony club events. All those community facilities are improving with this \$107 million investment across the breadth of New South Wales.

Recently the member for Northern Tablelands, Adam Marshall, took me around the Crown reserve infrastructure projects at Bingara, Bundarra and Moree to show how the community has come together. As reserve managers of those facilities, they have put the hours into the applications and they are making a difference. For every million dollars we have spent in this program, we are creating 3½ jobs. This is making a difference. At Narrabri we were able to fix the caretaker cottage so there could be a full-time caretaker to manage the grey nomads as they come through with their caravans. It is creating extra economic stimulus in that community.

The member for Cootamundra came to me over 18 months ago and said, "Melinda, I really need you to support an upgrade of the toilet block at the Barellan Showground." Every year some 10,000 people come to the showground for the Good Old Days Festival, which is run by Barellan Working Clydesdales. The problem is that they go to the showground for this big festival and have to hire a semi-trailer of mobile toilets, *Kenny* style. It is really dangerous walking up the stairs to those facilities. Now we are building a brand-new toilet block so that the organisers do not have to spend \$10,000 every year on the truck coming in with mobile toilets. That showground has significantly improved. Mr Pellegrino, the land manager of that showground, said that is a lot of tea and scone sales they do not have to make. [*Extension of time*]

That story captures the economic benefit of this festival. It brings 10,000 people to that town. The local land reserve manager has put in the application. The member for Cootamundra, Steph Cooke, has advised me they are only a couple of weeks away from finishing that new toilet upgrade. This has been incredibly important money to keep our communities working really hard during COVID—the tradies, the carpenters, the electricians, the plumbers and all those people. The improvements we have made to the safety of electrical contractors by upgrading electrical distribution boxes in showgrounds right across New South Wales have been very significant. We have been focused on those jobs outside this building.

Meanwhile, the conversations within this building are about blaming the Leader of the Opposition for Labor's poor showing. In fact, all those members opposite should take a hard look at themselves for their lack of policy initiative and their lack of attention to detail. It is important to actually stand for something, not just oppose everything—and that is from the top down. We are focused on looking after the jobs of the people outside this building and across the breadth of New South Wales. What we have achieved with this program—some \$107 million in stimulus funding—is going to make a real difference. It supports the vitality and the energy in regional New South Wales. This has been an enormous success. I particularly thank all those reserve managers who have put in hundreds and hundreds of hours on their applications, and I acknowledge the work of our Crown Lands staff across New South Wales, who have ensured we are getting the money out the door and that we are doing what we were meant to do: stimulating the economy of New South Wales and creating jobs.

PARLIAMENTARY STAFF COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:12): My question is directed to the Premier. We know that bullying, sexual harassment and sexual assault have been, and will continue to be, perpetrated on women and people working in the New South Wales Parliament. Will the Premier act immediately to establish an independent complaints process for the New South Wales Parliament so that people experiencing bullying, sexual harassment and sexual assault have a clear, supported and independent way to report those incidents?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (15:12): I thank the member for Newtown for her question and ask for her indulgence to outline briefly in my response both what exists already and what action I have already taken in relation to this matter. First of all, it goes without saying that all workplaces should be places of safety and respect. This is especially the case for all those who work in the New South Wales Government, all those who work in the New South Wales Parliament, and all those who work in New South Wales

ministerial offices. I also place on record my absolute commendation and respect for Ms Brittany Higgins, whose strength and courage has allowed conversations like this to be had. As the member for Newtown would be aware, the responsibility for workplace matters of Parliament and its staff, including electorate officers, is overseen by the Presiding Officers and the Department of Parliamentary Services. In relation to staff in this building and in electorate offices, there are two policies that govern how to deal with these matters. There is a grievance policy, which workers—

Ms Jenny Leong: Point of order: With the greatest respect, Premier, I believe all the women and people in this building who are across this issue are aware of those policies. We are also aware that those policies were in place at the—

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

Ms Jenny Leong: My point of order relates to relevance. I asked the Premier whether she will commit to immediately establishing an independent complaints process so that people have the ability to apply it to a complaint.

The SPEAKER: I am sure the Premier is aware of the question, and—

Ms Jenny Leong: Those policies were in place when this—

The SPEAKER: —I sense that she is heading in that direction.

Ms Jenny Leong: —harassment and intimidation has happened before.

The SPEAKER: The Premier will continue.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As I outlined to the member for Newtown, I was about to advise the House of action I had taken, but I thought it was important for members of the public to know what already exists in relation to these matters and what I have done since that time. I want to get on record all of the processes we have in place currently for this Parliament and for ministerial offices. Given the member for Newtown is likely to continue her interjections, I will get to the end of my response before I go back to the other information. Though a number of provisions already exist to govern staff in this building and in electorate offices and also ministerial staff, given the actions and courage demonstrated by Ms Higgins and the shock and absolute horror all of us felt when she explained what had occurred to her, on 18 February I formally requested that former Sex Discrimination Commissioner and former New South Wales Minister, Pru Goward, who is now a professor at the University of Western Sydney, review the processes in place for ministerial staff to make certain that we have the best practice processes for making and handling complaints about bullying, harassment or sexual assault.

I chose at the time not to do this publicly because I wanted to make sure that all the processes we have in this place and in ministerial offices are as robust and precise and as fair and transparent as they need to be. I also asked that the review include consultation with the Presiding Officers and the Department of Parliamentary Services in relation to these practices to make sure that any allegations of bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct concerning staff in this place are handled appropriately. A report of Ms Goward's findings and any recommendations will be provided to me within the next month. I will outline the terms of reference that I have asked Ms Goward to look at. The first is the process by which staff may make a complaint about bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct in the workplace, including who may be best placed to receive any such complaint. That goes to the issue of who should receive the complaint.

The second is best-practice procedures for receiving and handling complaints about bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct in the workplace. The third is the circumstances in which it may be appropriate to conduct an internal investigation into allegations of bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct, which may also constitute criminal conduct, and the appropriate person or body to conduct such an internal investigation. This review should make any recommendations considered appropriate for improving policies and procedures concerning bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct. The consultation that Ms Goward is undertaking for the review may be taken with relevant persons or bodies with expertise in addressing bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct in the workplace, as considered appropriate by Ms Goward.

The review should also include consultation with the Presiding Officers and the Department of Parliamentary Services in relation to practices currently in place to manage allegations of bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct. I chose to take this action to make sure that we stress test every single process we have in place. I want to make sure that every staff member who works in this place, in a ministerial office or in an electorate office knows that they will be protected if they come forward with any level of allegation or any action they feel has occurred to them. I want that made abundantly clear. The reason I did not publicly announce the action I took was that I want this to be robust. I want the report to come to me directly. If there are any loopholes, we will address them.

The SPEAKER: Before I take the question from the member for Holsworthy, I will add to the Premier's comments, which I welcome, particularly in relation to this House. As one of the two Presiding Officers, I emphasise again the importance of this issue in the context of parliamentary administration. We have been in consultation with Ms Goward. I did not want to disclose it because it was a confidential process that the Premier had initiated. Both the President and I, together with both the Clerks and the CEO of the Department of Parliamentary Services, have met with Ms Goward and have had ongoing communication about a cooperative approach. We are mindful that, within this precinct, the executive arm of government does not have control over the way that parliamentary staff operate, but there is obvious merit in having a consistency of approach across all government.

Ms Jenny Leong: Will there be consultation with staff as well?

The SPEAKER: I will continue. The feedback of staff is always welcome. The feedback of members is always welcome.

Ms Jenny Leong: But we did not know it was a review. No-one in this workplace knew it was a review until now. That is completely outrageous.

The SPEAKER: Please be quiet and let me finish. I am making a statement.

Ms Jenny Leong: So Ms Goward is consulting a President who is a man, a Speaker who is a man and the head of Department of Parliamentary Services, who is a man, in a secret review to undertake this.

The SPEAKER: Please be quiet. You are not showing respect to the Chair or to this Parliament. There is also a process of consultation, which is going on as we speak, through both the privileges committees of both Houses of this Parliament. There is a recommendation before those committees for a compliance officer to be appointed to this place as well as for modification to the code of conduct. There is potential for members to give their input. There is also a real question about the code of conduct and how we properly show dignity, courtesy and respect to all people in this place. In addition to all of those processes, I have been in discussions with a number of members. I welcome any input or feedback from the member for Newtown or any other member in this place about our existing processes, procedures and protocols and any additional measures or additional feedback, some of which will be treated confidentially, but some of which will go through a proper process. I wanted to get that on the record. I am happy to hear feedback—

Ms Trish Doyle: You have not told anyone. We do not even know when the process is.

The SPEAKER: Quiet! I am happy to hear feedback from people outside this Chamber. This is not the appropriate place to engage in a dialogue. But if there—

Ms Jodi McKay: But you have just announced it in the House.

The SPEAKER: I have announced it publicly in the House. If I had not done that, I would be criticised. I am happy to have the dialogue. If there is a point of order, I am happy to take it. Otherwise, I am more than happy to continue any discussion outside, which is the appropriate place.

Ms Jenny Leong: Point of order: I would like to make a personal explanation because I feel that—

The SPEAKER: The time to do that is not now, but I will give the member the opportunity immediately following question time to do so.

Ms Lynda Voltz: Point of order: There has just been a statement in the House. Whether it is a ministerial statement or not, there should be an opportunity for people in this—

Ms Gladys Berejiklian: It was an answer to a question.

Ms Lynda Voltz: It was not. The Speaker just said it was a statement on a public process—

The SPEAKER: From the independent Chair.

Ms Lynda Voltz: From the Chair on a matter of public process. When a statement is made announcing a policy in the House, there is an opportunity to respond—

The SPEAKER: I am not announcing a policy. There is no point of order. I will now take the question from the member for Holsworthy.

WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (15:22): My question is addressed to the Minister for Local Government. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is encouraging more women to enter local government?

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (15:22): The issue of women in local government is a very serious subject. I thank the member for Holsworthy for her question and for her involvement in local government in Sutherland Shire Council for eight years, including one year as the deputy mayor. I congratulate all the other members of Parliament who started their career in local government, as I did, because it is rewarding. Many members in this place had or still have a career in local government. I congratulate all of them on that. The problem in local government is that only 31 per cent of councillors in New South Wales are women. That is pretty deplorable and very disappointing. In fact, 91 per cent of councils have less than 50 per cent representation. That is really disappointing. Four councils have no female representation. I could name them, but I will not.

Dr Marjorie O'Neill: Name and shame them.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: I could. The point is that we are the worst-performing State in this country in terms of female representation. We lead the country in all other criteria, but on this New South Wales comes last. Who leads us? It is Victoria, with 42 per cent women. Even Tasmania has 40 per cent women. We have 31 per cent. As Minister, I thought it was important that we did something about increasing representation in the September local government elections at the end of this year. I have set in place a number of—

Ms Anna Watson: We are not laughing at you. I am sorry.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: As I said, representation of women in local government is a pretty serious subject. We need to do something about it. I hope the member for Lakemba appreciates that.

Mr Jihad Dib: I do. We were not laughing at you. It was about something different.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: I think members opposite should contain their interjections while I am speaking on this matter. In terms of female representation, I have set out to identify the barriers that women face before they enter local government. One of them, of course—I know the member for Holsworthy experienced this as a barrier, particularly in this place—is child care. Child care is a difficult issue. Sometimes a person has a supportive partner at home who may or may not be working when they have to get to a council meeting. Councils have a provision now whereby they pay childcare expenses, but guess what, they do not have to pay childcare expenses if 10 males vote in the council chamber not to pay those expenses. In fact, I know of one council that has voted not to pay childcare expenses.

Dr Marjorie O'Neill: Name it.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: I will not name it. But the point about child care is that I am now in the middle of mandating childcare payments for women who are local government councillors. It must be mandated because we cannot give a council the opportunity to vote against a childcare payment for women. That is the first thing we have done. This morning many members in this Chamber would have heard me talk about superannuation, which is another possible barrier because, as members would know, most women retire with 47 per cent less than men have in their superannuation account. Maybe we have to battle that as well. The Local Government Amendment Bill 2021, which I introduced into the House this morning, includes a provision whereby local government may make contributions to a superannuation account on top of the allowances of councillors. Let us hope that makes a difference. I have also released a discussion paper in which we talk about not only childcare expenses but also carer responsibilities. Hopefully, we can come to terms with that, and I am inviting feedback.

In my view, the other barrier for women in local government is remote attendance. Obviously, this year we have had Zoom meetings for local government due to COVID. I want them all back in the chambers—I really do. But we have learnt that sometimes women find it hard to get to a council meeting. Sometimes something blows up at home. Sometimes the children are unruly. Sometimes their partner is working and they cannot get to a council meeting. So I am extending the COVID regulations to the end of this year whilst we look at a discussion paper to examine opportunities whereby remote meeting attendance can continue to occur, particularly for women, because sometimes things blow up and they cannot get to a council meeting. Sometimes they have to drive an hour, like I did, to a council meeting. I had three little toddlers at home when I was on council. Sometimes it is just too hard. [*Extension of time*]

As the women in this place know, sometimes it is very hard, especially when they have young children. The member for Summer Hill, for goodness sake, had twins. I remember the member for Holsworthy bringing her children into the Chamber. It was damn hard. It was tough also for the member for North Shore. So let us try to make it easier for women in local government. Let us try to make it easier for women everywhere. Let us try to make it easier for women in this place. For women in this place, soon there is going to be a damn big job vacancy opposite. It is going to be a big job vacancy, so I urge the member for Coojee to step up and take a leadership role. Member for Gosford, step up and take a leadership role. Others? Member for Shellharbour, step up. There

will be leadership vacancies. You can do it. Member for Lakemba, you cannot do it—you are the wrong gender! I am encouraging women. It is about job vacancies. There is going to be a big job vacancy. Girls opposite, step up and take those leadership roles. You can do it.

Again, I say well done to all the women who run. It is hard. Well done to all the women who will run for local government in September this year. I hope they all succeed—well, maybe not all of them, but most of them. I wish them all the luck in September 2021. I am right behind them.

Petitions

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

The CLERK: I announce that the following Minister has lodged a response to a paper petition signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. David Elliott—Glen Innes Police Station—lodged 9 February 2021 (Mr Adam Marshall)

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

The Hon. John Barilaro—Casino to Murwillumbah Proposed Rail Trail—lodged 9 February 2021 (Ms Janelle Saffin)

The Hon. Brad Hazzard—Westmead Hospital Acute Palliative Care—lodged 9 February 2021 (Dr Geoff Lee)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—Swansea Channel—lodged 9 February 2021 (Ms Yasmin Catley)

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell—Hurlstone Agricultural High School—lodged 9 February 2021 (Mr Anoulack Chanthivong)

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell—School Librarians and Support Staff—lodged 9 February 2021 (Ms Tamara Smith)

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell—Murwillumbah School Closures—lodged 9 February 2021 (Ms Janelle Saffin)

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell—School Non-local Enrolment Policy—lodged 9 February 2021 (Mr Matt Kean)

The Hon. Shelley Hancock—Coffs Harbour Cultural and Civic Space Project—lodged 9 February 2021 (Mr Gurmeh Singh)

Personal Explanation

PARLIAMENTARY STAFF COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:29): By leave: Mr Speaker, I make a personal explanation because in the statement you provided to the House following my question to the Premier you implied that you would be happy to speak with me outside and that anyone is welcome to approach you outside. I make it clear that following a number of disclosures in the media about issues of assault and harassment by staffers and former staffers in the Federal Parliament and New South Wales Parliament, I approached the head of the Department of Parliamentary Services directly. I had a meeting with him and the head of human resources in which I offered my support to work in a cross-party, cross-parliamentary way to resolve the issue so that we could ensure that women, particularly in this workplace, would feel confident to come forward and speak. I encouraged them to send an all-staff email explaining the processes. That was done.

I also sought a meeting with your office, Mr Speaker. I had a meeting with your chief of staff to discuss the matter and to offer my commitment and willingness to work behind the scenes to facilitate a cross-party approach to undertake that work. In addition, I have had conversations with and disclosures from current and former staff members about their belief, which is mine also, that the current processes in this place are inadequate. It is important that we recognise the reality of what the Premier has said, which is that a Liberal Party member—a former Minister of this current Government—has been appointed to undertake a review that, until my question in this Chamber today, was not known to members, and that the people who will be consulted are the three men who are the three most senior officeholders in this Parliament. Clearly, there is a need for broader consultation on this matter. I appreciate the indulgence of the House in allowing me to put this on the record.

It is crucial that women staffers who work in the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Parliamentary Services are given the opportunity to provide input into the review. It is crucial that the review is conducted in an independent way. I am in no way reflecting on former Minister Goward, but no-one would consider that review to be independent if it is undertaken by a Liberal Party member, who was allocated the task

without public knowledge, and if it is without any open process for input, submissions or consultation. No-one would think it would be appropriate that the only three people to be consulted about the issue are the three most senior men who are currently overseeing the Parliament and the processes that have not worked for women—no disrespect to the current Speaker intended—and will not continue to work for anyone who is harassed, sexually harassed or bullied in this place.

Finally, I ask that members of the Public Service Association, as representatives of workers, be consulted about this. Mr Speaker, this is a serious issue. I do not wish to carry the burden of women who work in this Parliament and former parliamentary staffers coming to my office from outside the electorate of Newtown—they are not my constituents—and disclosing issues of trauma, assault, bullying and harassment that have taken place in this Chamber, simply because they know that I am willing to call that stuff out. I do not deserve that burden. That is why I say this is a personal explanation. I will keep doing it because nobody else is, but at some point could we use the resources of this Government, of this Parliament, to allow people who have survived sexual assault and sexual harassment in this building to have a voice and to put forward their solutions?

We know there are solutions, and we are not doing enough. The problem exists not only in Canberra; the problem exists in this building. It is a problem right here right now, and all members in this Chamber know it. All of the staff in this place know it. We must do more, and the review must be open and transparent. I thank the House for its indulgence in allowing me to make this personal statement. I hope we can open it up from here.

Ms Anna Watson: May I make a personal explanation?

The SPEAKER: I would have to be satisfied that it is, in context, a personal explanation. I am happy to hear from the member during the next item because I am not satisfied at the moment. Given the earlier discussion in the Chamber, I was satisfied in relation to the member for Newtown. I am not denying the member the opportunity, but we must have the conversation first. In addition to my earlier statement, I thank the member for Newtown. I understand her passion and her concern. For the benefit of the House, I will correct the record on one issue and give a commitment on another. First, the people who were consulted in the Department of Premier and Cabinet process, which is not a parliamentary process but one that we are collaborating on and sharing experiences, involved five people, one of whom is the Clerk of this House, who is a female. I recognise our Clerk as an outstanding leader of the Legislative Assembly who is in a senior role. The member for Newtown left her out. I also emphasise that the head of human resources in this place, Helen Gors, is also female.

There are consultative processes independent of and beyond the process that the Premier spoke of today, which happened without my notice, that the member is currently unaware of. I was not prepared to make a statement today and I am not prepared to go into great detail right now as this is not the appropriate place to do so. I thank the member for Newtown for her offer of assistance and I thank a number of other members for their offers of advice. There will be an opportunity for further consultation and involvement.

[A member interjected.]

Now is not the time for the debate. I am happy to have the discussion outside. I am happy to speak with the member for Shellharbour about her personal explanation.

Ms Anna Watson: I want to make it on the floor, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Yes, and I understand that. I am not going to open this up for a general free-for-all at the moment because I do not think that is appropriate.

Ms Lynda Voltz: Point of order: Maybe my point of order is on relevance under Standing Order 129; I do not know. But you have made statements in this Chamber that are now very unclear, particularly to the members sitting on this side of the House, in regard to whether there is a review being undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet of the parliamentary staff and the executive—

The SPEAKER: No, there is not. There is a cooperative approach. We are providing some information to assist the inquiry. I make it very clear that they do not have jurisdiction over this place.

Ms Lynda Voltz: I am not saying they have jurisdiction—

Ms Jenny Leong: So nothing is happening in this place?

The SPEAKER: No, that is not what I said. I said that there are processes in train not only in terms of committees but also in terms of the administration and the oversight of this body. I am not going to go into detail now, but I am happy to speak about it outside, in conjunction with the Clerk, who is also aware of what is happening.

Ms Lynda Voltz: My clarification was—

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

Ms Lynda Voltz: My point of order is that there are now inquiries and reviews that have been spoken about on the floor of the Parliament that members who have put forward problems over a number of years are unaware of, but there is no clarification on the record or in the public domain other than those statements that have been made by the Premier and by you, as the Speaker of this House. I think that is going to add to the grief—

The SPEAKER: There will be further clarifications. I had no notice of what was going to happen today, but you have a commitment that in the very near future I am happy to clarify for all members what is occurring.

Ms Lynda Voltz: Can I finish my sentence?

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Ms Lynda Voltz: It will add to the grief and distress that women who have been subject to assault, harassment and bullying feel because there is a lack of clarity and these statements have been given without them having been part of the process or having any knowledge of it.

The SPEAKER: Thank you for that. You have my commitment to try to create a greater sense of clarity and a greater sense of confidence about where we are going. You have my personal commitment to that. If anybody wants to speak with me outside, I am happy to have those conversations.

Ms Jenny Leong: People do not want to have personal conversations. They want a clear process to be able to report issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment.

The SPEAKER: I understand that.

Ms Jenny Leong: They do not want private, behind-closed-doors conversations one on one with a man about that. With the greatest respect, that is not what women want.

The SPEAKER: I am talking about the process, not about the details. I am going to speak with the member for Shellharbour. I want to understand what her personal explanation is about.

Ms Anna Watson: Why do I have to explain my personal explanation before I make it?

The SPEAKER: Because I have discretion.

Ms Anna Watson: The member for Newtown was afforded a personal explanation, but as the Opposition Whip I am not afforded a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: I am asking you to approach the chair and speak with me.

Personal Explanation

PARLIAMENTARY STAFF COMPLAINTS PROCESS

The SPEAKER: The member for Shellharbour has approached the chair and spoken with me. I am happy to give her the opportunity to make a personal explanation within the confines of what we have just discussed.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (15:40): By leave: I start by backing in every word that the member for Newtown and the member for Auburn have said. I do not know whether you guys heard on Tuesday that enough is enough.

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Shellharbour that this is not an opportunity to make a speech.

Ms ANNA WATSON: As the Opposition Whip and a member of the Executive, I was not consulted on any of this. I have women coming into my office from all over this Parliament complaining about bullying and harassment. As the Opposition Whip, I am asking on the record: Why wasn't I consulted? Why wasn't I a part of this group and a part of these discussions? We talk about an open, honest and transparent process and there is none.

The SPEAKER: I ask the member for Shellharbour to return to the leave of her personal explanation.

Ms ANNA WATSON: I have made my personal explanation. I am asking on the record: Why was I not consulted as the Opposition Whip in this place?

Bills

MARINE POLLUTION AMENDMENT (REVIEW) BILL 2020

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments.

*Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 16 March 2021*No 1 **GOVT No. 1 [c2021-001D]**

Page 10, Schedule 1.1[42], lines 17–18. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

- (b) that is certified to carry 15 persons or more, or

No 2 **GOVT No. 2 [c2021-001D]**

Page 11. Insert before line 39—

[55A] Section 135 Requirement to carry garbage record book on board ship

Omit "large" from section 135(1). Insert instead "prescribed".

No 3 **GOVT No. 3 [c2021-001D]**

Page 12, Schedule 1.1[56]. Insert after line 4—

- (3) In this section—

prescribed ship means a ship—

- (a) that has a gross tonnage of 400 or more, or
 (b) that is certified to carry 15 persons or more.

No 4 **GOVT No. 4 [c2021-001D]**

Page 12, Schedule 1.1[57], line 10. Omit "more than 15 persons". Insert instead "15 persons or more".

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendments be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

*Budget***BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2020-2021**

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (15:42): As I was saying earlier today, the impacts of a lack of mental health services in Port Stephens are felt not only by the people affected and their families but also by the hospital workers, police and paramedics who are left managing a crisis that could have been prevented had there been earlier access to mental health support. We must do better. As I sit in this Chamber it is hard to hear Government member after member regaling us about how good the Government is. The people of Port Stephens are not seeing or feeling any of the benefits that Government members are talking about. It is not fair and it is not right. From the poor old Hawks Nest Rugby League Club operating out of a shipping container for a clubhouse with an extension cord to connect to electricity, to the people caught in queues every holiday season on the M1's missing link at Heatherbrae and the people still living with PFAS in drains lining their properties that have not been touched for the past six years, many people are feeling let down by this Government and its wrong priorities.

This Government made a commitment prior to the 2019 State election for a new TAFE campus in Nelson Bay. The language on this is important: a new "TAFE campus in Nelson Bay". The Premier stood alongside the Liberal candidate and hairdressers from the community and said that TAFE campuses are the beating hearts of country communities. But what did we get? We got an online service centre at Salamander Bay. If that is the beating heart of our community, we have a real problem. If hairdressers, boilermakers and welders are getting trained online, we all have a problem. I am not sure the Premier understands what TAFE is, but she certainly does not care about it because since her Government came to power, it has been dismantling TAFE by sacking staff, selling off campuses and hiking up course prices.

Mr Michael Johnsen: You are just being silly on this issue now. You are getting yourselves all in a lather about nothing.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: The member for Upper Hunter has just interjected that I am getting myself worked up over nothing. In his electorate his Government is selling off an incredible TAFE campus: the Scone TAFE campus.

Mr Michael Johnsen: Which you know how much about? You know nothing about it.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: You promised your community it would not happen. Why did you delete your Twitter account?

Mr Michael Johnsen: You just sit on ideology. You have absolutely no idea what you are talking about.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: It is on the public record that you said that it would never happen and now your Government is selling off the TAFE campus where there were agricultural and equine courses.

Mr Michael Johnsen: The only person talking down TAFE is you. You are the only ones who talk it down.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Now Tocal College will be the only place left doing agricultural courses.

Mr Michael Johnsen: Rubbish! That is a blatant lie.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Did your Government consult with New South Wales farmers about closing a TAFE campus where there were agricultural courses?

Mr Michael Johnsen: We expect nothing else from you other than the blatant lies.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Before promising a new campus in the Port Stephens electorate—a campus we never got—the Premier did not even understand that there was already a TAFE presence on the Tomaree peninsula, which had been starved by her Government of resources for years, nor had she consulted another provider of skills training in Nelson Bay, the Tomaree Community College. The complete lack of consultation with the community has yet again led to an underwhelming outcome that does not at all match the promise that was made—just like Nelson Bay Road and just like Medowie Public High school. Again and again promises are made prior to an election that fail to be delivered by the Government. Adding insult to injury is the news of even more job cuts to TAFE staff, with 700 more people to lose jobs, including locals living in Port Stephens.

Mr Michael Johnsen: That is a lie as well and you know it.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I have met with two locals who are losing their jobs in the latest round of cuts to TAFE from this Government that Government members do not like to hear about. That is why the member for Upper Hunter keeps interjecting. Some 700 more people are to lose their jobs and I met two of them just recently who live in my electorate.

Mr Michael Johnsen: A blatant lie.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: So you're now saying on record that it is a lie that people in my electorate who work in TAFE are losing their jobs? Well, I can tell the member for Upper Hunter that things are happening in his electorate and my electorate that he does not believe but are true. People living in regional New South Wales working in TAFE are losing their jobs that the Deputy Premier promised would not be lost. He made that commitment to the people in the regions and that is not happening. People are losing their jobs and I am meeting them on a daily basis. Lastly, I turn to our hospital and access health services in Port Stephens. Tomaree Community Hospital continues to be left behind. It is not on any list of upgrades or investments in hospitals by this Government. Recent work to incorporate community health into the hospital has not increased beds, staffing or capacity for the hospital.

Once again, I constantly hear from people who turn up to the emergency department and leave before they are even seen because they cannot get in. I speak to the hardworking nurses and workers at the hospital who are doing the best they can with the few resources they have. Facing the number of people who come through the emergency department on a daily basis, especially during tourist season when there are so many more people in our community, as well as looking after the people who are in hospital beds, is an impossible task that this Government has set. I will end on a positive note. The community I represent is not only beautiful, it is amazing. They work together to look after one another, which is fortunate because this Government is not looking after them. That is why I will keep fighting every day for my community to get its fair share from this heartless, lazy Government.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (15:49): It is a great pleasure that I can begin and have a middle and an ending that are all positive; I do not need to wallow in the negativity of members opposite, which they like to do so often. Since 2011, when this Government was elected, a great deal of work has been required when it comes to budgeting and finance to ensure that the expectations of all our community members, including their representatives, regardless which side of the House they sit on, are met. Major structural changes needed to occur to the financial situation that Labor left when the Liberal-Nationals Government got into government in 2011. Through that long, hard, arduous process we are seeing the benefits for the community coming to the fore. There is no way that our State's communities and constituents would have been in such a good position if we and, in particular, members of the Executive Government, did not make the decisions we needed to make and continue to make to provide the financial foundation to meet those expectations.

I have been the member for Upper Hunter only since 2015 because I was not here for the first term of the Liberal-Nationals Government. I am extremely proud, honoured and humbled to have been elected as the member

for Upper Hunter in the 2015 and 2019 elections. It is all based on one key premise: We deliver a safer, stronger community and set of outcomes for our communities. The electorate of Upper Hunter has a wide level of diversity in geography and demography. In fact, the Upper Hunter has over 300 towns, villages and localities where people live, socialise and act in various capacities within their particularly community. There is no one big town like at Tamworth, Dubbo or Wagga Wagga. There are a lots of smaller towns, the biggest town being Singleton. The economic powerhouse of New South Wales—which is the Upper Hunter electorate—is, I like to say, the home of world-class mines, wines, equines and bovines. Would you like me to say it again, Mr Assistant Speaker?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: It was quite impressive, actually.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: All of those industries are critically important to the Upper Hunter electorate. In fact, they are critically important to the Hunter region and New South Wales. I remind the House that the Hunter region is the strongest regional economy in Australia. A lot of that primary income and benefit is generated out of my electorate of Upper Hunter. Those industries are equally as important as each other. With that, as members can imagine, comes diversity of the job opportunities and strong communities. In fact, one of the benefits of having that level of diversification in industry is that we have a consistently relatively low unemployment rate because with diversity comes opportunity. We all know that if you put all your eggs in one basket, you are at the mercy of the market. When we have industries such as mining and resources, the equine industry, the agricultural industry, the wine industry and other industries, not every market will run as strong as that industry or community would like, and natural variations come.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Port Stephens will come to order.

Ms Kate Washington: I said one thing and he heckled me the whole time. Nothing was said to him during the whole time.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I was not in the chair.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: There is a big difference, Mr Assistant Speaker.

Ms Kate Washington: What is the big difference?

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: Mr Speaker, the difference is that I am not going to lie about things.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: The member has just suggested that I lied. That is unparliamentary language and I would ask him to withdraw it.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I did not hear it but if the member for Upper Hunter said that, I ask him to withdraw it. There were a lot of interjections, which made it difficult to hear what was being said.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: I am happy to rephrase. I will not tell mistruths. Now where was I before I was rudely interrupted? That's right: the diversification of the economy.

Dr Marjorie O'Neill: There you go. More male Liberals shutting down female voices—surprise, surprise.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: Are you seriously trying to turn this into a gender thing? Are you serious?

Dr Marjorie O'Neill: So people are not allowed to have opinions?

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: Anyone is allowed to have an opinion.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Upper Hunter will continue. I will ask the Clerk to stop the clock if I have to.

Ms Kate Washington: Just like I had to continue over your heckling all the time.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: Like I said, I will not tell mistruths.

Ms Kate Washington: Only to your community.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I will start asking members to leave the Chamber if they continue to interject. The member for Upper Hunter will continue.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: With diversification comes opportunity and the generation of wealth, not only for our local community but also for the State. The consistently good decisions that the Government has made since it was first elected in 2011 gives it the opportunity to finance the expectations of our constituencies and communities. I have a whole range of examples of good things that have happened in the Upper Hunter electorate since 2015. I am talking about only certain capital grants that have been provided to a range of community activities and organisations. Since I was elected in 2015 just under \$56 million has been or is being

spent in the Liverpool Plains Shire. The shire participated in \$25 million worth of road funding on the New England Highway.

There are simple yet important things like money to the Quirindi Sporting Clay Target Club, the Quirindi Court Sports, the Quirindi Bowling Club, the Quirindi Junior Rugby League, the Spring Ridge Oval fence and the Quirindi Showground amenities. Those items of infrastructure are critical to the health and wellbeing of our communities. In the neighbouring local government area, the Upper Hunter, where I live and where I was on the council and served as mayor, \$206.5 million have been invested in new capital projects since 2015. A little further down the road in the Muswellbrook Shire—

Ms Kate Washington: Does that include your connected learning centre?

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: Yes, it does, actually. The connected learning centre is a wonderful facility. Members of the community love it.

Ms Kate Washington: And what are you doing with the TAFE—the Scone TAFE?

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: The only people who talk down connected learning centres are the Labor Party and the unions. It is very unfortunate because that is effectively giving the community and TAFE staff a proverbial slap in the face.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I remind the member for Port Stephens that she is on three calls to order.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Three calls? I have not had one call, Mr Assistant Speaker.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Sorry, I was advised it was three. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the first time.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: Mr Assistant Speaker, I would be happy to make my contribution in relative silence if she were to not be in the Chamber.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I will kick everyone out if this type of behaviour continues. I do not care. The member will continue.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: Part of that \$206.5 million includes a brand-new TAFE facility in Scone, which is working extremely well. A little further down the road in the Muswellbrook Shire, \$283.1 million has been invested in new capital projects since I was elected in 2015. Some of that is part of the Muswellbrook bypass—the bypass is coming; we are starting construction on that in late 2022. We are fully funding that, and not all of that money is included in this budget, by the way. The Government is upgrading Muswellbrook Hospital. During the stage two upgrade, some aspects such as utilities and lift wells, which will be needed in stage three, were constructed. The Government is now looking to progress to stage three of Muswellbrook Hospital in due course.

I have talked about health and road infrastructure. I now turn to upgrades to schools. We are expecting to begin major works on Muswellbrook South Primary School, which we announced at the 2019 election. That will probably begin by the end of the year. There is a lot of planning and consultation with the school community and the relevant departmental staff to embark on a major upgrade. I look forward to that coming to fruition. There are things like the Denman Junior Cricket, Denman Pony Club, Muswellbrook District Junior Rugby League, Muswellbrook Girls Academy, the Lions Club, Little Athletics, men's shed, Olympic Park tennis courts, the pistol club, the PCYC, the rugby club and the Sandy Hollow Progress Association. A wide range of capital investments is being made in our community in Muswellbrook and other shires, which directly reflects the diversity in our communities in the Upper Hunter.

In Singleton, \$175.2 million has been invested, which will substantially increase when we begin construction of the Singleton bypass, which we expect will begin in 2023. However, I know that behind the scenes a lot of work is going on to attempt to get that bypass underway sooner rather than later. We can have a degree of confidence there because we know that the full funding amount for the Singleton bypass is there—unlike the situation under those opposite, who, believe it or not, committed at the last Federal election to underfund the Singleton bypass by allocating \$250 million to a \$600 million project. I said at the time that the Federal member for Hunter will always be remembered for promising to underfund a major piece of infrastructure.

Mr Paul Scully: Well, what are you doing about it?

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: Well, we have fully funded it.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I want to hear the member for Upper Hunter. I call the member for Wollongong to order for the third time. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the second time.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: As I said, thanks to The Nationals in government at both the State and Federal levels, the full funding is now there for the Singleton bypass. As we have that funding, we are going to be able to progress this quicker than we may have originally planned. Again reflecting the diversity in the Singleton shire, another new TAFE facility has been built in Singleton and operational for a number of years. Major money has gone into the town centre upgrades, sporting facilities and community health facilities. The Singleton Hospital has been significantly upgraded. People are seeing or have seen the benefits of all sorts of community-based facilities, like the netball courts, for example. With a good attitude, it is amazing what you can achieve.

Ms Kate Washington: Is that right? It just takes attitude?

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: Yes, it does, actually. It is a funny thing. I will give you an example of how a difference of attitude reflects your ability to deliver.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Upper Hunter will resume his seat. A number of members are on two and three calls to order. I will ask them to leave the Chamber if this type of behaviour continues. I hope it does not. Let us get through this. I know it has been a rough question time for some.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: As I said, attitude and relationships because of your attitude can make a huge difference in your ability to be able to deliver for your community.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I do not know why, but the member for Coogee has not been placed on a call to order yet. I call the member for Coogee to order for the first time.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: Let us go with a couple of examples of neighbouring electorates. Let us take the Maitland electorate, for example. I am only talking about one department, but I am going to compare three different attitudes in three different electorates—one Government and two Opposition. The Maitland electorate has received a bit over \$11 million, but we all know that the attitude of the member for Cessnock is vastly superior, which, funnily enough, is reflected in the investment that he is able to achieve for his electorate. The electorate of Cessnock received just under \$30 million.

Ms Kate Washington: Compared to how much in yours?

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: Well, I am glad you asked.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Port Stephens to remove herself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A until 4.45 p.m.

Ms Kate Washington: When he heckles me he does not even get anything.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I was not in the chair for that. You were placed on three calls to order. You are to leave the Chamber.

Ms Kate Washington: I was on two calls.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: You were on three calls to order. You will leave the Chamber now under Standing Order 249A. I gave you plenty of leeway.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Port Stephens left the Chamber at 16:09.]

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Upper Hunter will continue. He will be heard in silence.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: Let me just reiterate attitudes and the results that come from having attitudes. This is only one department. Maitland electorate received just over \$11 million. The member for Cessnock, with a vastly superior attitude—as indicated by his own constituency, I might add—received just under \$30 million. I was asked about the electorate of Upper Hunter.

Mr Ray Williams: What is your attitude, mate?

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: Well, it seems to be a touch better. The electorate of Upper Hunter received just under \$108 million. Why? No other reason than attitude. Because if you are actually nice to people and if there is a situation where you see a problem and you need it fixed, you go and knock on the door, have a chat to the Minister and say, "Minister, you know what? We have a problem here and I need your help."

Mr Ray Williams: You get more bees with honey than vinegar.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: You get more bees with honey than vinegar. That is exactly right.

Ms Anna Watson: This bloke is happy to interject the whole way through the member for Port Stephens' contribution and if the Opposition does it to him, we are pulled up.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I was not in the chair, Ms Watson.

Ms Anna Watson: It does not matter.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: It does matter. I was not in the chair.

Ms Anna Watson: There is one rule for us and one rule for the Government.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: That is not true. I play very fair.

Ms Anna Watson: You do. I will give you that.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I will kick you all out if this type of behaviour continues. I do not care.

Ms Anna Watson: I think you should just kick him out for what he did to the member for Port Stephens.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: Speaking of vinegar, I am happy to provide the figures that reflect the attitude of Port Stephens to the member for Port Stephens.

Mr Ray Williams: I would like to hear that.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: Members would like to hear those as well. I will find those and bring them to the House. Can I ask for an extension? [*Extension of time not granted.*]

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (16:10): Before I speak on the budget take-note debate on behalf of the great community of Coogee, I take this opportunity to say happy St Patrick's Day to all the Irish Australians who are in the Chamber. I note we are debating the budget. It has been included on the business papers for yesterday, today and likely the next two sitting weeks, because clearly this Government has no legislative agenda. The cupboards are bare. This is despite the overcrowding and underfunding we see in our public education system, the mental health crisis apparent in our schools and among young people, and the clear public drive to properly and finally address the inequality that exists in our society. We see no legislation on any of these topics today or yesterday. Instead we are seeing a government wasting valuable time, which it should be spending helping the people of this State. I will, however, engage in this debate and shine a light on how, once again, this Government has failed to deliver on its promises to the people of the eastern suburbs and the Coogee electorate.

Had the Government delivered in its budget the promises it had previously made to the people of the Coogee electorate, it would have created and protected a variety of jobs, created stronger educational outcomes, increased access for people to get in and out of the eastern suburbs and protected the fabric of our local area from rampant overdevelopment. This Government has done none of these things. Today I stand here to hold the Government to account. Since my election I have frequently raised the issues of capacity and dilapidated infrastructure problems in high schools across the eastern suburbs. The Government has admitted this problem existed and the former member for Coogee—a Liberal member—committed to resolving it.

In 2018 the former member for Coogee, the Premier and the education Minister in tow made a commitment to undergo major upgrades to both Randwick Girls' High School and Randwick Boys High School. At midday today the upgrades to these schools are still listed on the School Infrastructure NSW website as "in the planning phase". They have been in the planning phase for three years. As we fast approach the 2021-22 financial year and the three-year anniversary of this announcement, students, parents and educators at these schools deserve some answers, but better yet they deserve action. Yesterday I tabled some questions on notice to the education Minister; however, it is worth giving these questions some air in this place as well. I asked: Will the Minister explain in detail what planning has been done over the past three years?

Mr Paul Scully: Not much.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL: No, not much at all. Given that this project is referred to on the School Infrastructure NSW website as being prioritised for planning and that it has been in the planning for three years, how many more years should the communities of these schools expect the prioritised planning stage to take? Fast-tracking these major upgrades and fulfilling the Government's promise for the only public high school in the Coogee electorate would create much-needed jobs in the education sector as well as in construction. At a time when we are looking at the end of major Federal Government stimulus packages and the major risk of skyrocketing unemployment rates, it is more important than ever that the Government fulfils the promises it has made.

Once again I am here—I have been here so many times since I was elected—to represent the Randwick Boys High School and Randwick Girls' High School communities, who are deeply frustrated with the ongoing

delays to their upgrades and believe that this Government is not listening to them. Once again I am using my voice to represent my community, and we expect some answers. Randwick Girls' and Randwick Boys are key examples of the dire need for greater investment in public education in the eastern suburbs, but that is not the end of the story. There are seven fantastic public primary schools in the Coogee electorate and according to data from the Department of Education, six of those seven schools are over capacity.

In previous years, the growth in public school enrolment has reflected the fantastic work being done by our local school principals and their wonderful staff to provide a first-class education and schooling environment in our local public schools. In speaking with our local school principals, it is clear that they are facing major increases in enrolment applications for years to come as local families begin to feel the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and Australia's first recession in 30 years. We know the worst of the economic impacts of COVID-19 are yet to come and some of the very worst may be just around the corner. It is a certainty that more local parents will be turning to public education from the 2021 school year onward. First, this will put a huge strain on the already stretched facilities and staff of our fantastic local public schools. Secondly, this guaranteed increase in public school enrolments will place a spotlight on the significant gaps in secondary public school education in the eastern suburbs.

There is no co-educational public high school in the Coogee electorate. The closest co-educational public high school is Rose Bay Secondary College in the Vaucluse electorate, which, according to recent data is already at 105 per cent capacity. Based on conversations with local parents those numbers may even be an underestimate of the squeeze for classroom space at Rose Bay Secondary College, with several parents indicating that the school could be up to 120 per cent capacity in the new school year. Rose Bay Secondary College is now unable to take students from outside the area.

Many of my constituents in the Coogee electorate have written to me to discuss their anguish that their children are not able to be enrolled at Rose Bay Secondary College and they have no co-educational public high school option within reach. The closest co-educational high schools for people in the Coogee electorate are to the south in Matraville and Mascot and to the west in Redfern and Alexandria. The closest option is the Inner Sydney High School, which is already at enrolment capacity and cannot take out-of-area enrolments. There are no existing dedicated public school bus services to connect local suburbs to the senior campuses of Alexandria Park Community School, Matraville Sports High School or J J Cahill Memorial High School. That means that if children wanted to attend those schools, it would take them over one hour each way on public buses.

The issues surrounding the huge reliance being placed on Rose Bay Secondary College are twofold. Firstly, Rose Bay Secondary is clearly not receiving the funding it desires for either the infrastructure or connectivity support that it needs. Only last month I was meeting with parents about the shortages of school buses available to their kids. On no less than seven occasions in the first fortnight of the 2021 school year, several Bondi families had to drop their plans and scramble to get their kids and their neighbours' kids from the bus stop to the school because the overcrowded buses simply drove past. These are year 7 students, 12- and 13-year-olds, now arriving late for their first classes at high school. I wrote to the transport Minister about this issue several weeks ago and I eagerly await his reply.

Secondly, what has been very clear to locals for many years is the need for another co-educational public high school in the eastern suburbs. Not only does my office receive regular correspondence from families desperately looking for support on this issue; there are also several community groups actively advocating to the Government for badly needed investment in public education. I believe the member for Wentworth is on board with this idea and I believe his campaign corflutes read, "Sharma for More High School Choices". He committed to consistently raising the issue with his State Government colleagues.

Today I call on the member for Wentworth to join with me in advocating for a new public high school in the eastern suburbs, because what local people want is better public education options and not another meaningless commitment prior to next year's Federal election. I also note the deplorable management of public transport, the lack of funding for buses for the eastern suburbs in this budget, the Government's heartless attack on our much-loved local buses and the reprehensible financial management of the light rail project. As members in this House know, more than 80,000 people have signed petitions in New South Wales voicing their concerns and discontent against the Government's cuts to public buses.

Mr Paul Scully: Eighty thousand!

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL: Eighty thousand, exactly—a lot of people. I thank all the residents of Coogee and the eastern suburbs and the people across New South Wales who have signed our petitions. I take this opportunity today to again speak on behalf of constituents in my electorate—people like Michael, a father of two and a nurse at St Vincent's Hospital in Darlinghurst, who contacted my office to tell me his story about what the loss of the 373 from Coogee to Circular Quay would mean to him. Michael's work week looks different from

month to month, sometimes from week to week, as his roster and schedule change to support the needs of the hospital and of the patients.

Michael takes the 373 bus from Coogee to Taylor Square, getting off a convenient 300 metres from work. The 373 travels throughout the day and the evening, allowing Michael to get to work efficiently and effectively whether he is working an early, late or night shift. The 373 has been slated to be cut by this Government. It is one of 17 bus services set to be ripped off the streets of the eastern suburbs by this Liberal Government, a government that prior to the 2019 elections committed to "making your commute easier by delivering new bus networks" as well as boosting existing services—another lie.

Losing this bus service will have big consequences for Michael and his family. He will have to take the bus to the University of New South Wales in order to get a connection to Taylor Square. The bus stop in Coogee will now be twice the distance from his house and the journey time to and from work could be over 30 minutes longer than his current trip. If the 373 bus service disappears, it will have a huge impact on thousands of people just like Michael. This is just one bus service and there are 17 bus services slated to be removed, each with thousands of regular customers with their own individual stories.

I will bring this House and the locals of the east up to date with the changes to buses for the eastern suburbs because we know that information will never come from the Minister or his department. The Government has cut six bus routes from region 9 in the eastern suburbs to date, meaning thousands of services every week were removed without any community consultation whatsoever. Many locals have found out that their bus no longer exists after going to the bus stop to catch it. Little blue signs are shoved in the door saying, "This bus will no longer exist from this Friday." Kind, lovely—that is what this Government calls community consultation. The number of local people who were subsequently late for work, late for their doctor's appointment or late to pick their children up from school is astronomical but this Government does not care.

It appears those opposite have turned their back on the people of the eastern suburbs altogether. That is despite the fact that the transport Minister committed on no fewer than three occasions, twice in writing, to engage in community consultation before removing services. Countless constituents have been in touch with me to ask me why their buses have been removed. Of course there is no official answer from the Government, but we locals know the truth. It has everything to do with the Premier's \$3.147 billion ghost train that departs from High Street every single day. In December last year the CBD and Eastern Suburbs Light Rail celebrated its first birthday, and what did it receive as a birthday gift? Figures show that the patronage levels are just 16 per cent of what was promised when the project was commissioned in 2013, a massive drop in patronage due to COVID that has not been seen on any other form of public transport.

Not only that, but Budget Paper No. 2 figures show that the light rail has the lowest customer satisfaction of any public transport mode—shock, horror! It is clear that the light rail has been a massive flop. A more ambitious, community-minded government might use those figures to begin a process of introspection. It would ask itself why nobody wants to take the light rail. It is probably because the light rail is 20 minutes slower than the buses that already exist. It may be because a single accident takes out large sections of the tram line for hours or it may be because it breaks down more often than Vanilla Ice.

Mr Christopher Gulaptis: That wasn't funny.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL: Yes, it was. That was a pop culture reference that went over your head. The crazy part about all of this is that, instead of trying to improve the light rail and make it more attractive for the people of the eastern suburbs, the Liberal Government has simply decided to cut the much-loved and much-used buses from our community, forcing people to use the light rail. You would think that a party that rails on about consumer choice and the free market would listen when people vote with their feet—apparently not. Instead they have completely ignored our community. They have not undertaken any community consultation whatsoever and they have gutted our beloved buses in favour of an inferior light rail. Because of the Government's mistakes and its inferior infrastructure that no-one wanted and that has destroyed hundreds of trees, the people of the eastern suburbs are now being punished for those mistakes.

How much did the taxpayers of New South Wales pay for that major inconvenience? That is another question that is interesting to ask, but unfortunately that question was not answered by the budget and nor was it answered in the previous budget. That seems to be a significant oversight. Was the Government acknowledging its lack of fiscal responsibility and its inability to plan major infrastructure? We must ask ourselves: Was the Government admitting that it had no idea what the infrastructure would cost the people of New South Wales? Or was the Government admitting that the costs of the light rail are still growing exponentially as it tries to fix all of its mistakes? Thanks to the Auditor-General's report, which was released last year, we now know that the CBD and South East Light Rail have so far cost the people of New South Wales \$3.147 billion. That is \$1.5 billion over budget and the numbers keep going up—and there is more.

Under the Future Transport *South East Sydney Transport Strategy* the Government is planning its next major transport project for the east before it has even got the first one working properly. Given the Government's track record it is clear that the proposed metro line that it is trying to put in is a Trojan horse for rampant overdevelopment of the eastern suburbs. The Government will use the new metro line to justify rezoning swathes of the eastern suburbs, allowing their developer mates to build 30-storey buildings along the metro line. That will forever change the fabric of our community. And not only that—we have seen through their refusal to build a new co-educational high school in the east. They will completely neglect the need for social infrastructure while thousands of new residents move in.

I will use this moment while I talk about social infrastructure to note that the Government is building a hospital in the eastern suburbs in the most densely populated part of Sydney. That hospital does not have any parking. I do not know what kind of low altitude flyer would build and extend a hospital in the most densely populated part of Sydney without thinking that some parking should be built to go with it, but I will leave that for now. I will make another speech on that because I do not have the time to talk with confidence about that today. I will make it clear that I support upgrades and new transport infrastructure in my electorate, but that should never come at the cost of destroying our beautiful suburbs so that Government members can give their developer mates more jobs. The eastern suburbs is already one of the most densely populated parts of Sydney. We do not require more density. None of this makes sense.

One of the gaping omissions from the budget was the lack of investment in public housing. If the Government would like to improve the state of planning in the eastern suburbs, an increase in the provision of affordable housing and the closure of planning loopholes that allow developers to exploit the current system would be welcomed. The allocation of meaningful funds to improve the current stock and to increase the supply of affordable housing in New South Wales was also a stark omission from the budget. If the Government needs an example of the benefit of greater spending on public housing it need only look south of the border. The Victorian Government will be spending \$5.3 billion to build more than 12,000 public housing homes over the next four years, creating over 10,000 jobs each year for the duration of the four-year project.

Undoubtedly there is a serious need for affordable housing to be built across Sydney, including in the eastern suburbs, particularly to ensure that key and essential workers like teachers, nurses, cooks, cleaners, cops and porters are able to live close to where they work. However, the affordable rental housing State environmental planning policy [SEPP] has created a Trojan horse for developers to build sub-par apartments that they can pimp out at well above market price for rent and then onsell in 10 years, rebranding their boarding house style rooms as "snug, boutique apartments" without any accountability. While the concept of affordable housing is a very good one, the lack of accountability and enforcement of the SEPP has meant that those tiny apartments are often incredibly unaffordable. The key workers for whom they were designed cannot afford to rent them. A boarding house room costs \$550 per week in the eastern suburbs. A hospital porter who earns \$39,000 a year would have to spend more than 60 per cent of their weekly salary on rent. That is not affordable by any stretch of the imagination. [*Extension of time*]

The lack of accountability and regulation has meant that eastern suburbs properties that are built under the pretence of being affordable housing are being used as backpacker accommodation or as expensive university accommodation, which is a complete violation of the SEPP. Key workers are missing out and many of them now have to travel for hours to work in those essential sectors. The Government is also aware that the electorate of Coogee has long had issues with stormwater. Prior to the 2019 election NSW Labor and I committed \$7 million to solving the problem; compare that to the \$2.5 million that has been committed by the Liberals. We knew at the time that \$2.5 million was nowhere near enough to solve that huge problem. For the past two years we have seen ongoing issues with water quality at Coogee Beach and no action has been taken by the Government.

As we have seen with the rental assistance scheme this week, or with the promise to reintroduce the 378 bus route prior to the 2019 election, it is all part of the Government's modus operandi. They announce a scheme or a policy, fail to deliver it and then hope nobody notices. Most of what I am hearing from the great people of the Coogee electorate is that they are sick and tired of the Government promising the world and delivering nothing. They want to see the next budget deliver on the significant investment that is required in local education, local public transport and maintaining the fabric of our local community. That is what we need to see in the 2021-2022 budget. I will continue to work every day to advocate for the great people of Coogee to make sure that they are not let down by the Government yet again.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:32): No previous State budget has been formed after a year that included a record drought, devastating bushfires and a worldwide pandemic due to COVID-19. The people of New South Wales have been incredibly fortunate to have entered this period of crisis with the best budget and economy in Australia. The New South Wales Government has enabled a budget to be delivered that will fund measures to keep us safe through the global pandemic, create jobs, kickstart the economy and lay the

foundations of a stronger future. The capacity for that repair has only occurred because of the good economic management by the Government over the past 10 years. The retirement of debt through asset recycling has been significant. The stimulus to the economy from a record infrastructure program has not only provided better schools, hospitals, transport and road infrastructure, but it has also provided jobs, a very strong economy and a resilient New South Wales budget that is able to withstand the shocks of multiple adverse economic events.

I will go into some of the key features of the budget. Of course I will start with the record \$107 billion plus infrastructure pipeline over the next four years. Importantly that pipeline is a great provider of jobs in the post-pandemic economic recovery. The size of our infrastructure program allows for economies of scale because we are doing so much. Whether it be the procurement of new lift upgrades for multiple railway stations in adjacent locations or the maintenance of many of our public schools in adjacent locations, money is not only being spent at record levels but it is being spent in a way that allows for economies of scale and therefore it provides greater value for money for those taxpayer dollars that are being invested in public infrastructure.

An important feature of the budget is the Treasurer's announcement that \$3 billion of the over \$100 billion infrastructure pipeline over the next four years has been brought forward from where it was originally planned to be spent, which is a very important stimulus measure to the economy. Another aspect of the infrastructure pipeline is that the Government is a future-building infrastructure government. It is focused on the future; we saw that recently with the announcement of the new city in western Sydney, to be called Bradfield. I think calling it Bradfield is certainly channelling the North Shore into the western suburbs of Sydney.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: "Henchkens" is what I would have called it.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: In Gordon I am very fortunate to live across the lane from J. J. C. Bradfield's house and the house that he built for his son. I am a little bit concerned that when I say that I live near the Bradfield house, people are going to think that I live in western Sydney. It could create some geographical confusion. I am a little bit worried that my Federal member, who is the member for Bradfield, is going to be confused. But I am sure all of these things will be worked out in the fullness of time.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I am sure you love western Sydney.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: J. J. C. Bradfield was a great visionary for the future. Not only was he a PhD engineering graduate of the University of Sydney and not only did he most famously design the Sydney Harbour Bridge but he also had a vision for infrastructure within Sydney that set the city up for 100 years. I believe the infrastructure pipeline of over \$100 billion that the Government is investing in our great State over the next four years will be viewed in the future in a similar way to the visionary work of the great J. J. C. Bradfield.

Some people misunderstand asset recycling; I know that is hard to believe. Some people try to present asset recycling as some sort of evil or some sort of selling off of assets, as if the proceeds of those assets go into the ether or even become part of the operational budget of Government. The Government's asset recycling program has very strict rules upon it. Every dollar of the proceeds of asset sales is reinvested into other assets. That means that the Government is taking what are deemed to be lazy or less efficient assets and putting those proceeds into better assets, better schools, better hospitals and better infrastructure generally. That is a very important part of an understanding of what asset recycling is.

The net assets of New South Wales have increased by about \$100 billion over the past 10 years under that asset recycling program. That is proof of how beneficial it is. You cannot increase your net assets by \$100 billion if you are selling off the family jewellery. It is a financial vindication of the wisdom of what the Government is doing. I will go into some of the tangible results of that infrastructure program a little bit later in my speech. It is fair to say that the New South Wales Government's asset recycling program has been the most successful in Australia. Certainly during the 16 years of the former Labor Government, the North Shore was largely ignored.

Ms Liesl Tesch: The electorate of Gosford has been largely ignored by the Liberal Government.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: An important difference between this Government and the Labor Government is that the Coalition Government builds the infrastructure that the community needs regardless of how the electorate votes. Many Labor electorates are receiving upgrades to their schools, hospitals, transport and road infrastructure. The member for Gosford just interjected somewhat impolitely, but I believe the Central Coast is also enjoying hospital infrastructure improvements and the like. Coalition seats need to get some support from Government; it should not all go to Labor seats. But if you listened to the Labor members in this place, you would think that their seats are the only ones that are worthy of the infrastructure, which indeed reflects the way they governed when they last had control of the Treasury benches.

Sometimes the magnitude of the infrastructure numbers that we talk about is so large that it lacks reality for ordinary people. Therefore, it is important to get down into some of the nuts and bolts of the incredible

expenditure on the future of New South Wales. I will start with education because education is extraordinarily important generally and also to my electorate. The pipeline for the next four years includes \$7.7 billion in education infrastructure expenditure. One of the achievements of the Government is establishing Schools Infrastructure NSW, which is a part of the Department of Education, dedicated to building and maintaining our public schools. No part of the education department was dedicated in such a way when the Coalition Government came into power.

That is probably because the Labor Party closed schools and allowed them to become overcrowded. When it left government, it left behind a \$1 billion maintenance backlog. In areas like mine, that meant that no new education infrastructure was created and our public schools were decaying. The people of Ku-ring-gai now know the difference between a Labor and a Coalition State Government. I will give a few examples of what I am talking about. One of the jewels in our public education crown in recent years has been the complete rebuild of one of the many great public schools in my electorate, Waitara Public School. It is wonderfully led by the principal, Ms Coelho, who was formerly the principal at Turrumurra North Public School. The Government has engaged in a complete rebuild of almost the entire school.

That has involved 38 new permanent teaching spaces, a new hall and canteen, upgraded core facilities, a heritage garden and landscaping, with a total investment of over \$40 million in the school. I was fortunate enough to go to the school for its end-of-year assembly last year. The principal took me around. It is an amazing school with terrific teachers and wonderful children. That school is truly a state-of-the-art education facility. In recent years Killara Public School, another one of the great public schools in my electorate, had a substantial investment of over \$6 million made when the Government built eight additional teaching spaces and a multipurpose sports court. The school is looking fantastic. At the end of 2020 I was also privileged to go to its end-of-year assembly, which was held in the newly upgraded library area. The school is absolutely flourishing with the investment that the Government has made in the education of that community.

Ku-ring-gai High School is another example. In excess of \$15 million was invested in a new multipurpose hall and 15 classrooms were refurbished. Some outdoor teaching spaces were created. Last year I joined the Premier and the education Minister to open those works. Both the kids and the teachers love those outdoor teaching spaces. They provide a really relaxing environment for performances and other things to take place, whether it be music, drama or environmental studies. Another great public school in my electorate, Ku-ring-gai High School, is absolutely flourishing with the investments that this Government is making.

When I talk about education investment I need to note the maintenance backlog. The Coalition Government inherited a \$1 billion backlog of maintenance in our public schools. I spent all 13 years of my school life in public schools. They were rundown then, and they were rundown at the end of the Labor Government's 16 years. When I go around the public schools in my electorate the first thing that the principals, teachers, P&C presidents or parents say to me is, "Thank you for the great new roofs you put up" or "Thank you for the great toilets that have been refurbished." Turrumurra Public School, Beaumont Road Public School, Turrumurra North Public School and many others in my electorate have enjoyed that investment. Teachers told me when I became an MP in 2015 that every time there was decent rainfall the roof leaked and the kids' work got damaged. It was incredibly disruptive to the education of the children. That is all a distant memory due to what we have been doing to fix up the little but important things in our public schools.

The budget includes a \$10.1 billion investment in health infrastructure. The record of this Government is really quite outstanding with regard to our health infrastructure. I think the number of new and refurbished hospitals in New South Wales will be 75 or more by the end of this term of government. Certainly the people of Ku-ring-gai have been able to see that. The Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital has had massive investments to date and that is ongoing as I speak. Stage one of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital upgrade was a \$121 million investment. It involved the rebuilding of surgical theatres, anaesthetics and recovery from surgery facilities. We have also built a \$19.8 million six-storey car park with over 500 spaces—that is all done.

Stage two, which is a \$265 million investment, is underway. We have already opened part of that investment. I was there when the medical imaging facility was opened. They have fantastic new equipment that the Government has invested in—equipment that was never there before and never available to public patients. I attended the opening of the paediatrics ward. It was very interesting to talk to the medical specialist, paediatrician and head nurse about some of the issues that teenagers are dealing with through the COVID crisis. There is also a robotic pharmacy there that has already been opened. Things still to come in stage two include a refurbished and expanded emergency department; combined intensive care and high-dependency unit; combined respiratory, cardiac and coronary care beds; inpatient units and more. Certainly my community will have a top quality public health facility to look after all their needs whether they are young or old—but, as members know, our seniors use the medical system more than younger people.

Within the budget there is also what can only be described as a massive \$72.2 billion roads and transport infrastructure component. That includes \$9.2 billion for the Sydney Metro to Western Sydney Airport; \$10.4 billion for Sydney Metro West; and \$2.2 billion for the Sydney Gateway project, including linking it with WestConnex. The metro is incredibly important to the North Shore community. It will create more seats on trains for North Shore travellers into the city. Sydney Metro City & Southwest will create a second line along the North Shore from Chatswood to the city and on to Sydenham.

When talking about this massive investment in roads and transport, members need to acknowledge some of the great investment that is happening locally in Ku-ring-gai. I could not help but begin with NorthConnex, which has recently opened. In its 2015 report Infrastructure Australia named Pennant Hills Road as the worst road in the entire Commonwealth of Australia—but you would not know it now. Since the NorthConnex has opened there are tumbleweeds blowing down Pennant Hills Road. The change is absolutely unbelievable. The tunnel itself is a pleasure to drive along, at six minutes from end to end with no stopping. NorthConnex was a \$3 billion investment by the Commonwealth and State governments, and private enterprise.

There has been some concern about whether the NorthConnex has led to more trucks on the Pacific Highway. That does not necessarily make sense because Pennant Hills Road goes in a different direction to the highway. However, a transport department traffic counter on the highway at Warrawee indicates that there are in fact fewer trucks on the Pacific Highway since the NorthConnex opened. I suspect that the community may just be noticing the trucks a little bit more than it has in the past. I seek an extension of time. [*Extension of time*]

I thank the House. The actual counting data, which distinguishes between ordinary vehicles and heavy vehicles, indicates the heavy vehicles have actually decreased on the Pacific Highway and not increased, contrary to what may be public perception. The other very important thing that is happening on the Pacific Highway in my electorate is the \$44.4 million investment currently going on to get rid of bottlenecks going north on the highway from Turrumurra to the M1. Part of these works have been brought forward as part of the COVID Accelerated Infrastructure Fund. The Federal member for Bradfield, the Hon. Paul Fletcher, and I recently went to open part of those works in and around the intersection with Finlay Road near Warrawee Public School. Those works account for only \$1.9 million of the overall \$44.4 million investment. There is another \$24.5 million that is being spent on the Fox Valley Road intersection and another \$18 million being spent on the Redleaf Avenue intersection.

These works will mean three uninterrupted lanes all the way from Turrumurra going north to the M1 expressway. This does away with three significant bottlenecks that have impacted on people travelling north out of Sydney along the Pacific Highway. All of the public service road experts who have briefed me have expressed that making major arteries more efficient takes a burden off our local roads. It is extraordinarily important to make those major arteries as efficient as they can be. Another part of the roads and transport investment in our local area is the lift upgrades to our local railway stations. Since becoming the member for Ku-ring-gai I have fought very hard for those upgrades. It is incredibly important for our seniors, young families with prams and disabled members of the community. When I became the member for Ku-ring-gai, six of our eight railway stations were without lifts and were very difficult for seniors, young families or people with disability to navigate. All six stations now have funding committed to the installation of lifts and modifications to make them more accessible.

Warrawee station is complete. Station upgrades at Wahroonga, Waitara, Pymble, Normanhurst and Killara are in progress and will be delivered progressively during the budget's forward estimates. Other significant budget investments for operating government services include \$26.4 billion for Health to keep us safe during the pandemic; \$16.2 billion for Transport to keep us safe as we move around; and \$19.9 billion on education and schools, which includes free preschool in 2021 for 44,000 children, funding for additional tutoring for school students and mental health support. That is a very popular program, as learning in 2020 was disrupted by the pandemic. So \$337 million, including \$306 million for eligible students in every New South Wales public school, will be spent on a landmark tutoring program where small groups of two to five students are provided with learning support by casual qualified teachers and university tutors. The program begins in term one of this year and will run for all of 2021. The tuition will focus on core content and skills, particularly literacy and numeracy. Schools will be supported to identify students who will benefit from intensive support.

The budget also includes investment in skills and training to unlock opportunity and to get people back to work. That includes 20,000 training places in aged care and social services, as well as support for apprenticeship and trainee programs. My father was in charge of a workshop of tradies at the Hunter District Water Board, as it was then called. Every year he employed apprentices. He told me many stories about the great start in life that he was able to give predominantly young men back in those days, who could get a trade, whether they be a carpenter, painter, plumber, electrician and so on. The budget's commitment of so many funds towards supporting apprenticeships and training programs is an important investment in young people and in the future of our State. The budget includes 10 new Service NSW centres. The budget's heavy focus on job creation is incredibly important.

I mention the Government's COVID response. Many people consider that New South Wales has been the best State in Australia in managing the public health challenges. But it has also been best at doing that while keeping our society and economy open as much as possible. That has been one of the great challenges of our lifetime. It is disappointing that it has not been undertaken with greater bipartisan support from Labor. Many of Labor's attacks on the Government were unnecessary and, frankly, fell on deaf ears with the public. Certainly, Labor's negative attitude is the reason why its political stocks are so low and its leader is on political life support as I speak. It is also the reason that the union movement, which created the Labor Party as its political wing, is at war with the New South Wales Leader of the Opposition. It is impossible to see how the member for Strathfield will survive as the Opposition leader.

The secret of the Government's success has been the leadership of the Premier, in the context of a talented team, who has risen to the COVID challenge. Certainly, it is the role of good government to protect life, liberty and property and to enable the pursuit of happiness. Recent events have been an existential challenge to good government. Through drought, bushfires and now a global pandemic, the Government has risen to the challenge. I trust that through my highlighting of the statewide and local aspects of the budget, the residents of Ku-ring-gai will better understand how the New South Wales Government has been working to keep them safe and secure.

Debate interrupted.

Public Interest Debate

WESTERN SYDNEY AEROTROPOLIS LAND REZONING

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (17:00): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the Government's rezoning of land under the Western Sydney Aerotropolis Precinct Plans and SEPP, and its compulsory acquisition of 26 hectares of land at Orchard Hills for the proposed Sydney Metro station, are causing great financial and emotional uncertainty for hundreds of residents.
- (2) Notes the comments by the member for Mulgoa that the Government's actions are legalised theft.
- (3) Calls on the Government to engage with affected landowners in good faith and to ensure that their concerns are adequately addressed with outcomes that provide them certainty, dignity and respect.

I am delighted yet disappointed that I, on behalf of the Labor Opposition, along with my colleagues Chris Minns and Nick Lalich, have to bring this matter to the House. It is disappointing because the matter goes to the core of what is expected of a good government and of representative governance—representation and a listening ear that this Government has not provided. The motion's call for the Government to address the concerns of affected landowners with outcomes that provide them with certainty, dignity and respect goes to the core of the issue and the frustrations of residents.

The landowners want certainty for their future, their wellbeing and their homes. They deserve and are entitled to dignity in having the Government hear their issues and treat them equitably. That goes to the core of respect. They have not been treated with respect. Quite frankly, the people of Orchard Hills—my colleague Chris Minns will talk more on this matter—have not been treated in the same way that larger, wealthier landowners have been treated. Their concerns about how they will be compensated and the amount of that compensation continue to raise serious questions about this Government's approach.

The area of land that the Government is acquiring appears to be extraordinarily exuberant. The Government has not been clear about what it intends to do with that land. That comes back to certainty: Is this Government simply acquiring the land to sell it off to a developer at another time with a profiteering motivation? The Government must understand that that land is not simply a piece of property for it to profit from; it is people's homes. For many of those people, it is not only their home but also the business from which they earn their living. Many of them, throughout the surrounding lands, have had that land in their family for generations, since the post-World War II migration experienced right across that western Sydney belt.

But we must ask ourselves what the role of government is. It goes to the credibility of a government that will simply go into a community and acquire land for the benefit of its political interests. I put to the House that good governments govern for people. They govern equally; they treat everyone the same and do the best they can to ensure that people's voices are heard. Not one Government Minister has turned up to those community meetings and met with any of those people. To say that people are furious is an understatement. It is grossly inappropriate and goes to the level of unjust actions that we have not seen in this State for years. When we move along to Luddenham, Kemps Creek, Bringelly and Rossmore, we see precinct plans proposed that would see people's land rezoned as basically worthless.

Theo, a resident whose case was well reported in the media, has had his land, which was worth millions, reappraised as worth \$1—not even sellable. No-one wants to go near it. This particular resident's piece of land is his livelihood and superannuation. It is where he has spent the entirety of his life and it is his financial prosperity. I know what members of the Government will say: They will outline the typical political spin of Ministers and conservatives. But on this side of the House we know that it is unjust to acquire land for the Government's interests. It is unjust to rezone land to ensure that residents are squeezed out or, if the land must be acquired, that the Government pays next to nothing for it. If we put ourselves in the position of these local families we too, each and every one of us in this House, would be terribly disappointed. The anxiety it is creating for them is nothing short of inappropriate. They should not have to go through all this.

The reality is that this Government has approached all the acquisitions around Western Sydney Airport and the aerotropolis in a terrible way. I have always believed every approach will determine every outcome. The way the Government has approached this has determined an outcome that has installed anxiety throughout the western Sydney belt to a degree that I feel it simply does not understand. The member for Mulgoa rightly said, "This is legalised theft." I credit her and the member for Camden for fronting the meeting. However, they are members of the Government and the Government must respond. It must put people first, not the profiteering ventures of a greedy Government that treats western Sydney with nothing less than contempt.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (17:08): I am pleased to speak in debate on the motion before the House. These are difficult issues; I do not think anyone is disputing that. Ultimately, in the aerotropolis, the new city of Bradfield and surrounding areas we are seeking to build a grand parkland city to provide more jobs and homes in a growing part of our metropolis on land that has been appropriately supported with the right infrastructure. We must recognise that wherever the constraints do not allow that development to proceed, we make sure that, wherever possible, that land can also be put to productive, alternative use.

In a democratic planning process you will always start by looking at the constraints of land, then the opportunities and the necessary infrastructure required to support it—in this case, an airport, rail lines, roads and utility corridors. You try to ensure that you put it in locations to make it as affordable as possible, recognising that the uplift created by the rezonings will be one of the main instruments you have to pay for the infrastructure that will be necessary to support development on the land that is benefiting from an uplift in value. These are all complex issues. You start by identifying the constraints and the opportunities. You then, quite appropriately, go through a process whereby you put forward plans—yes, visionary to start with and then more granular and detailed as you go through the planning process.

It is important to consult the community the whole way through. As you go through the opening of these processes there will always be a level of land speculation going on. The more detail that is provided, the less room there is for land speculation. Over time that will produce greater certainty, which will moderate land values. That is just the way these processes work. Importantly, in a democratic planning system such as ours it is not appropriate for government to go out and say, "Well, here is a fait accompli—this is the plan and there will be no changes to it." Instead, you go out and demonstrate through technical studies, which are available for people to read, a clear plan of the various uses based on constraints in various areas. You then put that those plans out to the community and ask for the community's feedback.

Obviously there will be a range of strong opinions and the role of the Government is to listen to those opinions and respond appropriately. That is precisely the process that we are engaged in. I noticed a couple of personal reflections from the member for Campbelltown, who suggested that members and Ministers were not prepared to meet with people from the area. I say to the House that I have met with people with strong concerns about a whole range of issues related to the aerotropolis. It is simply not possible to meet with everybody. I note there was a particular meeting organised by Labor, which—whether by accident or design—corresponded with the day that I was required to face an estimates hearing. I literally could not be in two places at once. There has been a process of consultation and more than 800 submissions have been made.

For the benefit of the House, I note that not one submission has been put forward by a member of the Labor Party in this place. That is the democratic process set up under legislation that members opposite voted for to be involved and engaged in these processes. Instead, I note that the member for Mulgoa and the member for Camden have both participated in that democratic process on behalf of their constituents. That process has been established for people to have their say. We will obviously engage compassionately with people whose land is so constrained because of the nature of it, particularly from a flooding perspective—and, let us be honest, the reality of the vast majority of lands that are problematic in terms of rezoning are flood prone. Of course, we will seek to be compassionate in relation to their circumstances.

We will always look to find a way forward so that people can maximise the opportunities to use their land and, where they cannot, to protect their existing uses. Ultimately, we have a responsibility both to people now and

to future generations not to put development in harm's way. That includes not putting housing or extensive development in the middle of flood plains. That is our responsibility and we take it seriously.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (17:13): That was a somewhat insipid response from the Minister, who I respect and like and am used to in this House. But if you are a landowner in Orchard Hills you would be furious with the Government's response. No-one is talking about flood-prone lands along the metro route. That is not the case in Leppington. We are talking about families who have owned this land for, in some cases, 30 years. That land is being rezoned, we think, they think and the media thinks, for development. If this is such a critical and difficult situation for the people of Orchard Hills, why in God's name would the Government be pursuing development on that land with property developers?

This is a very simple issue. Radio 2GB's Jim Wilson has been talking about it nearly daily for months and getting virtually no response from the Government. It is, as the member for Campbelltown said, legalised theft on the part of the Government perpetrated on people who live in Government members' electorates. We made this motion very easy for Government members to support. There is no political posturing, there are no cheap political shots, there is no inflammatory language. We wanted to make this easy for the member for Mulgoa and the member for Camden to support in the interests of their communities, to put their communities before political posturing, before their own political party.

I note that the Opposition questioned the Government yesterday about this very issue and the Premier said in this House, "If any of them"—meaning us or people in the community—"have a suggestion on how to increase probity and transparency, please let us know". It prompted a further question from the Opposition. I asked the Minister for Transport and Roads whether he planned on taking the land via compulsory acquisition and turning it over to property developers to up-zone and build property on. He spoke for five minutes but refused to give an answer. He spoke about the New South Wales Opposition, he spoke about the Government, he spoke about what was on television that night. But he refused to explain to the House and, more crucially, the people of Orchard Hills whether ultimately this land will be acquired by the Government, flipped and sold to property developers.

I imagine this is what a Cuban version of *Renovation Rescue* looks like. The Government comes in, takes the land in a compulsory fashion and then turns it over to property developers to make an enormous windfall. That is what is happening here. It has nothing to do with building on flood plains or with the fair-use processes of the New South Wales Government or with us making a submission to the Government's inquiries. It is about taking family homes from people in western Sydney and then selling them to property developers for them to make millions and millions of dollars. It is not fair and it is not right.

This is the scale of the situation we are facing in Orchard Hills compared to similar projects on the Sydney Metro West. In Westmead the Government is acquiring 1.5 hectares. In Parramatta it is 2.4 hectares, in Sydney Olympic Park, 2.3 hectares, in Burwood North, 1.2 hectares, in Five Dock, one of the smallest, 0.4 hectares. In Orchard Hills it is 26 hectares for a footprint of almost exactly the same size. When a hole is being dug in the eastern suburbs, it is with a spoon, as if it is the excavation of Tutankhamen's tomb. But in western Sydney it is a bulldozer through the front door of someone's house. Why the discrepancy between Orchard Hills, where the Government is nicking 26 hectares of land, and Westmead or Parramatta or Five Dock or the bays, where the Government is acquiring a miniscule footprint?

There is a very simple solution to this. If the Government were being genuine about it, it would be followed. I have spoken to nearly every home owner in Orchard Hills. They have suggested to me that they would be happy to lease their properties to the New South Wales Government if 26 hectares are required as a staging zone. The only caveat is that after construction is finished the land return to them. That is the only fair way of pursuing this, of going forward with this. That is what the landholders want. I assume that is what the local MPs want. It is what the media are clamouring for. Rather than insipid replies from the New South Wales Government, which are really ultimately cynical because everybody knows what is going on in Orchard Hills, tell the people of western Sydney what you are doing with their land. It is their land. It should not be treated with contempt by Ministers of this New South Wales Government.

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (17:18): I move:

That the motion be amended by leaving out all words after "That" with a view to inserting instead:

this House:

- (1) Notes the Government will conduct all compulsory acquisition of land in the Aerotropolis in accordance with the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991 and provide certainty for affected landowners.
- (2) Notes that no member of the Opposition has made a submission or engaged with the formal Aerotropolis planning consultation process.
- (3) Notes the Government continues to engage with affected landowners in good faith to ensure that their concerns are adequately addressed with outcomes that provide them with certainty, dignity and respect.

For over 12 months I have been meeting with local residents and listening to their concerns. Many of these concerns were brought up at a meeting at the Luddenham showground. Since that meeting, I have met with and discussed residents' concerns with the Premier and the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to express my concerns, particularly the uncertainty for residents. I am now confident in this Government providing certainty by the end of this year. To be clear: All land identified for public use will be acquired by the Government under the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991. Land will be acquired for market value to ensure that land will be acquired for the fair amount. The New South Wales Government is delivering the Western Sydney Aerotropolis to be built on the doorstep of the Western Sydney International (Nancy–Bird Walton) Airport. The Aerotropolis is a game-changing project and will drive the creation of 200,000 jobs across Western Parkland City, including my electorate of Camden. Many of these jobs will be high-tech roles in advanced manufacturing, research, science and education.

At the centre of the Aerotropolis will be a thriving city centre, which had been known as the aerotropolis core. Yesterday the Premier and the Minister for Western Sydney announced the city centre will be named "Bradfield" in honour of renowned engineer John Bradfield, who helped to shape Sydney. Bradfield is synonymous with delivering game-changing infrastructure and sets the right tone for the aerotropolis, which will become Australia's first twenty-second century city. The area of land in Bringelly may be paddocks at the moment, but it will be transformed into a thriving, bustling city centre offering the best job opportunities anywhere in Australia.

Bradfield was selected after the western Sydney community was asked to have their say and put forward more than 4,000 suggestions. This was an incredible response and shows just how much interest there is in the aerotropolis project. Of those 4,000 suggestions, almost 800 were unique, and Bradfield itself was nominated several times. This is no surprise, as Bradfield represents New South Wales' aspirations for an innovative, world-class city focused on advanced manufacturing, technology, education and research. As a pioneer in engineering and construction, John Bradfield embodies the New South Wales Government's vision for delivering world-class new industries, better-connected communities, education and training.

To deliver on the vision for Bradfield, the New South Wales Government will build the Advanced Manufacturing Research Facility [AMRF] in the city's centre. The Advanced Manufacturing Research Facility will be a state-of-the-art facility showcasing industry-led innovation and design. It will have flexible space where businesses, industry and Government can work to test great ideas and take them from a concept to reality. We want the facility to build a knowledge and manufacturing capability that will deliver many high-paying skilled jobs to Western Parkland City and show the potential of local businesses and industry. One of the keys to the AMRF's success will be its surroundings. The facility will be at the heart of a growing innovation hub to be based in Bradfield. The hub will also include the CSIRO's new headquarters. And the New South Wales Government has commitments with 18 foundation partners looking to be involved in the aerotropolis, including Hitachi, GE Additive, BAE Systems, Northrop Grumman, Vitex Pharmaceuticals, Australian Space Agency, Siemens and DB Schenker.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (17:23): I thank the member for Campbelltown for bringing this motion before the House. The land at Cecil Hills and the ridge through to Calmsley Hill and down to the Austral brickyard—there is a big ridge running along through there—is some of the best land in Sydney, with 360-degree views of the city and out to the Blue Mountains. You can bet your bottom dollar on there being hotels, wedding reception lounges, coffee shops and walkways right along that ridge in the next 10 to 20 years. That all sounds lovely and nice, but when you know how the Government acquired that land, it is not so nice. The land was compulsorily acquired by the Liberal Askin Government back in the late 1960s and 1970s. As is happening in Orchard Hills at the moment, the signs went up. The landowners said, "LJ Hooker sold, we bought and then Askin moved in and compulsorily acquired the land from us." They held meetings and protests, but to no avail.

The landowners argued, "Why didn't Askin compulsorily acquire the land from LJ Hooker when it owned all the land instead of waiting until it was sold to individual owners?" Askin said that it was for a communications corridor, which we absolutely needed. Those landowners got nowhere near market value for their properties—usually people got the Valuer General's recommended price. We know what the land is used for now. The majority of it was sold by the State Government for private housing and now constitutes the suburbs of Elizabeth Hills and Cecil Hills. The Government made a motza out of it. So much for the Liberals' communications corridor! The same story is playing out in Orchard Hills at this time. Twenty-six hectares is far more land than is required for a train station. Let us hope that the outcome is better this time than it was back in the 1970s.

The same thing happened at Bonnyrigg. Compulsory acquisition was used to take land from farming migrants who came to Australia after World War II. The acquisition was enacted in 1971 and 1972, but the Government did not bother to shift the land title into its name until 1975. In 1975 when the Government came to take over their land the landowners rightfully thought they would be paid the 1975 price and not the 1972 price.

That was not so. The landowners went to court and it was ruled that the Government had the right to pay the 1972 price, not the 1975 price. But owners received a little what I suppose you would call compensation. They got a little interest on the money that the Government should have been paid them in 1972—three years of interest.

Then in the 1980s when the area around my father's property was rezoned to residential, the company Suncorp bought up a lot of the farms. It entered into contracts saying it would give the owners of the land two or three blocks back fully serviced. This was so the owners could pass them on to their sons and daughters. In time, Suncorp did not go ahead with the subdivision and onsold the land to Landcom, a government agency. As we know, Landcom reneged on the contract between Suncorp and the original owners, and just gave the owners two or three blocks back unserviced. It cost the original owners a lot of money to get sewer, water, electricity and telephone services connected to those blocks. So much for the honesty of the State Government at the time! I remind the House that Liberal State governments were responsible for those compulsory acquisitions. Compulsorily acquiring land at the Valuer General's price, or at a price far lower than recommended, seems to be in their DNA.

Neville Wran's Labor Government put legislation in place that governments had to pay fair market value for land that it bought or compulsorily acquired, but it looks like that does not apply to this Government. If governments rezone your land to special purposes, you should get the same money as the owners of adjoining properties would receive as those properties will receive the benefit of what the special use properties will give, whether that be a train station, airport or open space. The whole community benefits, so there should be no loss of property value for the owners of property that is zoned as special use. For the sake of common decency, honesty and integrity, I call upon the Government to meet with the people of Orchard Hills to discuss and examine their situation and their requests. They are not asking for much—just fairness, honesty and decency from this Government. Let us hope those opposite support the motion this afternoon.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (17:28): I thank the member for Campbelltown for the opportunity to speak in this place on matters concerning residents in my electorate. I place on record that the first community consultation event that was organised by the community at Luddenham was held on a Saturday when I was unable to attend, and I provided my apologies. It was then brought to my attention that there was a second such community forum being organised at the behest of the member for Campbelltown. Regrettably, that second community consultation fell on the date and time that the New South Wales Government was holding the NSW Women of the Year Awards at the International Convention Centre, Darling Harbour. Needless to say, once again I was unable to attend. So I contacted the community member who was assisting in organising the second forum and asked them to please shift the time and date so I could attend at least that event. Thankfully, they moved it to the previous day.

At that community forum I spoke on stage along with the member for Camden. I stood there proudly and said that I was employed by the people of Mulgoa to be their advocate, voice and spokesperson in this place for all matters concerning them. I put on record that the Leader of the Opposition was present at that particular event and talked about a parliamentary inquiry. I brought to her attention that she did not need me and the member for Camden to support her in the call for a parliamentary inquiry; the upper House could call for it any time it wished. She chose to ignore me and continued to use this very serious situation that my community is facing—working through all the uncertainty and the anxiety that this process brings—in an attempt to play political games. I was absolutely disgusted with her efforts and said to her on the stage, "Please stop playing political games with my community and just let the upper House move to establish a parliamentary inquiry." So what did we see? The very next day the upper House moved to commence a parliamentary inquiry. I thank members of the upper House.

Again, I put on record that the Leader of the Opposition has been attempting to use this situation for political gain. I find that absolutely distasteful and disingenuous in the face of the serious concerns of my community. I am glad that Opposition members have finally come to the table to discuss this issue, because I have been working with my community, particularly in Orchard Hills, for four years. Labor members have turned up in the past four weeks. Since this matter has hit the metro newspapers and radio, they think, "Here is a good story that we can attach our label to and say that we have stood up for the community on. Rah-rah! Go Labor!" But, no, that is a fail. Where were those members four years ago when I was working to help my community? They were nowhere to be seen. But now they have come to the table, and I am glad they have.

As a government, we have the challenge of creating a second amazing city in western Sydney. It is an amazing opportunity to build a city from the ground up—from nothing, from paddocks and creeks. I love the vision and what we will create in time: the Western Parkland City and opportunities for our people not only in the now but into the future. They will not just get jobs in western Sydney; they will be able to live and have careers there. One of the two key reasons I ran for State Parliament was to be a voice for the people of western Sydney and to ensure they had good quality of life. Western Sydney residents should not have to spend hours commuting to the city. They should have good jobs and careers where they live. The Western Parkland City will go a long

way to providing that. But planning and building a city of that scale and size means there will be change, and change is difficult at times. It brings uncertainty and anxiety.

I say to my community again on the record—as I said last night in this place about jobs and skills coming to western Sydney—that I am their representative in this place and I hear what they say. I speak to many members on a daily basis. I am in contact through SMS or emails on a daily basis. I have read every submission that has been brought to my attention in relation to the aerotropolis precinct plans. I have sat with the Minister today and given him 19 pages summarising individual people's concerns and the impact this is having on an individual basis. I state for the record that I hear their anxiety and know what they are feeling and facing. They have the strongest advocate to stand alongside them during this process. I will not abandon them. I will be their strongest voice in this place.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:33): I appreciate the opportunity to speak in this debate and I acknowledge the member for Campbelltown, who moved the motion. I have a great deal of experience with the issue of compulsory acquisition. As the member for Balmain for the past 10 years or so, I have seen the compulsory acquisition process play out in Haberfield and destroy large areas of that heritage suburb. We have also seen the compulsory acquisitions of a whole range of businesses and local residences. The motion is relatively inoffensive. It talks about the anxiety that people are rightly feeling because their homes and properties are sought to be acquired. It refers to comments by the member for Mulgoa and calls on the Government to engage with affected landowners. It is a completely reasonable, very thoughtful and methodical motion.

I found it more alarming when the Government moved its amendment. The first point in it is that the Government will conduct all compulsory acquisition of land in the aerotropolis in accordance with the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991. That is alarming because it is that Act which has caused such misery, hardship and emotional distress in the community that I represent. I would not be putting that up front, even though it has a nice sounding name, because the reality on the ground is very different. Transport for NSW plays hardball with the residents whose homes are being taken from them. It does not provide the type of generous, relaxed and positive environment that some people may think. It conducts a hard-nosed negotiation in a take-it-or-leave-it fashion. It uses lawyers and engages in brinkmanship. People have to battle for every cent.

A person's home is incredibly valuable and important. When a valuer comes through, ticks boxes and says that their land is only worth so much, it is very confronting. It sounds like a trite statement, but relationships and marriages have broken down because of the stress that acquisitions cause. It is not only about fair value for the land. It is also about stamp duty and the cost of moving, which is only paid lip-service in the Act. People have to fight to get stamp duty so they can move to a comparable property and they have to fight to get moving costs. Those associated expenses are rarely fully taken into account. Of course, with every deal the Government does it puts in an NDA, a non-disclosure agreement. While people are in the middle of warfare trying to get their money, they know that if the matter goes to the court it is all over bar the shouting. They have to stump up \$100,000 to battle it out in court if they think the valuation is not right. They are bullied with the fact that if they go to court, they could lose and the costs could be extreme.

Without alarming people in the aerotropolis part of the world, I highlight to them that the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act is inadequate. That is why I welcomed the parliamentary inquiry. We will be able to hear from residents about exactly what has happened to them but of course many of them have signed NDAs. That is why we have not seen these issues in the news. As soon as people do a deal, they have to sign a confidentiality agreement. The tears and upset do not get to the media because people have to comply with their agreements and if they do not their compensation is threatened. Something very important needs to be addressed here. That is not to mention the issue of hardship acquisitions.

In my community people's homes are so badly impacted that they beg Transport for NSW, "Please buy our home. We can't live here. It has been over a year. My kids can't study. We are living in hotels." The department said that it would pay people to live in hotels and that it would be all right, yet children are studying or trying to sleep with jackhammers next to their homes. People are begging to get their houses acquired. That is a significant problem. The Government needs to amend the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act to provide genuine compensation. Just look at how much more generous other jurisdictions are compared with New South Wales. We are taking their homes, their land and their businesses for goodness sake. We can afford to be generous. Let these projects continue if they have to, but let us be generous and not force people to sign NDAs in order to keep their silence.

There is business land in my electorate currently up for grabs—the old Gillespies Cranes site. The Government did not use that building. What is it going to do with it now? Is it going to be sold? The community wants those buildings for community facilities. It is the least the Government can do. Finally, substratum acquisition has zero market value under this Government. We know that it has an impact, all other things being

equal. People do not want a home that has a substratum acquisition. That issue needs to be dealt with as well. I support the motion before the House.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (17:38): In reply: We will not be supporting the amendment moved by the member for Camden. We feel that it simply displays how out of touch this Government is, how flawed in its conviction it is and how far away it is away from the needs, dreams and aspirations of the communities that are affected. I thank the member for Pittwater, the member for Kogarah, the member for Cabramatta, the member for Camden, the member for Mulgoa and the member for Balmain for their contributions to this public interest debate. In my reply I will refer to a number of matters to correct the record.

The Government amendment states that no member of the Opposition has made a submission or engaged with the formal aerotropolis planning consultation process. What a load of rubbish. We are not landowners around the aerotropolis, but our interest is in fighting for local residents—which is far more than any Government member has done. The member for Mulgoa said that she is their local representative and she is standing up for them. Then she should do that. She is a Government member. She said it was legalised theft. The member for Mulgoa should take it up on behalf of the Government and put these communities first, not the political games of the Liberal Party in New South Wales.

The absolute joke of all of this is in the lap of the New South Wales Liberals. They just do not get that communities do not like them going into town with their bulldozers, knocking their houses over and taking their land—and taking their livelihoods, their wellbeing and their financial futures. Reference was made to the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act. It is broken. For this Government to refer to that and act in accordance with it is one of the greatest problems. We have established an upper House inquiry and we are going to have more to say about that.

The member for Kogarah put it right when he outlined the difference between this Government's focus on wealthy landowners and developers compared with mums, dads, kids and small businesses right across western Sydney. It says a lot about this Government and its priorities that it would give a wealthy landowner and developer higher priority than a local mum and dad, their kids, their grandchildren, the generations before them and the very homes they live in. This Government is flawed in its conviction and devoid of respect. We see it right across western Sydney. This is just another chapter in the betrayal by the New South Wales Liberals that stretches right through Mulgoa and Camden. No matter where we go, we see it every day. Western Sydney knows it and we will not let the Government forget.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes46
Noes40
Majority.....6

AYES

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

NOES

Aitchison, J	Finn, J	Mihailuk, T
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NOES
 Donato, P
 Doyle, T
 Mehan, D (teller)
 Zangari, G

PAIRS
 Berejiklian, G
 Hornery, S

Motion as amended agreed to.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: REFERRAL TO THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I move:

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

- (1) Permit the consideration forthwith at this sitting of the message from the Legislative Council proposing a referral to the Independent Commission Against Corruption and of the following resolution:

"That:

- (1) The Legislative Assembly disagrees with the Legislative Council proposal for a reference to the Independent Commission Against Corruption as set out in its message dated 17 March 2021.
- (2) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council of the resolution."
- (2) Provide for the following speaking time limits:
- (a) mover – 10 minutes;
- (b) one Opposition member – 10 minutes each;
- (c) one Cross Bench member in favour of the motion – 10 minutes;
- (d) one Cross Bench member against the motion – 10 minutes; and
- (e) mover in reply – 3 minutes.
- (3) Provide for the resumption of any interrupted item of business at the conclusion of the debate.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (16:04): The Opposition agrees with the suspension of standing orders.

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

Motion agreed to.

Motions

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Reference

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council regarding a referral to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. In accordance with the suspension of standing and sessional orders, the message will be considered forthwith.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (18:05): I move:

- (1) That the Legislative Assembly disagrees with the Legislative Council proposal for a reference to the Independent Commission Against Corruption as set out in its message dated 17 March 2021.
- (2) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council of the resolution.

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

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: A referral of a member of Parliament to the Independent Commission Against Corruption is certainly not a trivial thing. It is not an opportunity for vexatious or partisan attacks on one's opponents. A referral by both Houses of Parliament commits the taxpayer resources of the ICAC without any discretion by ICAC on the matter. Labor talks about the importance of the independence of ICAC, but does not want it to act independently as evidenced by its motion. Until this disgraceful Opposition's referral to ICAC, referrals were a relatively rare thing in both Houses of Parliament. The only time in recent memory was when both Houses of Parliament referred Eddie Obeid and Ian Macdonald to ICAC, and that was some years ago.

A reference by both Houses to the ICAC has particular legal consequences. Under section 10 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act any person can make a complaint to the commission. Referrals to ICAC by members of the public can be assessed as unworthy by ICAC under section 20 of the Act, and the commission can decide not to conduct or continue or to discontinue its investigation. But a matter referred by both Houses of Parliament must be investigated by ICAC under sections 20 and 73 of the Act, and must result in the preparation of a report under section 74. ICAC cannot refuse to investigate a reference from both Houses of Parliament, no matter how frivolous, no matter how ill advised and no matter how politically motivated a motion may be, as is the Legislative Council ICAC referral motion that we are debating today.

The referral by the upper House does not come from any sense of necessity or evidence. In every respect the Premier has answered openly and truthfully the question that was put to her. I will go to the substance of the matter, which is very important. The sealing of the State's regional highway network has been a longstanding project of the New South Wales Government and that includes major investments in Far West New South Wales on projects such as the sealing of the Cobb and Silver City highways. Work on sealing the Cobb Highway has been underway since the early 1980s and the completion of the works has been a particular priority of the National Party. Sealing the last 170 kilometres of the Silver City and Cobb highways will see improved freight access and increased flood immunity, supporting regional development and road safety. Funding priorities are a matter for the relevant Minister; in this case it was the then roads Minister. There is wide support for the sealing of the Cobb and Silver City highways. Recommendation 12 of the Legislative Council report into economic and social development in central western New South Wales was unanimously passed by the Liberals, Labor, The Nationals and the Christian Democratic Party. Recommendation 12 states:

That the Minister for Roads develop a planning schedule to complete the sealing of the Cobb and Silver City Highways as soon as practicable.

At the 2014 Western Division Councils of NSW annual conference the then National Party roads Minister, Duncan Gay, advised that the sealing of the Cobb and Silver City highways was a priority—a move that was widely supported by delegates at the conference. The sealing of the Cobb and Silver City highways is ahead of schedule and due to be completed in 2022. The Labor Party seems to have a bizarre conspiracy theory about how Country Garden got the route of the M9 Outer Sydney Orbital from Daryl Maguire and also that Mr Maguire got that information via unknown, illegitimate sources. But let us actually go to some facts—not that Labor ever allows facts to get in the way of anything. The M9's final designed route and the route that appears in Country Garden's submission to the Greater Sydney Commission, though similar, are not the same; the differences are material.

The land that was bought up by Country Garden is a natural choke point between the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute to the east and Razorback to the west. For those who do not know, Razorback is a series of steep ridges, the summit of which formed the spine of the Old Hume Highway. It is an utterly unsuitable location for a modern motorway to be built. The Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute is New South Wales' leading biosecurity facility. I am not a biologist, but I would hazard a guess that putting a motorway through a biosecurity facility is not sound road design. The information about the broad corridor was not secret; it appeared on page 10 of the September 2017 report by Infrastructure Australia entitled *Corridor Protection: Planning and investing for the long term*. Even at that stage the familiar north-west-north route in the Cawdor area was apparent. If you are coming north from Douglas Park the only way that makes any sense is the route that bisects the area between Razorback and the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute. But it cannot continue north because the road would run into a heritage preservation area, Sydney University farms and eventually Camden. It must turn west and then north again to keep tracking towards Cobbitty.

You do not need secret information to know where the road is going to go; you just need to be able to read a map, understand topography and have a bit of common sense—which disqualifies Labor Party members. That is presumably what Country Garden did: It looked for a natural choke point that constrained the alignment of the M9 and then it bought up a monopoly land bank position in that area. The proposed referral to ICAC is a bizarre conspiracy theory from Labor. It is delusional and it is a sign of how desperate Labor has become. It is seeking any diversion from the leadership crisis that is engulfing the Leader of the Opposition. The Chief Transport Planner for Transport for NSW, Tim Raimond, said in budget estimates:

... quite a bit of information about the route of the Outer Sydney Orbital was in the public domain. Indeed, as well as the 2015 study area that was in the public domain, in October 2017 both the Future Transport Strategy and the Greater Sydney Region Plan were released to the public in draft. They both contain a high-level alignment for the Outer Sydney Orbital. It was actually in response to one of those documents that the media article has been raised.

Later Mr Raimond said:

The route that was exhibited in March is similar, but it is not the same as that [Country Garden] route. I think, fairly obviously, the reason it is similar—if you know that area around Cawdor—it is highly constrained. To the south of our alignment is the Razorback range. To the north of our alignment is a heritage estate. There is a road in between, which is Finns Road. Pretty much, the only way

you can get through that area is that site. It should not have surprised anybody that that is where the Sydney orbital would have to go if it was going to reach the Hume Highway.

This is a complete slam dunk of a crazy Labor conspiracy theory. This motion is more than unfortunate; it really is a disgrace. It is vexatious and utterly without foundation. It is not grounded on any evidence of wrongdoing but instead on a series of unsustainable theories which are unworthy of this Parliament. Labor was lamentable in estimates and now it seeks to hide its embarrassment by bringing this massive try-on to the House. It is an extremely serious matter to refer any member to ICAC and it should not be done lightly or for trivial reasons, but we have before us a motion from the upper House the sole purpose of which is to embroil ICAC in a pool of petty partisan politics. It is unbecoming of a member of Parliament.

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

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: If this Parliament is to have any respect from the community, I encourage the members of this House to support my motion and not make this trivial referral to ICAC. It will bring this Parliament into disrepute and waste the resources of ICAC, which those opposite pretend they care so much about.

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (18:15:5): Let me start by saying that there is nothing trivial about a referral to ICAC involving the Premier. In fact we take this matter very seriously, which is why it has passed through the upper House and is now here. To be honest, if the Premier had absolutely nothing to hide, she would support this motion. Then again, if she had nothing to hide, she would have answered those questions truthfully and in a fulsome way at budget estimates. She did not, which is why the referral to ICAC is occurring. This motion covers two separate issues and I want to go through both of them because it is important, given the seriousness of the referral that we are seeking, that we explain those issues in full.

The first relates to a meeting that nobody but the Premier can explain. On 17 November 2016, during her time as Treasurer, the Premier met with Daryl Maguire and some western New South Wales councillors to discuss the Cobb Highway. The member opposite would have us believe that this is about the sealing of and work on the Cobb Highway, but it is not. It absolutely is not, and to put that up as the excuse is simply not truthful. This is about a meeting that was held where neither the local MPs for Barwon or Murray were present. The highway goes right through their electorates. We know that there is no record of that meeting with the roads Minister, the Deputy Premier or the Premier's predecessor, Mike Baird. We also know that the Cobb Highway goes nowhere near the electorate of Wagga Wagga.

It does not go within 100 kilometres of Wagga Wagga. It has nothing to do with the parliamentary duties of Daryl Maguire, yet he organised the meeting and he was in the meeting. He had no reason whatsoever to take an interest in the Cobb Highway. Daryl Maguire also owns two properties in Ivanhoe. He bought the first one a month before that strange meeting with the Premier. After that meeting funding for the Cobb Highway was escalated. Some months later he told the Premier that he wanted to turn his Ivanhoe properties into Airbnbs, and we know that because of recorded conversations from ICAC. The Premier knew that Daryl Maguire wanted to make money off a property just off the Cobb Highway. She knew that he had lobbied her to fund the Cobb Highway. She knew that the Cobb Highway had nothing at all to do with his role as the member for Wagga Wagga.

She knew that he had been disgraced at ICAC for using his position as an MP to make money for himself in places a long way from Wagga Wagga and she never said a word about it. There was no disclosure, no declaration and no reporting to ICAC, and we got no answers at budget estimates. Then there is Cawdor and the property developer with the predictive powers of Nostradamus. We know that Daryl Maguire started advising Country Garden sometime in 2014 or 2015. We know that in December 2016 it began buying up land around Cawdor and that a year later it owned 364 hectares. We know that in December 2017, in a submission to the Greater Sydney Commission's Greater Sydney 2056 plan, Country Garden said:

Based on the information available, the current alignment of the M9 Orbital will pass through the north-east corner of the site ...

What we do not know is how it was so sure of that, because the corridor for the M9 Outer Sydney Orbital was not announced until March 2018. Sure enough, when it was announced, it passed through the north-east corner of the Country Garden site. How did Country Garden know that? By February 2018 at the latest, the Premier knew that Daryl Maguire was engaged in business dealings with Country Garden. We can be sure of that because Mr Maguire told her in a telephone call recorded by ICAC. The Premier did not ask, "What is Country Garden?" in that phone call. She did not ask because she already knew what Country Garden was. She already knew that Country Garden was a client of Daryl Maguire and that he wanted to make money by helping it.

Between April and June 2018 she chaired meetings about the route of the Outer Sydney Orbital with then roads Minister Melinda Pavey, transport Minister Andrew Constance, then member for Wollondilly Jai Rowell and then member for Camden Chris Patterson. She never declared a conflict of interest in that meeting. She did not disclose it. She had an obligation to disclose her conflict of interest. She never mentioned that she was in

a relationship with someone whose client owned a huge chunk of land right along the corridor. Just as she did with the Cobb Highway, she kept her head down and kept quiet. She did not fulfil her obligations as the Premier or as an MP in this place. In 2018 an official at Transport for NSW wrote in an email to himself:

OSO – Chinese investor buying up land – who has been talking to who...what MPs being briefed, how did Darryl McGuire get that info.

At budget estimates we asked the Premier this question: How did Daryl Maguire or Country Garden get that information? As usual, we got no answers, so we make this referral to ICAC because there are some serious questions that the Premier needs to answer. She had every opportunity to do that at budget estimates and she did not. The Premier wants us to believe that the Cobb Highway issue is a matter of a road being upgraded. Yes, the Cobb Highway is a road that the National Party has supported the upgrade of for a long time. Labor has supported it as well; it goes back to the 1980s. But the fact is that it has nothing to do with the sealing, maintenance or upgrading of that road. It has everything to do with a meeting the Premier had which Daryl Maguire was present in. Two MPs whose electorates were impacted were not in that meeting and Daryl Maguire had properties that he was going to benefit from. Everything screams, "Conflict of interest!" Everything screams, "There is a big issue here!" If you connect the dots, it says, "This is a matter that stinks. This is a matter involving the Premier of New South Wales that benefited her partner."

We make this referral on top of other matters before the Independent Commission Against Corruption. I have gone through the matters at Cawdor and I have gone through the matter relating to the Cobb Highway; we all know the matters that are currently before the Independent Commission Against Corruption. During the last sitting I spoke about the fact that the Premier stood there and said, "If you know something, you should report it to ICAC." That is what she said. Every time I watch that video I cannot get over the bald-faced lie she told in this place. "If you know something, you should report it to ICAC." She knew everything! She knew everything and she did not report it ICAC, which is why it is incumbent on members to report these matters to ICAC. That is the obligation each and every one of us have when we walk into this House.

We know that the Premier knew exactly what Daryl Maguire was doing. The telephone conversations that were recorded occurred a long time before the Canterbury City Council inquiry happened. When ICAC investigated and Daryl Maguire was exposed and was asked to leave the Parliament, she already knew everything. She knew everything that is included in the motion that we are putting before the House, yet those opposite will not support it. The Premier will not even come into the House to defend herself because she knows there is a very significant and serious issue with the way she has managed her partnership with Daryl Maguire.

We believe in integrity on this side of the House. We have put a number of integrity measures before the House; I will second read a speech on a bill this week, which will be the fifth such measure. We are a party that believes in integrity. We believe in letting the sun shine in. We believe in transparency. It is critically important to this place that those members opposite do, too. If they did, they would support this motion. This is not about us bringing a frivolous motion to the House—I think those were the words of the member for Ku-ring-gai. This is a really serious motion that has passed one House of this Parliament, and which we are now seeking to have pass through this House.

If members on the opposite side of the House were serious about this they would not have a backbencher debate this motion. They would have a Minister or the Leader of the House stand in this Chamber and defend the Premier. However, the fact is that not one of them wants to stand here and defend the Premier because they know what she has done. They know there will be an adverse finding against her at the Independent Commission Against Corruption. They know that this Premier cannot survive this scandal, and they know that they do not want to stand in this Chamber and have their name and face attached to this corruption—and that is what it is.

The proposed referral made by us to the Independent Commission Against Corruption does carry weight if both Houses pass it. I say to the member for Ku-ring-gai that such a referral is not a waste of taxpayers' money. It is what taxpayers, residents and citizens of this State expect: that we do our jobs, that we stand for integrity, and that we do what is responsible and what we are obliged to do, which is to report this to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. I seek the support of those members opposite to ensure that this happens.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (18:26): I thank the Leader of the House for the opportunity that the crossbench members have to speak to this motion. As members know, The Greens have sometimes voted in favour of censure motions regarding this Government and sometimes against. On this matter, we will be supporting the referral to ICAC. We take this very seriously. We genuinely weigh up the issues because we know it is something put to us that we need to take carefully. In general, our principle is that we would prefer investigation rather than not.

We also believe that it is not our job as members to satisfy sections 8 or 9 of the ICAC Act. The member for Ku-ring-gai put forward a similar argument to the previous motion moved in this House regarding a referral

motion from the other place. It is our view that it is not our job to satisfy those elements in the Act. More than that, it is exactly why we have the ICAC. The ICAC has the capacity to do things and gain insight that members of Parliament and normal citizens cannot. Because of its corruption-fighting powers it is the right organisation to address this issue. That is why we believe the matter should be referred. Let the ICAC get on and do its work and investigate.

The issue has been raised that it would be a waste of ICAC's resources. This is exactly why we argue so hard that ICAC should have sufficient funding: that it should not be an impost on the ICAC to have a look at a matter that the Parliament has determined is something that should be considered. ICAC should be able to pick that up quickly and run with it, undertaking an investigation using wisely the resources that it has. It should have the capacity to be able to take this on. In our view, the use of resources by ICAC should not be something this House considers. We should be using a different test; whether or not it costs money should not be part of the equation.

We will be supporting this referral because we think it is important that the view of the upper House is reflected in our decision-making. The Government knows that the referral will not be supported by this House—we understand that—but we need to be addressing it as though it would and making our decision based on the information before us. We have set a test and we believe that test has been satisfied. We do not believe the resources that are required to undertake this review should be significant to us when making our decision. We think that members are not here to investigate. That is what ICAC is for, and it can be taken from there. We support the referral.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (18:29): In reply: Frankly, what we have heard from the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Balmain does not justify a referral to ICAC. In fact, when they said they opposed the motion all their arguments in substance were supportive of what I put. Under section 10 of the ICAC Act any individual can make a referral to ICAC. ICAC can then exercise its independent discretion to establish whether the referral is trivial and vexatious, as I said it was, or to assess whether the limp arguments against what I put have some substance.

The member for Balmain said nothing about the substance of the matters at all. The Leader of the Opposition did not really say anything against the proposition that the Cobb Highway has been a longstanding policy of the Government. She did not say anything against that, but relied on conspiracy theories and meetings. With regard to Cawdor, she said nothing against the fact that the topography suggested that it was the natural place. Indeed, she used the same words that the Hon. Mark Latham used in the upper House, that it was some act of Nostradamus. All members know that Mark Latham has this creepy obsession with the Premier's former relationship with Daryl Maguire. The fact that the Leader of the Opposition is using exactly the same language as the Hon. Mark Latham suggests that she has been infected by the same creepiness. There has been nothing said in substance to persuade any fair-minded member of this House that my motion should be opposed.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury will remain silent.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I ask that members be cognisant of the fact that any referral under section 10 of the ICAC Act can be investigated if ICAC, in its independent discretion, believes that it should. But a referral by both Houses of Parliament is not justified in this matter because the evidence relied upon by the Leader of the Opposition is so trivial that one should give ICAC the discretion as to whether it investigates or not—which is what it has now. There is no reason to compel ICAC to investigate these very trivial and ridiculous conspiracy theories by Labor.

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

The House divided.

Ayes46
 Noes40
 Majority.....6

AYES

Anderson, K
 Ayres, S
 Barilaro, J
 Bromhead, S
 Clancy, J
 Conolly, K
 Constance, A

Gulaptis, C
 Hancock, S
 Hazzard, B
 Henskens, A
 Johnsen, M
 Kean, M
 Lee, G

Roberts, A
 Saunders, D
 Sidgreaves, P
 Singh, G
 Smith, N
 Speakman, M
 Stokes, R

AYES

Cooke, S (teller)	Lindsay, W	Taylor, M
Coure, M	Marshall, A	Toole, P
Crouch, A (teller)	Pavey, M	Tuckerman, W
Davies, T	Perrottet, D	Upton, G
Dominello, V	Petinos, E	Ward, G
Elliott, D	Piper, G	Williams, L
Evans, L	Preston, R	Williams, R
Gibbons, M	Provest, G	Wilson, F
Griffin, J		

NOES

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

PAIRS

Berejiklian, G

Hornery, S

Motion agreed to.*Private Members' Statements***SOUTH COAST PRODUCTIVITY BOOTCAMP**

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (18:40): On Tuesday 23 February I was pleased to joined the Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, and my colleague and friend member for South Coast, Shelley Hancock, at the official opening of the South Coast Productivity Bootcamp in Norfolk Avenue, South Nowra. Young people who want to develop trade skills are encouraged to sign up for the first Productivity Bootcamp in the South Coast region, which is all about jobs and skills. I am pleased that our Government has committed \$1.2 million to establish the local boot camp, which will offer up to 100 training places to young people. We know that young people are concerned about a post-COVID-19 economy. That is why the New South Wales Government is committed to providing access to training opportunities and creating more jobs.

The Productivity Bootcamp will provide participants in the South Coast region with intensive, hands-on training to increase their job prospects, particularly in construction. With a record number of construction projects planned over the next decade, upskilling today's youth will ensure a pipeline of skilled workers to meet the demands of those projects and help local young people find those work opportunities. Whether it is the Berry to Bomaderry upgrade or the Albion Park Rail bike path, under this Government we have seen construction work opportunities for apprentices, young Aboriginal people and trainees getting their first start, their first go, on local infrastructure—local young people building local infrastructure, developing legacies for the future. In fact, last week I visited the Bundanon Trust where a number of local people, including local Aboriginal young people, are getting their first chance to work on a major infrastructure project—a new gallery at Riversdale as part of the Bundanon estate. That is another example of New South Wales Government dollars backing New South Wales regional young people in my community.

Participants in the boot camp will gain valuable, trade-related skills at a time when training forms a key part of our State's COVID recovery plan. In addition to trade skills, boot camp participants will develop attributes

critical to employment success, like reliability, communication and teamwork—which the Opposition could learn something from. The practical training on offer in this program is an investment in the future that promotes optimism and builds resilience in our local young people. The program provides a transformative eight-week intensive course that arms young people with the skills and attitudes needed to be a successful employee. At the 2019 election, the New South Wales Government committed to delivering two additional Productivity Bootcamps in western Sydney and on the South Coast. In October 2020 the Campbelltown Productivity Bootcamp opened. On 15 March the South Coast Productivity Bootcamp commenced. It is based in my electorate in South Nowra.

I acknowledge Rebecca Embleton, Director, Productivity Bootcamp; Paul Breen, Director, Productivity Bootcamp; Kieran Duffy, Executive Director, Productivity Force; Darren Cocks, former Chief Operating Officer, Business Australia; Stephen Cartwright, former CEO, Business Australia; Anthony Body, Director, Illawarra Shoalhaven, Department of Regional NSW; Nola Watson, Acting CEO, Business Australia; Stephen Dunshea, CEO, Shoalhaven City Council; Adam Zarth, Executive Director, Illawarra Business Chamber; Glenn Fairweather, Illawarra YES Coordinator, Illawarra Business Chamber; Marianne Jones, Economic Development Officer, Shoalhaven City Council; Stuart McKechnie, Senior Project Officer, Infrastructure Skills Legacy Program, Transport for NSW; Andrew Craig, Workforce Participation and Training Manager, Fulton Hogan; Judith Field, Communities Manager, Lendlease; Paul Goodwin, Project Manager, Regional Development Australia, South Coast; David McCormack, Program Manager, Campbell Page; Natalie Turmine, CEO, Campbell Page; Hollie Bowling, Site Manager, Campbell Page; Sandra Grey, Local Jobs task force, Department of Education, Skills and Employment; Lauren Noble, Transition to Work Manager, Mission Australia; Linda Hawkins, School-Business Partnership Manager, Workplace Learning Shoalhaven; and Matthew Glass, graduate of Productivity Bootcamp, now a second-year electrical apprentice with Productivity Bootcamp. It was wonderful to meet him, in particular.

With a record number of construction projects planned over the next decade, upskilling today's youth will also ensure a pipeline of skilled workers to meet the demands of these projects. The New South Wales Government is committed to initiatives such as the Productivity Bootcamp program which will help individuals and communities train and upskill to expand their job options. Just as importantly, they develop the attributes critical to employment success, as I mentioned earlier. I am also extremely pleased that this will open up 100 new Bootcamp employment training places, which is a major boost for our Shoalhaven region to address the skills shortage. It does not matter whether it has been investments in State infrastructure or, indeed, the Illawarra Youth Employment Strategy, or YES, which I piloted as the Parliamentary Secretary. This Government is investing in real opportunities, real jobs and changing real lives for regional young people.

WATERLOO PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATE

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (18:45): The sorry saga of the New South Wales Government's plan to privatise and redevelop Waterloo's public housing estate drags on for yet another year. My community knows that since the plans were first announced in 2015 I have repeatedly expressed the view that neither I nor the Labor Opposition will ever countenance evicting 3,000 public housing tenants, many of whom are elderly and have lived in Waterloo most of their lives, just to hand the land over to property developers in a fire sale. It is disgraceful and driven solely by the profit motive and developer greed. The wholesale eviction and demolition of vital public housing in the inner city is disgraceful. I have never and will never stand for it. Last month *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported that the planning Minister, for whom I normally have high regard, warned:

... he will intervene within weeks if a stand-off between the City of Sydney and the state's social housing agency ... is not resolved urgently ...

The nature of the disagreement is not about density—both proposals are incredibly and equally dense—but about the commercial viability of the plans. The State is wedded to plans for outrageous skyscrapers because it no doubt figures that developers will pay more to build taller towers. As with everything this Government does, it is just about making a quid. The Minister has now threatened to take back control of the project and hand it to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment if the debate cannot be resolved. That would be a cowardly U-turn. The Labor Party's position and 2019 election commitment was to give planning powers back to the City of Sydney Council because it was best placed to guide the redevelopment of some areas of Waterloo in the medium term. Minister Stokes relented after that election and did the same. He now threatens to reverse his own decision.

Labor committed to give planning powers back to that community through the council, a commitment that may sound familiar to the Minister because that was what the Liberal-Nationals Party promised to New South Wales when seeking election in 2011. That promise is long broken. The City of Sydney has gone about salvaging some decent planning outcomes while trying to maintain social, affordable and First Nations housing for the area. Astonishingly even those plans are denser than anywhere in the adjoining Green Square urban renewal area, an area denser than anywhere in Hong Kong or New York. A redeveloped Waterloo would be the densest neighbourhood in the Southern Hemisphere. What I find really contemptible about this saga is that the only thing

these plans are about is handing over valuable public land to the private sector. People are being lured in with the promises of more public housing or housing especially for Indigenous Australians decades down the track, which may never materialise.

Redfern and Waterloo retain special significance for Aboriginal Australians as the birthplace of the Aboriginal civil rights movement and a place of immense cultural and historical importance. Since the arrival of Europeans at Sydney Cove in 1788 Aboriginal people have been driven and even hunted from their land. Now they are just priced out—just look at what has happened to The Block. Gentrification is the new weapon. If people really want to know what the Government's intentions are, I can reveal that Minister Pavey has threatened to simply sell all the land off if the City of Sydney Council continues to insist on 50 per cent social, affordable and Aboriginal housing. You do not just sell land without vacant possession. The threat is clear and it makes me sick to the stomach. On the tenth anniversary of the Government's election I say to Minister Stokes: Adhere to your promises, give planning controls back to communities through their councils and keep the greedy hands of property developers off Waterloo.

RSPCA YAGOONA

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (18:49): The future of the Liverpool Animal Shelter is always uncertain as there is often talk of sending the animals to Blacktown instead of looking after them locally. This chopping and changing causes a great deal of angst for our area. Thankfully, the RSPCA at Yagoona is consistent and near enough to the Holsworthy electorate that locals find it a helpful place to take an animal in need or to adopt a pet. The Hon. Shelley Hancock, Minister for Local Government, Wendy Lindsay, the member for East Hills, and I have visited RSPCA Yagoona a few times now. Each time more construction has been completed and it is looking incredible.

I take the opportunity to thank Mr Steve Coleman, RSPCA NSW CEO, for hosting us again. On our first visit in June 2019 we announced \$12 million for RSPCA NSW to undertake a heap of upgrades. I noticed that the facility had not changed much from when I visited for the first time as a five-year-old. The facility had aged but our standards of care for animals and for their volunteers and staff have also become paramount. An upgrade to the kennel and cattery facilities, as well as an increase in the capacity for educational, training and community programs, were therefore greatly needed.

During our visit we saw the construction and some completed new facilities, and the Minister announced that RSPCA shelters would be receiving a further \$10.5 million from the Government to improve their centres across New South Wales. It is important for them to be up to scratch so that our furry friends have a safe place to stay. The funding will also assist them to expand. RSPCA centres take in around 30,000 animals each year so expanding facilities will mean they can offer shelter, assistance and a comfortable environment to more animals during their stay. Yagoona will be able to construct a dog playground, other shelters across the State will benefit from veterinary hospital upgrades and others will receive cattery upgrades all thanks to this investment. It will also boost the RSPCA's bushfire emergency response infrastructure, including emergency response centres in Sydney and Katoomba. Those upgrades will also help boost the local economies with construction and works supporting local builders and contractors.

The RSPCA also provides support and education to communities across the State in responsible pet ownership and animal welfare. The work it does in helping to protect animals is amazing, and its adoption and fostering programs are a great success. I mentioned earlier my first ever visit to the RSPCA as a five-year-old. I was proud as punch to leave with Ginger Megs, a boy cat who needed a place to call home. I am so grateful to the RSPCA for pairing me with my little mate. Each time I visit, my office has a running joke: Do not let her come home with a cat. But on my latest trip they told me about fostering.

My staff member Sophie, who was supposed to be in charge of me, was a little bit weak and so I left with a baby kitten. He will live with us for four weeks until he is old enough to be adopted to a forever home. Because I had to go to the office after the visit, he came with us and made himself comfortable, alternating between sleeping under Sophie's desk or up on my shoulder. Like my first cat, he is a ginger tabby, and my girls have decided to name him Chocolate—naturally, because they love both chocolate and the new baby kitten. I think he is as sweet as chocolate too.

While I am determined that he will just be with us for four weeks, no-one believes me and they think I will give in and keep him forever. But I am determined to raise him to be ready to make another family happy. Hopefully by then I will have him toilet trained. I know that they will find him to be playful and to love company. He races into the bedroom to say hello every morning and likes to sneakily follow the kids to their bedroom so he can stay with them each night. My kids were begging for a pet but are not quite old enough for the full-time responsibility so I have found that fostering is a perfect way to make a difference to the life of an animal. It also has the benefit of teaching my kids how to care for an animal and how to be careful around one. I can see us

fostering again in the future. Fostering through the RSPCA has been a fabulous process. It was awesome in providing cat bowls, litter, litter tray and food, and will help with his worming and vaccination if needed.

It made it a smooth process and I encourage everyone to open up their homes, as it really does make you feel good to help free up space at the RSPCA and to give a little one like Chocolate a great start in life. I thank the Minister for Local Government and the New South Wales Government for supporting the RSPCA. Its work stopping cruelty to animals and finding loving homes is important. This funding boost highlights the New South Wales Government's ongoing commitment to supporting animal shelters across the State as well as the welfare of the animals themselves. I am pleased that the Government is putting more funding into modern, more comfortable shelters so that more and more animals can be cared for, and the staff and volunteers will also have the opportunity to work in much better conditions and facilities as well. I look forward to visiting again in the future and hearing all about how Chocolate has progressed.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN MILLER, OAM

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:55): It is with deep sadness that I update the House on the passing of a great man and a legend of the Hawkesbury region, Mr John Miller, OAM. John passed away on Friday 12 March 2021 at the age of 91. He was a passionate local who consistently fought for the betterment of Hawkesbury and its people even until his last moments. I was very fortunate to have him call me on the day that he was admitted to hospital for the last time. It was as if he knew that he was not ever returning home. John was short of breath as he spoke to me but relentless in his advocacy to ensure the third river crossing between Richmond and North Richmond was progressing and to reinforce his commitment to raising the Warragamba Dam wall. He wanted me to tell Dom—referring to the New South Wales Treasurer, Dominic Perrottet—about that too. John was born on 14 April 1929, the same year as my mum, and arrived in the Hawkesbury in 1955 to farm orchard fruit and vegetables.

After seven floods he moved to higher ground in the Hills and grew mushrooms, although his love for the Hawkesbury had him return to the area he would consider home and devote his whole life to protecting. John was a very active person for years in the Australian Mushroom Growers' Association and he worked very hard to have local mushroom farmers supported. He promoted the use of locally grown mushrooms and united farmers across the country. As chief executive officer of the association in the 1970s, he played a vital role in the establishment of a research facility at Rydalmere to improve productivity for local farms. John also successfully pushed to have Australia host the first 1981 International Farmers Conference. In 1986 John joined the Hawkesbury State Emergency Service and held the role of chief warden for 10 years and served as a radio operator during major floods in that time. His devotion to protecting Hawkesbury from floods played a major and leading role in our current ability to detect and respond to the threat of floods. As chief warden, he enlisted 250 wardens with local knowledge to establish an early flood-warning network.

He also helped establish a community flood education session in all major towns for residents. In 1986 John was appointed as the social secretary of the Hawkesbury Historical Society and he wrote many books about iconic Hawkesbury historical figures such as Sister Julia Bligh Johnston, who served in the Boer War and World War I. He also wrote a very comprehensive history of mushroom farming in the Hawkesbury region, which he himself was a big part of. John was strongly committed to having people develop a greater understanding of both Aboriginal and European history and heritage across Hawkesbury. In 1996 he trained young people as guides for the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service to develop a greater understanding of the heritage in the area. John went on to win the golden award for tourism and was appointed an ambassador for Hawkesbury by Hawkesbury City Council. In the mid-1990s John established a community group to advocate for the State Government to raise the Warragamba Dam wall, an issue that was close to his heart up until his final moments. He also had a strong focus on improving evacuation routes to allow early evacuation of residents to avoid being cut off by flood waters.

John always looked out for the vulnerable and did everything he could to protect them. He would strongly express his concern about the dangers traffic-related matters posed to vulnerable people and would consistently follow up resolutions to such dangers. He also strongly advocated for the construction of a centre for excellence in aged and dementia care as well as respite accommodation for Hawkesbury's aging population. In 2018 John received the Medal of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for his service to the community of Hawkesbury. John was a very respectful man whose love of Hawkesbury and its people was mirrored by the respect he showed when discussing his positions on any matter. All of his viewpoints were always centred not on self-interest but the protection and betterment of the community. John had an extensive knowledge of the history of Hawkesbury and documented this so that future generations would benefit.

John was married to Beryl for 68 years. He openly and unashamedly expressed his love and devotion for her. They lived in Richmond and I watched him cater for their aging needs as Beryl transitioned from home to aged care and then to a nursing home where they were both side by side. He will be sadly missed, although his amazing legacy for Hawkesbury is ongoing. From heritage to flood mitigation and mushroom-growing to tourism,

John's influence has left its mark in so many memorable ways. To the family, his wife, Beryl, their children Annette, Ken and Robyn, his seven grandchildren and six great grandchildren, I offer my sympathy but also my thanks for the generosity they have shown over the years when John championed a cause and they were there to support him as well. I say rest in peace, John. He will be missed.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:00): We are all well aware of what has been in the media recently regarding sexual assault, what has happened in Federal Parliament as well as the shocking public disclosures of what has been happening in high schools across our country. Former Sydney student Chanel Contos has become a household name in recent weeks. Her petition calling for better consent education in Australian schools has attracted almost 36,500 signatures in three weeks and her website has been flooded with more than 3,000 testimonies of sexual assault from current and former school students. What does this tell us? It tells us that we have a real crisis on our hands.

What kind of society have we become when sexual violence is so prevalent? I commend and thank Chanel for her wisdom, courage and determination to set the wheels in motion to bring about essential, long-overdue change. Her voice and the voices of all those who have shared their stories thus far have shone a blinding spotlight on this scourge in our society, showing us that the time to make amends is now. The uncomfortable reality of what is happening in our schools, homes, streets and society as a whole is now part of an important national conversation. In 2019 the NSW Women's Alliance called for the prevention of gender-based violence to be a key priority in New South Wales secondary schools. It said:

Whole school respectful relationships education programs help students, staff, parents and community members to understand the drivers of gender-based violence and how they can change their attitudes and behaviours to prevent violence.

The New South Wales Government has been talking up its ongoing once-in-a-generation curriculum review, but it has failed to present us with a plan that addresses the issues of harassment, rape and sexual assault in our schools or in our parliaments. I say in this place that NSW Labor demands action. We will not accept anything less than a holistic, comprehensive and in-depth review that tackles head-on the challenges of teaching consent and brings about real reform in our school curriculum. I thank my NSW Labor colleagues, Marjorie O'Neill, Prue Car and Jihad Dib, in particular for leading the way with me in pushing for this most crucial of reforms. This cannot become an issue that saturates our headlines for a week or two and then fades into the background.

Programs already exist today, such as Love Bites and Social and Safe, that embrace early intervention strategies that discuss healthy relationships, consent, rape and domestic violence. The task of achieving better, age-appropriate consent education in Australian schools is not impossible. It is far from it. It will require a collaborative, bipartisan approach. A student in my electorate, 14-year-old Alice, shared something with me recently after discussions at home and amongst her friends about what has been in the media of late. She is 14. This is an excerpt from what she wrote:

I want to run until my legs make me stop and my lungs catch a breath of fresh air. I want to lie in the grass for so long that my skin feels itchy afterwards. But as a young woman I know never to walk alone or to show too much, just in case. So would I run for fun or out of fear? Would I lie in the grass to appreciate the world we live in, or would I have been pushed to the ground, full of fear? How do I prepare myself for what might happen? What struck me most after reading that is that here is a young woman who is yet to experience a relationship or fall in love, but already she has learned to fear. What has become of our society when young women have an expectation that sexual assault could very well happen to them? They expect it. That is shocking. I want to talk about a comment that was left on my Facebook page recently, too. I said:

Every one of us must be part of changing gendered violence.

All of us.

Every one of us has a responsibility to call out the horrors of violence, of sexual assault, harassment, rape.

I received lots of positive support, but one comment said:

... We have become a weak insipid, society that has been fuelled by feminist propropaganda brigade.

I want to say a couple more significant things. First, I believe Nicki Scott. Stand strong, sister. Justice will be served. Second, I acknowledge and thank the many good men and boys who exist in this world—those seeking change just as much as their daughters and their wives, their sisters and their mothers. I thank my remarkable sons in particular for being the next generation of change. Finally, for the feminist propaganda brigade—if that badge means I am a woman who dedicates her life to advocating for the equal rights of women and girls everywhere, if it means I can do something to help shape a world where women live free from violence and discrimination, and if it means we can raise a generation of girls who do not grow up to expect that sexual harassment or domestic violence or rape is something they will one day endure—I wear that badge with the deepest of pride and steely determination.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN MILLER, OAM

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (19:05): I echo the sentiments expressed by my colleague the member for Hawkesbury and honour the extraordinary life of John Miller, the man dubbed "the Ambassador for Hawkesbury", who died last Friday at the age of 91. I also offer my sincere condolences to John's wife, Beryl, and all of his friends and family who mourn his loss. For those who have spent any significant amount of time living or working in the Hawkesbury region, the name John Miller will be very familiar. If members look up the definition of "community spirit" in the dictionary, they might well find a picture of John. Reporting the news of his death, the *Hawkesbury Gazette* called John one of Hawkesbury's "most passionate and proudest citizens"—and he was. As the former member for Hawkesbury I had the pleasure of getting to know John very well and it is my great privilege today to share with the House a few details of John's life, a life of service to his family and to his community.

John was born in Matraville in 1929. His strong sense of community spirit was evident from a young age. He was a boy scout—a sea scout—and although he was too young to serve in the Second World War John still found ways to contribute, collecting scrap metals to be used in the manufacture of army equipment. A farmer's son, John followed in his father's footsteps. He began with a farm in Seven Hills and later acquired a dairy farm at Eastern Creek, supplying milk to the local community. But he would rise to prominence as a successful Hawkesbury mushroom farmer and an active member of the Australian Mushroom Growers' Association, of which he was made a lifelong honorary member in 1971. John turned to mushroom farming after the devastating Hawkesbury floods of 1956, when his farm was flooded seven times in a year and every crop destroyed.

After moving to the Hills area for a period, John's love of the Hawkesbury region got the better of him and he settled back there with his family. John's experience with flooding inspired him to join the Hawkesbury SES, where he was instrumental in setting up an early flood warning network. He later became chief warden and by his example and powers of persuasion signed up hundreds of new members in his time. John was never content to just react to local challenges; he always wanted to get to the root of a problem and find a solution. That made him a powerful, patient and persistent campaigner for change that would benefit the local community—from raising the Warragamba Dam wall to building a new river crossing in Richmond. I received dozens and dozens of letters and phone calls from John and had many meetings with him, and he always made his case respectfully and persuasively.

John's commitment to his community went far deeper than just campaigning for infrastructure. He understood that community is a rich tapestry with many threads. From sport to the arts to history and the natural environment, John offered up his talents for the benefit of others. In Parramatta he was a member of the musical comedy society and he refereed every grade for the Parramatta rugby league club, which made him an honorary life member. He ran historical tours of Windsor and four-wheel drive tours of the Hawkesbury Valley. He wrote books about the history of mushroom farming in the Hawkesbury and documented the history of Hawkesbury war heroes. He championed better care for the elderly and for those suffering from dementia, a reflection of his desire to help those most in need. But all of this barely scratches the surface. John was such a prolific contributor to the community that in 2018 his doctor ordered him to take a step back for fear that he might not live to see his ninetieth birthday. I was very pleased to nominate John for the Medal of the Order of Australia, which he was awarded in 2018—a deserving honour in recognition of a life of service.

John's seemingly endless capacity to serve those around him reflects his great strength of character. John was renowned by all who knew him for his integrity, generosity, warmth and proactive, can-do outlook that led to positive change. He ruffled a few feathers in his time, but even those who disagreed with him were impressed by his respectful and kind demeanour. What struck you above all about John was his deep and enduring love for his family and especially Beryl, his beloved wife of almost 70 years. In the weeks before his passing John told my friend the member for Hawkesbury that although he knew the end was approaching, his only concern was that his wife, Beryl, would be okay. I am told that in John's final moments, Beryl was there by his side and gave him a kiss just moments before he departed this life. John will be missed dearly by his family and by his community, but his legacy will be forever woven into the fabric of Hawkesbury. To Beryl, John and Beryl's children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, please accept our deepest sympathy and condolences. Vale, John. May he rest in peace.

REGIONAL MEDIA

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (19:10): Just over 18 months ago I stood in this Chamber and spoke about the loss to regional news across the State with the announcement that WIN had decided to close four regional newsrooms. That decision impacted 35 to 40 staff and saw talented professionals leave our communities. This week our regional media has suffered another blow, with Channel 9 announcing its Nine News local bulletin will cease. The hardworking journalists in its regional newsrooms across this State, Queensland and Victoria will be made redundant on 30 June. My electorate is superbly serviced by two local Nine News bureaus; Nine News Central West and Nine News Riverina. The journalists and camera operators in those newsrooms have gone above

and beyond to cover news stories in our communities, no matter how far, and we have worked closely together to publicise important stories they have been unable to travel to. The idea that they will no longer be reporting on stories that matter to our communities is devastating.

I particularly thank Naomi Avery and Will Murray, who have steered their teams in the Central West and Riverina with care and diligence. It is not the only recent loss to regional media in my electorate. Since 1928 the *West Wyalong Advocate* has kept the community informed about the issues affecting them, sharing local stories and giving local businesses a space to advertise. Its previous incarnation, *The Wyalong Advocate and Mining, Agricultural and Pastoral Gazette*, began in 1900. Sadly, the Advocate has not published an edition so far in 2021. The paper is not gone and there is still hope that it will be back. It is my sincere wish that the talented staff at the Advocate, under the experienced leadership of Heather Vearing, can soon return to their important work of keeping the community informed.

We have also lost important community papers in Cootamundra and Junee with the *Cootamundra Herald* and the *Southern Cross*. There is no information on whether the *Cootamundra Herald* or the *Southern Cross* will return as print publications. The *Cootamundra Herald* has been serving the community since 1877, with the Junee *Southern Cross* dating from a similar period. Both ceased to be printed publications during the COVID-19 shutdown last March. While websites for the papers are still being updated, digital editions have not been published for months. Sadly, Cootamundra-based journalist Tom Gosling has decided to retire. I thank him for his years of vigorous reporting.

Local media is vital for telling the stories of our local communities and ensuring the issues that matter are heard. They are on the scene and have stepped up to cover events in times of crisis, like last summer's bushfires. Like many other members in this Chamber, I have had my fair share of memorable moments with local media. They are there to keep us on our toes, asking the questions that matter. They are the fourth estate in our democracy and are vital in ensuring that people are properly informed, a role never more crucial than in the world of fake news and echo chambers we find ourselves in.

In my experience, very few journalists and publishers are motivated by greed. Instead what drives them is a desire to do good, to seek the truth and to find the issues that matter to their communities. Journalism is a profession embarked upon by the idealistic, the curious and the communicators, many of whom cut their teeth in our regional newsrooms. The announcement from Nine is a huge loss for local jobs but also for the future of metropolitan newsrooms, which so often rely on the training grounds of our regions for new staff or trustworthy reporters on the scene. I thank all the camera operators, the journalists and the editors who have shared the stories of the people of the Cootamundra electorate, and I join with many others in expressing my sadness. I thank them for the early-morning starts, for coming out to remote locations, for keeping me accountable and for their professionalism. They will be sorely missed in our communities.

SUMMER HILL BOARDING HOUSE DEVELOPMENTS

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (19:15): Last week hundreds of local residents gathered in Summer Hill to express their concerns about the proposal to build a 105-room boarding house development at 55 to 63 Smith Street, Summer Hill. This is just the latest in a long line of boarding house developments proposed in our area. Residents are concerned about this proposal having very little to do with increasing the availability and quality of affordable housing in the inner west and just being another cash grab by developers trying to make a buck off the back of people in housing distress and exploiting a loophole in the New South Wales planning system. We know that delivering more affordable housing is critical to building healthy, diverse and vibrant communities. Boarding houses provide important options for people experiencing housing insecurity; however, they can expose residents to exploitation and exacerbate the other pressures they may face. In this space I acknowledge the very important work of the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre's Boarding House Outreach program, which supports boarding house tenants across the inner west every day.

The issue is that, in many cases, the boarding house developments currently before our councils are not actually boarding houses but rather shoebox apartments no bigger than jail cells, without rent controls or other oversight to ensure they are housing the people who need the most support. Communities across Greater Sydney hold serious concerns regarding the quality of housing provided through backdoor planning provisions overseen by the Government. Even conservative councils have called out this situation. Hills Shire mayor Michelle Byrne has described developers' moves to approve boarding house developments as "doing sneaky things". Michael Regan, mayor of the northern beaches, has described the State Government's rules governing boarding house developments as "a horror". I note reports on the weekend saying, following the very good work of the member for Coogee, that these developments contribute to freezing out essential workers from the city, with apartments priced well above what is affordable for frontline workers such as our teachers, nurses, cleaners and emergency service workers.

I acknowledge that the Government has taken steps to address many of these issues through the design of the new Housing Diversity State Environmental Planning Policy [SEPP], but it will not fix what has already been built in communities across our city. Nor will the new SEPP address the fact that developers are rushing to gain approval for these high-density blocks before changes to the SEPP come into effect, including at 55 to 63 Smith Street in Summer Hill. It is just another example of a developer proposing high-density apartments while avoiding the usual requirements to invest in community infrastructure, with little or no requirement for the housing to be actually affordable.

The Smith Street development proposes replacing prime industrial land with a high-density housing block with next to no common space, no green space and very little internal open space. It does not retain any retail or employment opportunities currently available on the site. The apartments proposed are incredibly small, with many only marginally larger than the national minimum standard for a two-person jail cell. What is most disappointing is that these apartments will not actually be affordable. There will be no maximum cap on rental prices. In fact, they are likely to be rented at market value as studios. Most would consider that affordable housing would be operated by good community-housing providers, of which we have many across the inner west, but these apartments will actually be managed by real estate agents LJ Hooker.

The application should be rejected because it erodes the stock of employment lands in the inner west, it inappropriately applies the SEPP guidelines and, most importantly, it fails the residents it proposes to house. While the community eagerly awaits more certainty around the Housing Diversity SEPP, it is critical that we do not allow rushed, substandard applications to sail through under the current planning instrument. The Minister must act to close the developers' back door to high-density apartments not just in the future but right now.

I also challenge the Government to act now to improve housing affordability for the most vulnerable in our community. That should include mandating inclusionary zoning targets in new developments. The Government should abolish no-fault evictions, giving tenants critical protections. The Government should follow the Victorian Government's lead and build more public social housing. We have to stop the sale of existing public housing, including in Glebe. We need urgent action to stem the rising number of older women facing homelessness in our State. The Government must properly regulate boarding houses and ensure that developments under the new SEPP meet community expectations and actually serve the people who live in them.

HUNTER REGION ECONOMY

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (19:20): The Hunter region has been the engine room of the New South Wales economy. The Hunter region contributes over \$55 billion annually to the gross regional product of the New South Wales economy, with coal exported through the Port of Newcastle contributing almost \$24 billion of this. The Hunter region has the largest regional economy in Australia, ranking above the whole of Tasmania, ranking above the whole of the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. In fact, the Hunter region contributes more than one-quarter of the total economic output of New South Wales each year. However, in the Hunter region a slow-burning crisis is underway, a crisis that has been coming for many years, to which this Government must turn its attention because it owes the people of the Hunter.

The Hunter region is facing massive economic and structural change being driven by a rapidly decarbonising world, which will impact coalmining, power generation, industry, investment and jobs in the Hunter region, and people and businesses in my electorate of Charlestown. The Hunter community is not the first to face structural change. The people of the Hunter are accustomed to disruption, as you know, Mr Temporary Speaker. The closure of BHP's Newcastle steelworks in 1999 is still held in the collective memory of my constituents in the broader Hunter community. Many of those former steelworkers reskilled and retrained, often using TAFE to assist. However, many never worked again. The Hunter community faces a new challenge, bringing change and uncertainty as the world acts to do what it must do in order to reduce carbon pollution and as renewable energy sources provide cheaper sources of power.

Supporting the Hunter community when it comes to responding to this looming and major structural change is incumbent on the New South Wales Government. Generation after generation of Hunter families have worked in mining, power generation and related industries. The people of the Hunter have provided the labour on which this State has prospered. The people of the Hunter, with unions and local environment groups and Labor Environment Action Network, have formed the Hunter Jobs Alliance. I congratulate the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, the Electrical Trades Union, the United Workers' Union, which is my union, the Australian Services Union, Community and Public Sector Union, National Tertiary Education Union, Teachers Federation, the Independent Education Union, the Nurses and Midwives' Association, Labor Environment Action Network, the Lock the Gate alliance, Hunter Community Environment Centre and the Nature Conservation Council for identifying the commonalities of purpose among their organisations and coming together to create the alliance.

The Hunter Jobs Alliance aims to create a future for the Hunter region with full employment, good jobs, and a thriving and healthy living environment, with a stable climate and renewable prosperity. The Electricity Infrastructure Investment Bill we dealt with last year was a step in the right direction. Thanks go to Minister Kean for working collaboratively on this and agreeing to Labor's amendments to include the Hunter region as a renewable energy zone. But this bill is not the end of the story: There is much more work to be done, and much, much more the Government can do. The Hunter Jobs Alliance calls for four things: firstly, the establishment of a local collaborative statutory body to support the community in adjusting to structural change; secondly, a public investment commitment, including the ongoing allocation of dividends from the NSW Generations Fund; thirdly, the delivery and funding of a set of evidence-based actions to support workers and communities and attract job-creating investment into the region; and, fourthly, the development of a standard creating clear expectations of companies undertaking large-scale closure and retrenchments in the Hunter region.

While traditional mining and manufacturing jobs are declining in the region, jobs in what have been seen traditionally as caring roles—jobs in areas such as aged care, early childhood education, health and nursing—are on the rise. There is an opportunity for the Government to play a role in recalibrating the way that those roles are recognised and remunerated, thus expanding the range of jobs that could be seen as attractive as our regional economy restructures. I acknowledge that may not occur immediately but it would certainly increase the pool of good jobs that are available to counter the decline in the Hunter's traditional industries.

A failure by the New South Wales Government to be proactive will be at the expense of not only the people of the Hunter but the New South Wales economy. The Government must not abandon those communities that have given so much. Instead it must work with them to find solutions to meet the inevitable challenges that lie ahead as not only the Hunter but the world responds to the urgent need to reduce carbon emissions in order to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. I sincerely hope the Government works with the Hunter Jobs Alliance to deal with the transition as it occurs.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I concur with much of what the member for Charlestown has said and I appreciate the sentiment about structural change for the Hunter with BHP. That does still resonate so I thank you.

MRS RASHA DANIEL

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (19:25): I congratulate Fairfield West resident Mrs Rasha Daniel on her 2021 Fairfield Local Woman of the Year award. Rasha is a founding partner and the driving force behind the Food Angel relief program, which is a not-for-profit organisation within the Good Samaritan Aid Society. Food Angel provides fresh food hampers at minimal cost to those in the Fairfield community who are in need of support. That is a huge task as the need for assistance of this type in the Fairfield community is extremely high. She also lends her support to members of our community in many other ways. Rasha is a devoted member of Christ The Good Shepherd Church in Wakeley. She has been volunteering and assisting those in need for the past 15 years. When Rasha came to Australia in 2002 she spoke no English and had to leave her family behind in Iraq. Although heartbroken at being separated from her family, Rasha rose to the challenge. Not only did she adjust to life in Australia but she was eager to help others to do the same.

Rasha began her studies in social services and progressed to helping women in need to find volunteer work in order to increase their community mindedness and to improve their own self-esteem. She began by volunteering with the Immigrant Women's Health Service, where she ran English-speaking programs for refugee women. Women not only learned English in those classes but they were also encouraged to speak about their hardships and struggles both in their homeland and in Australia. Rasha's advice as a professional psychologist, combined with her kindness and sympathetic ear, helped a lot of women to realise that their struggles were not unique and that help was at hand to support them. Rasha then moved on to become a complex needs officer with the Non-English Speaking Women's Housing Scheme, where she supported women who were suffering from or who were at risk of domestic violence. She has also supported refugees who are adjusting to life in Australia by lending assistance with housing and Centrelink matters.

Rasha currently works with the Liverpool Volunteer Resource Centre and she has developed a partnership with the Food Angel relief program. Volunteers may take part in the hamper program by lending their services to that wonderful and very necessary initiative for the Fairfield area. Rasha advises that there is a twofold benefit to that collaboration: Volunteering is a wonderful way to combat depression, and helping to prepare much-needed supplies improves a volunteer's self-worth and community spirit—not to mention the advantages of the community working together to make things happen and to ease hardship. As well as her devotion to our community, Rasha is a loving wife, and mother to three children. When asked how she manages to combine her dedication to her family and to the wider community, Rasha simply says, "God," and attributes her energy and dedication to divine inspiration.

Rasha is a valued member of the Fairfield community. She has assisted many refugees to settle into the Australian way of life and she has helped them to acquire the necessary skills for completing tasks such as catching public transport and opening a bank account—not to mention her mammoth effort with Food Angel, the running of which is a full-time job. Though she professes to spend three days a week dealing with the Food Angel relief program, we all know that it takes up much more of her time. Patient and serene, Rasha is a woman who can never say no to a person in need. In the past she and her husband, Joe, have even hosted people in their own home when they have needed a place to stay. She is self-motivated and driven, and it is easy to see why the community is in awe of her accomplishments and why her personality drives people toward her. Indeed, Rasha is a role model for the many women who come into contact with her. A keen listener, she exudes humility and understanding, which makes her a person who others trust implicitly.

Rasha's contact with others is a lifelong thing. On many occasions women who Rasha once assisted when they first arrived in Australia return to her for a sympathetic ear and for advice, which Rasha is more than happy to provide. Rasha Daniel's nomination for NSW Woman of the Year is well deserved. Once again I offer my sincere congratulations on such an achievement. Rasha is our 2021 Fairfield Local Woman of the Year and we are immensely proud of her. I look forward to continuing a working relationship with Rasha and the Food Angel relief program for many years to come.

KOALA POPULATIONS AND HABITAT

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (19:31): I congratulate Deputy Premier John Barilaro, planning Minister Rob Stokes and environment Minister Matt Kean on arriving at a sensible decision regarding the State Environmental Planning Policy (Koala Habitat Protection), or the Koala SEPP as it is now known. I love koalas just like everybody else and I believe the revamped koala policy does in fact do what it set out to do, which is to protect koalas. Just as importantly, it does not unfairly target our rural industries such as farming and private native forestry. Those industries employ thousands of locals in the regions and boost our local economy. They are the mainstay of our regional communities.

I received numerous emails and phone calls from farmers, rural landowners, people in the timber industry and many people who work on the land who were concerned about the impact that the draft SEPP would have on them personally and on their industry. They were concerned that the SEPP was just another layer of red tape that would burden farmers and other rural industries, require them to carry out ecological studies for minor works and prevent them from carrying out their routine daily activities. Let us not forget that those industries provide the food and fibre that we need on a daily basis. They provide the timber that we use in housing construction and furniture manufacturing. Those are the same industries that have suffered through the worst drought in living memory. We held fundraisers to support our farmers and we bought bales of hay for them, but once they had their heads above water it seemed as though we were going to kick them under again with more bureaucracy and red tape.

The irony is that we have koalas in the region because those industries have protected them for the past 200 years. They have had protocols in place to protect our native fauna for decades and they do an incredible job of protecting our biodiversity. In fact the foresters and the timber industry did such a great job of managing our State forests that Bob Carr decided to convert the forests into national parks. Surely they would not have been converted into national parks if they were mismanaged or denuded—no, their ecosystem was thriving because of the sustainable way in which they were managed. I dare say that the policy of locking up national parks, blocking fire trails with locked gates and minimising hazard reduction burns to a bare minimum has not been an effective way of managing our national estate.

With the introduction of the draft SEPP it seemed to me that we were making the same poor policy decisions on managing our national estate that we have made in the past—policy decisions that were, in my opinion, fundamentally flawed. They contributed to millions of hectares of bushland and farmland being burnt to a cinder and also to the deaths of billions of native fauna species. I felt very strongly about the impact that the SEPP would have on my electorate, and I heard those same feelings expressed loud and clear from longstanding rural landowners, farmers, foresters, people from the timber industry and people who have made an incredible contribution to my community—people whom I respect. I gave them a commitment that I would not support that SEPP and that I could not be part of a government that would be responsible for destroying rural businesses, throwing country workers on the scrap heap and killing regional communities.

This was such a significant issue for my electorate that I had to draw a line in the sand. I could not stand by and see regional communities and livelihoods decimated. I advised them that my only recourse against a poor policy decision of Government was to go to the crossbench. I had no intention of bringing down the Government. This is a good Government led by a great leader. I think the world of the Premier, but this was a poor policy decision and I wanted to make a stand for my community. After all, that is my first priority and should be our first priority. What I am most proud of is that our leader, John Barilaro, and all my colleagues felt exactly the same

way. We all stood tall for our farmers, timber industry, rural landholders and all those other rural industries unfairly targeted by the SEPP. We stood up for our communities first and foremost. The net result is a much better policy for koalas and for farmers. This is a sensible policy and another example of why we need The Nationals in government.

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY SAINT JOSEPHINE BAKHITA CAMPUS

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (19:35): On 12 March this year the new Australian Catholic University campus at Blacktown, the Saint Josephine Bakhita Campus, was blessed by the Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen, Bishop of Parramatta, and officially opened by the Hon. Alan Tudge, Federal Minister for Education and Youth. This is an important development for that part of western Sydney, bringing university education closer to many families who may not have previously had a family member access higher education. I acknowledge the role played by Blacktown City Council, and by the member for Blacktown while he was the mayor, in facilitating this development. On the occasion, the ACU Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Zlatko Skrbis, said, "Standing at the cultural and geographical heart of Blacktown, we want to be partners and collaborators, to lead this community forward into a confident future."

Sister Melissa Dwyer, Provincial Superior of the Canossian Australia Delegation, expressed her hope that the Josephine Bakhita Campus of the Australian Catholic University may be a true university of mercy, of inclusion, and of hope, inspiring young minds and hearts to dream of a common future beyond that which seems possible. His Grace Anthony Fisher, Archbishop of Sydney, read a message of congratulations from Pope Francis commemorating the occasion. Some of the courses being offered at the university campus in Blacktown will include Bachelor degrees in Arts and Education, Exercise and Sports Science, High Performance Sport, Midwifery, Nursing, Commerce and Law; a Masters degree in Teaching; a Graduate Certificate in Religious Education; a Graduate Certificate in Philosophy (Healthcare Ethics) and in Theological Studies; and a Masters of Religious Education and Theological Studies. This is a great start for a new university campus in Blacktown offering a great range of courses for people in that part of the world.

The university campus is named after Saint Josephine Bakhita, patron saint of Sudan and of the survivors of human trafficking. I will spend a few moments providing a bit of background about her. She was born around 1869 in Darfur in western Sudan, a member of the Daju people. When she was about eight years old, she was seized by Arab slave traders. She was bought and sold several times. Some of her owners were cruel, others less so. She ended up being owned by an Italian couple who took her back to their home near Venice. While she was there she spent some time with the Canossian Sisters in Venice and that connection was an important one for her future. There, Bakhita encountered Christianity for the first time. She recalled, "Those holy mothers introduced me to that God who from childhood I had felt in my heart without knowing who He was." When, in 1889, the Italian couple tried to take her back to Sudan, Bakhita refused to go. An Italian court ruled that, because the British had outlawed slavery in Sudan before her birth and because Italian law had never recognised slavery as legal, Bakhita had never legally been a slave. For the first time in her life, she found herself free. She chose to remain with the Canossian sisters.

In 1890 Bakhita was baptised. Later she joined the Canossian Sisters, taking her vows. In 1902 she was assigned to the convent at Schio, in the northern Italian province of Vicenza, where she spent the rest of her life. During her 42 years there, Bakhita was employed as a cook, sacristan and doorkeeper, and was in frequent contact with the local community. Her gentleness, calming voice, and ever-present smile became well known to local people. She died in 1947. A young student had once asked Bakhita, "What would you do if you were to meet your captors?" Without hesitation she responded, "If I were to meet those who kidnapped me, and even those who tortured me, I would kneel and kiss their hands. For, if these things had not happened, I would not have been a Christian and a religious today." In 2000 she was canonised as Saint Josephine Bakhita. She is venerated as a modern African saint, and as a statement against the brutal history of slavery. As I have acknowledged, she has been adopted as the patron saint of Sudan and human trafficking survivors. She is a great example for the brand-new campus of the Australian Catholic University at Blacktown. I hope she inspires many people to live a life of goodness and to meet the needs of those who are really disadvantaged.

COFFS HARBOUR ELECTORATE STORM

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (19:39): I refer to a terrible storm that occurred in my electorate on the night of 24 and the morning of 25 February. The storm hit the areas of Corindi, Upper Corindi and the Sherwood Creek Road area, as well as the Nana Glen and Glenreagh areas. The storm dumped somewhere between 270 millimetres and 400 millimetres in a few short hours. It was the equivalent in one valley of a dam bursting where 20,000 megalitres of water pass through a creek not much wider than this Chamber. The most severe storm impacts that hit our community were in the dark in the early hours of the morning. By morning light the water had dissipated leaving a trail of destruction. It is estimated that the damage bill will run into the tens of

millions of dollars, if not the low hundreds of millions of dollars. Dozens of homes were impacted. Some will have to be torn down and rebuilt, such was the impact.

Families survived the ordeal by standing on tables watching their possessions float away—a lifetime of work and saving floating away down the creeks. People awoke that morning with knee-high water in their bedrooms. They were obviously fearful for their children and their safety, with so much water in their households. One farmer got up in the morning at 2 o'clock. Hearing the rain he went to go check on the young family next door. Driving through the flood waters, as you are not supposed to do, he was very lucky that his Land Cruiser was pinned up against the power pole and he was rescued by the SES the next morning. Two truck drivers who were on their way to Brisbane at 3.30 a.m. were very fortunate to escape when water rose above their bonnets. The bonnets were over two metres tall. You can imagine driving down the highway and all of a sudden being hit by two metres of water.

Early that morning we also experienced a freight train derailment of a 1.5 kilometre long freight train with three locomotives at the front, which derailed at Morrows Road at Nana Glen. The first 16 carriages were concertinaed and the rain was so heavy that the nearby neighbours did not hear the train derailing. But we had luck on our side in this event, in some respect. There was no loss of life. The train drivers escaped with minor injuries. The train was also carrying dangerous goods, but it was fortunate that those carriages were at the back of the train and did not derail. More generally, while there was a massive loss of and damage to property, there was no loss of life. The damage is very extensive. Dozens of homes have been damaged beyond repair. Some homes have had all of their possessions damaged and tens of kilometres of fences are down. We have also seen millions of dollars of damage to some horticultural properties where tractors were washed away, irrigation pipes were ripped out of the ground and a 270,000 litre water tank floated away.

Some of the other damage was unforeseen and unexpected. With fences down between private properties in the national park, we had brumbies coming in from the national park fighting with pet horses and all the associated damage that that can cause. There are reports of insurance companies not playing ball. However, one of the silver linings in this tragedy is that the community has come together to support each other. I know I will not get to everyone, but I want to single out a few people—Sheridan-Lee Motbey, Michelle Hanson, Fiona Hayes and all the rest of the Corindi community who helped distribute meals, appliances, clothes and furniture to those who needed it, and the dozens of restaurants and cafes that delivered cooked meals to the Corindi Beach RFS shed, where Sheridan and the team were able to distribute them.

A special mention must also go to the SES. For the past month or so the SES has been on high alert. They have had to perform dozens of rescues, putting their own lives at risk rescuing people, repairing roofs and making sure the people are okay. They do their job in absolutely terrible conditions. Today, as the community looks ahead to the weekend with apprehension, the forecast is for more heavy rain and flash flooding. I know that the SES is on high alert. Finally, I call on the insurance companies to do right by their customers. A lot of people dig deep to insure their homes and properties, and it is not right that insurance companies sometimes mess around with the description of what might be a flood or a storm. At the end of the day, people pay money for peace of mind and it is being eroded by the behaviour of some insurance companies. I call on them to do the right thing by their customers.

WOLLONGONG TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (19:44): I thank the member for Coffs Harbour for updating us on what has happened in his community. I wish everyone who has been impacted by the floods well. In Wollongong we know all too well the difficulties you can have with insurance companies in times like that. I once again acquaint the House with the transport infrastructure challenges facing the third-largest city in New South Wales, and its connections to Sydney and south-west Sydney. I have spoken about these issues on many occasions since I was first elected to this place. I acknowledge that the Government has in the past addressed some of those deficiencies in the regularity of services and rolling stock, but only once extreme political pressure was applied by me and my parliamentary colleagues, acting on behalf of thousands of Illawarra commuters.

Adding a few extra carriages on a couple of services does not make a transport system. Wollongong commuters have had to battle the Government for a decade to get the transport infrastructure and services that a large city with one of the largest commuter populations in the State deserves. Yet after a decade under the Government, it is like waiting for a train that will never arrive. Even the commencement of work on Unanderra station is not on time. After a decade of the Government resisting community pressure to build lifts at a station that only has access via 72 stairs, the battle continues. In last November's budget the first funds for the upgrade were allocated—a decade, mind you, after the Government and in fact the current Premier took away the funds allocated by the previous Labor Government.

A tender process was promised to be completed by the end of last year. It was not. It was promised for early this year; that deadline has been missed too. The most recent update is that a contract will be awarded "in the coming weeks". The Government promised that work would be scheduled to start mid this year and end mid to late next year. I will hold the Minister for Transport and Roads accountable for that pledge; the so-called "coming weeks" cannot come soon enough. I am determined to see the lifts built and I will not let up on the Government until we have three lifts at Unanderra station operating fully. While we wait for an upgraded Unanderra station, the rest of the commuting population from Wollongong and Illawarra stations waits too. They are literally last in line for the New Intercity Fleet carriages.

The New Intercity Fleet rolling stock are imported through Port Kembla, unloaded from ships and then trucked to Sydney. It is worth reminding the House that those trains could have been built in Unanderra, had the Government been interested in taking advantage of the manufacturing capability and skilled workforce of the Illawarra region. Instead, knowing the price of everything and the value of nothing, the New South Wales Liberals and The Nationals shipped those manufacturing jobs overseas, ignoring local job opportunities. Wollongong and Illawarra commuters were to start riding the New Intercity Fleet later this year. It was promised—until the Government quietly changed the timetable to sometime in 2022. We have delayed construction, delays to new rolling stock and the ongoing delayed release of the McNaughton report into a fast rail future for the Sydney, Wollongong and Nowra corridor.

The Government has been sitting on that report for a long time. I note that a recent newspaper article suggested that it had not yet even been to Cabinet. I made an application for access to the McNaughton report under the Government Information (Public Access) Act. Given the admission that the report had not gone to Cabinet, I figured the Government would have no problem releasing it. It turns out the Government did have a problem releasing it. My application was rejected yesterday, citing that the report was Cabinet information. It has not been anywhere near the Cabinet room, but we get knocked back because it is Cabinet information. That continues the decade-long tendency to hide, obfuscate, lie and keep secret the reports that the Government commissions on the authority of taxpayers.

I am interested in the McNaughton report's findings and recommendations because with faster rail, commuters could travel from Sydney to Wollongong in an hour, down from the current one hour and 25 minutes. The report remains a secret and it should not be. I call on the Minister to publicly release the McNaughton report so that we can see and judge its conclusions and recommendations for ourselves. While it is at it, the Government should also release any plans it has to untangle the spaghetti of rail tracks at the Unanderra-Coniston junction, and plans for the duplication of track south of Unanderra station that would allow more services to be provided to cater for the more than 50,000 people who will soon call West Dapto home. The Government need not be reminded of the time line for the strangulation of the South Coast line.

The freight task in the Illawarra is considerable, with more than 35 million tonnes of freight moved in, out and around the Illawarra in 2016, and it is expected to double over the coming decades. The business case for the Maldon-Dombarton line made clear that within a decade the South Coast line will become so choked with train congestion that it will place the Port of Port Kembla's ongoing viability into question. Completing the Maldon-Dombarton Line will connect Wollongong with the economic powerhouse of south-west Sydney and the future airport city, now to be named Bradfield. With \$100 million in output every year, a population centre of 1.2 million people, 150 of the top 500 companies along with 160,000 small- and medium-sized businesses and over 8,500 manufacturing firms, we could be the port of choice for south-western Sydney. That means a jobs future for the Illawarra and the south-west.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh): I thank the member for Wollongong for his kind words to the Coffs Harbour community.

ORANGE PUSH FOR PALLIATIVE

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (19:50): I speak about palliative care, which is an important issue for the people of my community in Orange. Orange Push for Palliative formed in response to the removal of the dedicated palliative care ward from hospital services in Orange when it was relocated from the old Orange hospital to the new Orange Health Service. Shortly after being elected to represent the good people of the Orange electorate, I met with the passionate members of the Orange Push for Palliative. At the time they were busily gathering signatures for their petition, which called for improved resourcing, reopening of the medical ward previously used for palliative care at the Orange Health Service, and provision of dedicated palliative care beds and space to cater for the needs of patients and their families.

The 10,000-signature petition was eventually debated in this place. Unfortunately, at the time the Government did not agree, believing the existing end-of-life services provided at the health service in Orange were sufficient and did not require a dedicated ward or space. That did not deter me from pursuing the wishes of

my community for a dedicated palliative care facility. I formed the Orange Palliative Care Working Group, which comprised community representatives and stakeholders including the Western NSW Local Health District and the Orange Health Service. The working group proposed that an offsite public-private facility be considered by NSW Health as a suitable alternative to a palliative ward at the hospital. The Western NSW Local Health District agreed with the proposal and provided a fully funded trial for a four-bed dedicated palliative facility, which was eventually delivered by contract through UnitingCare at its Parkwood facility in Orange.

The trial demonstrated that the service was well used by the community, with a high occupancy. That news came as no surprise to my fellow palliative working group members nor to the community, who backed the initiative. Finally, the health district could see there was a case for the reinstatement of a permanent service at a dedicated palliative care facility. I wish to credit Catherine Nowlan, general manager of the Orange Health Service, for the solution that would guarantee the delivery of a dedicated palliative care facility and service for the community of Orange and surrounding districts. Catherine Nowlan worked very hard behind the scenes, shuffling her hospital's significant resources and developing a concept plan for a palliative care centre of excellence in the Orange hospital. Catherine conceived a dedicated multi-room palliative care ward that linked haematology, oncology and palliative services, forming what is now called the HOPS unit.

That was an enormous task. Establishing a space in a hospital that was already packed to the rafters was a real challenge. Equally challenging was creating a tranquil space that could accommodate families who wished to be with their loved ones in their final moments together. If realised, Catherine Nowlan's concept would effectively reinstate a dedicated palliative care service for people in their final days, delivering specialist care in a purpose-designed space. Catherine managed to deliver; the HOPS unit was officially opened earlier this month and has been fully occupied ever since. I have been advised of positive community feedback about the new service and facility, which is a testament to the care, dedication and professionalism of the healthcare professionals and support staff of the HOPS unit.

The new unit consists of two palliative care beds, with two surge beds in times of high demand. Each room has an ensuite, televisions, iPads and touch lamps. Handmade quilts are provided to patients by Orange Push for Palliative and the community, which families can take home as a keepsake of their loved ones. Dishwashers, crockery and other items have been purchased and donated by Orange Push for Palliative for the coffee and tea station, and a separate kitchen and dining area has been made available for use after hours and on weekends. Artworks have been donated and loaned by well-known local artists to decorate the patients' rooms, the nurses' station and a family lounge area, with the assistance of staff from Orange Regional Gallery.

The return of a dedicated hospital-based palliative care facility and service is what the community asked for, and now, finally, that is what has been delivered. I commend Catherine Nowlan, my fellow members of the Orange Palliative Care Working Group, and especially the passionate members of the Orange Push for Palliative who initiated the process, and whose tenacity led to the reinstatement of palliative services in our hospital.

VAUCLUSE ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY EVENTS

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (19:54): At 24.5 square kilometres, the electorate of Vaucluse is one of the smallest in New South Wales. People from all around the world come to live in my local area, drawn by its proximity to Sydney Harbour and the city, its deep history, green open spaces and beautiful coastline, including our iconic Bondi Beach. Our citizenship ceremonies always reveal how diverse in ethnicity, nationality and faith our local residents are. Australia Day is always a time to celebrate these differences and show how it is a great strength in the eastern suburbs of Sydney. On Australia Day morning, I joined Woollahra Municipal Council's citizenship ceremony hosted by Mayor Susan Wynne. It was a gorgeous sunny morning and we welcomed our soon-to-be citizens against the picturesque backdrop of Sydney Harbour at Redleaf Pool.

COVID-19 meant our guests were not able to bring those friends and family who would normally want to be with them on such an occasion, but we tried to make up for that absence by sharing refreshments with them after the ceremony. COVID-19 also meant that we were not able to sing our national anthem so instead we listened to its stirring words. I always love that moment when our soon-to-be citizens get up and take the oath or affirmation and the joy that we see on their faces and those of their family members as they become citizens of Australia. At the ceremony we heard from guest speaker, former New South Wales police deputy commissioner Nick Kaldas. He shared his life experience of what it meant to be Australian.

COVID-19 has meant we had smaller ceremonies, and more of them. At that ceremony only 15 special residents pledged to become Australians. They came from all parts of the world, including France, Ireland, the Philippines and Kazakhstan. I acknowledge Woollahra councillors Mary-Lou Jarvis and Anthony Marano, who also attended the ceremony, along with my Federal counterpart, the member for Wentworth, Dave Sharma, and my colleague the member for Sydney, Alex Greenwich. I thank Woollahra council, which does a great job with catering and making everybody feel welcome against that magnificent backdrop of the harbour.

Following the Woollahra ceremony, I attended the Australia Day citizenship ceremonies hosted by Waverley Council. Given COVID-19, there were three separate awards ceremonies held in Bondi Park. It was amazing to see over 80 residents take their pledge to become Australians. Many I spoke to have called Australia home for a number of years but had decided to take the important step to become citizens and I celebrated that decision with them. When they left they were given eight native plants to take home. Even those without a green thumb pledged to plant that native in celebration of the steps they had taken. On Australia Day, we also acknowledge Australians who have gone above and beyond in their service to the State and the nation. It was no surprise to see a number of awardees from my local area be acknowledged for their contributions in so many different ways.

I offer my congratulations to former Prime Minister The Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, AC, who was honoured for his service to the people of Australia; Emeritus Professor Christopher Fell, AO, for his service to science and engineering, especially in the field of nanotechnology; Ellen Greenfield, OAM, for her service to the fashion and textiles industries; Michael Mann, AO, for his service to Australia and South-East Asia relations and tertiary education; Dr Milton Osborne, AM, for his service as an author of history; Dr Tom Playfair, AM, for his service to ophthalmology; Kerry Roxburgh, AM, for his service to women in business and the financial sector; Elizabeth Swan, AM, for her service to the library and information sciences; and Peter Wise, AM, for his service and leadership in the Jewish community.

I thank all of those wonderful local residents for their distinguished service to the State and the nation. Again, in closing, I warmly welcome to my electorate those who received their citizenship on Australia Day. I know not everybody could turn up to those citizenship ceremonies but it was good to meet those who did. It is not an easy thing, we must remember, to start afresh and live in a new nation—it takes courage and perseverance. One thing we all agree on is that we are lucky to live in the electorate of Vaucluse, a spectacular part of the world. It is a pleasure and a privilege to serve my electorate as their MP. I commend my private member's statement to the House.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (19:59): I celebrate International Women's Day and all the wonderful women in the electorate of Shellharbour and beyond. In reflecting on the achievements of women over the past 50 or 60 years, I thought just how easy it would be to forget the gains we have made and to simply accept them as the status quo. It would be an interesting exercise to do a survey of our younger women to see how many remember how much tougher it was in some ways for women 60 years ago. While many things have changed and women find themselves able to be more independent of the traditional roles of some 50 or 60 years ago, other pressures have been brought to bear on them with the emergence of the idea of the "super mum"—the mum who works full-time, has a career and does the majority of the work raising the children. In truth, many mums still work part-time or at casual jobs and are not able to accumulate reasonable superannuation, long service leave, et cetera. This is already causing problems for older women who are not able to support themselves in their older age. We have been talking about wage justice for women forever and still it has not been delivered.

It is not so long ago that women working for the Commonwealth public service would find themselves out of a job if they got married. Can you imagine finding yourself out of a job just because you were married? If a woman was married and of a certain age, the general attitude of employers was to look at her career in terms of child-bearing. Thank goodness that is not still the case—or is it? I am not sure. In the 1960s a doctor could be arrested for performing an abortion. Like all prohibitions, it spawned illegal, underground activities—illegal abortions put already desperate women at greater risk. Well, ladies, we can tick that one off the list of freedoms gained over our own bodies. We should not forget the outlawing of rape in marriage. This occurred in my lifetime.

In terms of the history of the Western world, some changes came relatively quickly to society, so many of those gains being borne on the backs of our feminist forebears. It would be easy to sit back and simply take stock, but you only need to take note of the media to know we have so much more to achieve. There are historic allegations of rape being denied by Christian Porter while more women make allegations of sexual assault in Canberra. We, as leaders, are meant to be the exemplars of good behaviour in society. Alas, it remains a problem not just for Canberra—it is a local, national and international problem.

The freedom for social contact the internet offers is almost boundless. The ability to connect with loved ones and friends, or to simply interact with colleagues, is made possible by the magic of interconnectivity of the World Wide Web. Add to this cyberbullies and harassers, and it becomes a dark and sometimes dangerous place for women and girls; a place where predators lay in wait, threatening rape, physical violence, using abusive and sexist language, posting manipulated photos and sending pornographic pictures while remaining anonymous and unconstrained. Girls and young women often become afraid and begin to restrict what they post. In the worst cases, they feel really unsafe because they are confused by how one person could find out so many details about their lives. It makes them concerned that he could find their home address.

The theme of the 2020 State of the World's Girls report is "Free to be online". The researcher spoke to 14,000 girls in 32 countries about their online experiences. More than half have been harassed and abused on social media. In all 32 countries, girls had been exposed to explicit messages, pornographic photos, cyberstalking and other distressing forms of abuse. Fifty-nine per cent of girls reported being targeted by abusive and insulting language, 41 per cent by deliberate embarrassment, and 39 per cent reported body shaming and threats of sexual violence. The social media platforms designed to connect us as a global community are drastically failing girls and young women. You need to ask yourself how far we have come.

Sure, as women, we have changed many things and those changes have made our lives better. That is a fact. But it is the things we have not changed or that "remain water on stone" that worry me. The idea that Brittany Higgins' alleged rape was deliberated on by the Prime Minister, with his wife having to put it into perspective for him, is a sad indictment on him and maybe us as a society.

TAFE NSW

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (20:04): This evening I talk about an incredibly important issue in my electorate, being the critical value of TAFE in Port Stephens for local residents and local businesses alike. For decades TAFE NSW has been a world-renowned, high-class public provider of vocational education and training. We all know someone who earned and learned their skills at a local TAFE campus: local tradies, hairdressers, mechanics, forestry workers, health workers, early childhood educators, hospitality staff, mine workers, beauticians—the list goes on and on. TAFE used to be as quintessentially Australian as a meat pie and a beer. My mum was a TAFE teacher. To this day, she has people coming up to her on the street and thanking her for giving them a leg up in life. TAFE teachers were expert and specialist teachers who were proud of their work and proud of the opportunities they were providing to people in the community. They are still experts and they are still proud of their work, but the reality is this Government has destroyed TAFE as we know it.

Since this Government was elected it has systematically dismantled TAFE. Campuses have been closed and sold off right across the State. More than 6,000 TAFE teachers and support staff have been sacked. Courses have been cancelled and course prices hiked up. It should come as no surprise that there have been 175,000 fewer TAFE students each year since this Government was elected and the number of apprentices statewide has fallen by a third. Given the State's population continues to grow and our unemployment rate continues to rise, how else can you possibly explain the carnage at TAFE over the last 10 years except for it being a deliberate act and the deliberate policy of this Government to decimate TAFE?

Recently I met with a number of local TAFE staff who live in Port Stephens, alongside the shadow Minister for Skills and TAFE, Jihad Dib, who I acknowledge is in the Chamber. The stories we heard were shocking and sad. They were shocking because of the impact of the Government's cuts to TAFE on local businesses, local students and local lives. They were sad because these long-term workers have seen this brilliant vocational education and training institution being whittled away slowly but surely by this Government. It was also sad because the people we were speaking to were about to lose their jobs, too. Recently it was revealed that 700 more TAFE workers will be sacked. Some of those workers are my constituents. Certainly, TAFE students who live in Port Stephens will continue to bear the brunt of these decisions as well.

Prior to the last election the Premier stood next to local hairdressers in Nelson Bay and announced that the town would be getting a brand-new TAFE campus. The Premier then claimed that we did not have a TAFE presence and that this new campus would be the first. That was an embarrassing blunder from the start because TAFE had been operating out of the Tomaree Education Centre for years. The centre was purpose-built to include TAFE facilities and opened in 1998, some 23 years ago, but had been starved of resources. That was the first indication that the Premier's announcement was not genuine. Of course, after the election it became apparent that we were not getting a TAFE campus at all; we were getting an online learning hub known as a Connected Learning Centre, which rarely has teachers on site. It scares me to think how hairdressers are going to learn their skills on a computer.

That leads me to the biggest tragedy in all this: the real impact of this Government's decade of destruction of TAFE. Our local businesses are struggling to get the workers they need and our local residents who are unemployed, especially our local youth, are struggling to get a job. When you dismantle TAFE you are dismantling the futures of our young people and crushing the future of a local economy. At a time when hospitality businesses such as restaurants and cafes are trying to recover from COVID, they cannot find the trained staff they need to take advantage of the uptick. I know that there are manufacturers at Tomago importing foreign welders and boilermakers because they cannot find locally trained workers. It is all well and good for the Government to say it is creating jobs when it announces new infrastructure projects, but they should be local jobs for local people.

Here is something the Government should be thinking about but is not: As we head towards a decarbonised economy, where power stations inevitably close as planned and coalmines reduce their production lines because

of international market forces, we need to ensure that workers have the ability to pivot into new jobs in renewables, manufacturing and rehabilitation. The only way to do that is by providing the training and the skills that they will need. For decades TAFE has played a critical role in providing people with the skills that have built our communities, supported families and improved lives. The legacy of TAFE is all around us. Shamefully, in just one decade this Liberal-Nationals Government has purposefully decimated TAFE. But TAFE still has a critical role to play, and only Labor will rebuild it.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (20:09): There are specific moments in time when people look to the members of this House and beg us to put politics aside so we can work together to create a better society. This is one of those times. I cannot attest to what it is like to be a woman living in a world where you do not feel safe. I stand in this Chamber as a person in a privileged position. However, as a man in today's world, and in this Parliament, I know I can be a part of the solution. Like so many others, I am horrified to read testimonies of women bravely sharing their experiences of sexual assault. Chanel Contos' account of being sexually assaulted has led to thousands upon thousands of women recounting incidents that reveal a shameful culture of abuse. We have seen marches calling for change. Women of all ages have been joined by men, all of them saying that enough is enough—enough of the abuse, the harassment, the sexual assault, the gendered violence and the disrespect.

I am deeply disturbed by the stories of a sexualised culture some young men have developed towards their treatment of women. I am deeply disturbed that we have limited formalised mechanisms to address this, and I am deeply disturbed that the issue of consent still remains unclear. Sadly, this is not new news, or news that just affects today's younger generation. Many older women have shared stories held deep within for years. Our Australian of the Year, Grace Tame, has said it takes an average of 10 years for a young woman who has been abused to come forward with her personal story. But perhaps what is new is a hope that it does not have to be like this—that the voices lifted in protest do not just fade once the news cycle moves on. In this Parliament we must do more than just hope. There is an imperative to act—for each of us individually, and together—to meet the challenge of this moment with the determination to make things better.

I wish I had the one answer as to what we can do but I do not, and nor does any one individual or organisation. That is why we need to work together. This is a whole-of-society challenge and, as such, it needs a whole-of-society approach and solution. We should commit to a whole-of-Parliament approach, an education and awareness program detailing respect, consent, sexuality, power, offences and consequences. Young people of any gender must have access to information about pathways for making and resolving complaints and receiving support, therapy and counselling. Schools cannot shoulder this burden alone and we cannot have these topics as some sort of tick-a-box dot point squeezed into the school curriculum as the only solution. We must bring people together who represent all government and non-government agencies, along with people of different genders, to design the change needed.

It all starts with respect, not just implicit and tokenistic but explicitly taught and embedded in our cultural norms from an early age. Whilst the issues may make some people uncomfortable, we can find ways to deliver age-appropriate messages by gradually addressing issues that face children navigating their life journey. I believe it is better to have these potentially uncomfortable discussions rather than try to pick up the broken pieces left in the wake of leaving things unsaid or unattended. We must look at the results of the legislative review into consent. Whilst it is complicated, we cannot leave it for the next generation of leaders to deal with. Other countries are adopting a requirement for affirmative consent, and the harrowing accounts given by women of their sexual experiences must cause proper consideration of whether a key plank of protecting them is through an affirmative consent model. We have seen other States act on this. It is now well past our time to do the same. We need to teach the meaning of consent in a very clear manner.

I am reminded of the *Where the Good Men Grow* mural at my old school as a symbol that there are many good young men—men of integrity and decency—who are also repulsed by this behaviour. We can limit and ideally prevent these awful incidents through education, support and the law. We must provide better opportunities to resolve these incidents to the satisfaction of the victims. We must ensure that women feel confident in being heard when they come forward with their experiences—confident that they will be taken seriously and confident that they will not be victim-blamed, shamed or dismissed—and, most importantly, that they have confidence in a system they know will support them. We must listen to the stories, find out what has happened and what is still happening and act on what we have to do to change it. We cannot do nothing. We all play a role in this. Just as I see my role, I implore anyone reading or listening to this speech to also see theirs.

We cannot have a situation where any woman leaves her home in fear of being assaulted or taken advantage of. Conversely, we cannot have a situation where a young man is not fully aware of his responsibilities as a decent human being. Once we have supported the victim, we have a role to play in ensuring offenders are directed towards life as a positive member of the community. At its most serious, incarceration is a consequence, but jail is not the

only option. Community service, conferencing, rehabilitation programs and restorative justice are also powerful ways to change behaviour, particularly for young men. This is complex. This is hard. This can get messy. It will require skilled navigation through myriad social and judicial challenges that are well beyond a five-minute private member's statement. It is important that we draw a line in the sand. I, like so many others who have entered this place, came here to do important work. Let us not put it off; let us do this important work not only for the brave women who implore us to do it but also for the sake of our society as a whole.

DICK PAYTEN RESERVE

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (20:15): I am pleased to inform the House of the opening of Dick Payten Reserve, a local park in Bankstown that has been renamed as a mark of respect for the late Mr Dick Payten, OAM. Mr Payten was a great man and a treasured part of the Bankstown community. His indelible legacy of community pride and service has been officially recognised by the naming of Dick Payten Reserve. Mr Payten was a Bankstown resident who was made, rather than born. His life began in Dubbo on 30 March 1921.

Later, at the age of 20, he waited in line for hours for the chance to enlist and fight for his nation in World War II. Once accepted, Mr Payten became a valiant member of the Australian Army. Initially, he served as a bombardier in the Middle East. After that campaign he returned briefly to Australia. He wasted no time in securing a quick engagement to his wife-to-be, Mary, before shipping off to serve two more campaigns in New Guinea and Borneo. After his service Dick married Mary and moved to Bankstown, immediately throwing himself into the vibrant community.

In Bankstown, he devoted himself towards serving the local veteran organisations and ensuring a welcoming community for his fellow soldiers. Mr Payten was the President of the 7th Australian Division AIF Association and a committed member of Bankstown Legacy. He was heavily involved in organising Anzac Day services—in particular, the commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the Kokoda and Milne Bay campaigns. Sadly, on 1 March last year, after a long and rich life dedicated to helping others, Mr Payten passed away at the age of 99.

Throughout his life, Mr Payten was deeply passionate about making sure that those who serve during war are honoured and remembered. He strived to attend every memorial and commemoration for his fellow soldiers and was a devout supporter of the recently established Bass High School ANZAC Community Garden, where a plaque commemorates his dedicated service. Now the community turns to honour and commemorate a man who did the same for so many others. Yet Mr Payten was the kind of man who in many ways has already been memorialised. He lives on in the memories of those who knew him, met him or had merely seen him in an Anzac Day march.

We will remember his kindness, selflessness and devotion. Mr Payten's service to his community has made him a permanent feature of life in Bankstown. Now a permanent change to the community's physical landscape has been made in recognition of that service. Dick Payten Reserve sits at the intersection of Miller Road and the Hume Highway, and along the Remembrance Driveway. Mr Payten was essential to the establishment of the driveway, which stands as a living memorial to the bravery and the selflessness of those who have served their nation. Just as Dick Payten Reserve will forever be part of Remembrance Driveway, Mr Payten will forever be recognised and remembered as an essential part of the noble legacy it represents.

Fittingly, the renaming of the park was a community effort. I thank Remembrance Driveway Council President, Air Commodore Ian Scott, AM, for making the initial request to rename the park, and Councillor Alex Kuskoff for his advocacy, together with the Canterbury-Bankstown Council, in making that request a reality. I thank Mr Payten's children and their partners: Mrs Jen Krahn and Mr Paul Krahn; Ms Lyn Brown; Mrs Sue Swinfield and Mr Ian Swinfield; and Mr Rod Payten and Mrs Judy Payten. I also thank Dick's grandchildren and great-grandchildren for their efforts in preserving his incredible legacy. In all aspects of his life, Dick Payten represented the ideals that we, as a society and as a community, must strive towards. In war he was courageous and loyal. As a father and a husband he was kind and generous, and as a veteran he was honourable and dedicated. Dick Payten Reserve now stands as a permanent reminder of those values. I am so proud to have it within the community I represent. Vale, Dick Payten.

ORCHARD HILLS LAND ACQUISITION

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (20:20): I am pleased to speak about a matter that has concerned members of my community, particularly in Orchard Hills, and has been the subject of discussion in this place over recent weeks. It relates to the acquisition of land for the Orchard Hills metro station. I put on record an example of the impact of our Government's infrastructure project planning on a family's situation. I received correspondence from a landholder in Orchard Hills, Mr Sam Grima. Upon reading about his personal experience

of the impact of this infrastructure development and the compulsory acquisition process, I put on record his family story to put a human face to the reality of a government project. As a government, we have amazing and wonderful plans to continue to grow and invest in our community. However, where our plans intersect with people's personal property, dreams or business operations, we can never lose sight of their impact on those individuals. I take this opportunity to put on record the story of Mr Grima and his family.

Mr Grima lives with his family in Orchard Hills amongst the 65 acres of land that is under compulsory acquisition by Sydney Metro. Mr Grima, together with his brother and their wives, works a property owned by his parents in Horsley Park in my electorate. For more than 30 years they have produced fruit and vegetables on that property to sell at Sydney's Flemington Markets. Their production, persistence and love of their work has twice earned them the Sydney Markets Produce Grower of the Year award, which is quite an achievement, given the number of market gardeners who sell their produce at Flemington Markets. However, Mr Grima's land is being acquired as part of the Sydney Metro land acquisition process.

The problem that he and others in that space are facing is that the current offer by Sydney Metro for the land is nowhere near the market value that would enable them to relocate within the Orchard Hills community and minimise disruption to their families' lifestyle and to their business operations. Mr Grima has expressed to me that while the valuation of his property is not meant to reflect the uplift of the infrastructure that is coming, the fact that surrounding land and properties are reflecting the expected uplift in value that the metro line and station will bring creates an immediate disconnect between the value of land within the compulsorily acquired area and the value of land outside it. Instantly that makes them unable to relocate within the same community.

For practical reasons Mr Grima needs to be located within the area because three nights a week at 11.00 p.m. he goes to the farm to harvest the produce in time for it to reach Sydney's Flemington Markets to be sold to the network there so it can get to the restaurants and the shopping centres so that we can then buy it for our families. He needs to remain close to the Horsley Park community. He is currently one minute from the M4, approximately four minutes from Horsley Park and 30 minutes from Flemington market. All those issues are critical to enable him to simply do his job and run his family business without being completely compromised by having to relocate a significant distance away from the practical locations of his farm at Horsley Park and the Sydney Flemington market. I take this opportunity to put on record just one story out of the 17, 18, 19 families impacted by the development. I urge Sydney Metro to come to the table to provide market valuation for those lands to enable people in these locations to move within the Orchard Hills community so their businesses and families are not disrupted.

WEST DAPTO SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (20:25): In March 2019 NSW Labor committed \$60 million to commence planning and construction of a new school precinct in West Dapto, if elected. That commitment was not matched by the New South Wales Liberal Party. It followed on from a \$45 million commitment by NSW Labor in 2015 to build a school in the West Dapto precinct. West Dapto is the fastest-growing residential area in New South Wales outside the Sydney region. Many new developments are underway or have already been finished in the area. Over the next few decades it will become home to around 19,000 new homes and more than 50,000 people. The 2009 West Dapto master plan predicted an eventual need for eight new primary schools and three new high schools in the area. But as far as the New South Wales Government is concerned, no new schools will be built in the growth suburb of West Dapto in the "short to medium term".

The Department of Education said it is monitoring the growth of West Dapto. Meanwhile, increasing numbers of children have to travel across West Dapto to Dapto to go to school. It is obvious that if you build it they will come, and they are coming, despite the Government's myopic view of the needs of the area. It is not surprising given the struggle we had to get the hospital in Shellharbour. The New South Wales Liberals wanted to privatise it at one point and it was saved and kept in public hands only through community rallying. If we want to attract more people to this area—and we need to—we must give them confidence that the infrastructure is in place to cater for the current and projected population, so that new residents do not have to travel to schools and other vital infrastructure because of the Government's short-sightedness.

As I understand it, the NSW Department of Education will not consider building a new high school until there is the possibility of 2,000 students and it will not build another primary school until there is the prospect of 1,000 students. For the record, the school population in the current West Dapto primary school is now well and truly over capacity with 900 children. The confirmation that a new school for West Dapto is not on the horizon should ring alarm bells for local residents and prospective residents. The Government has conceded that the demand for more class spaces has increased enormously due to increased population growth. Instead of starting a building program in West Dapto, it increased capacity at Dapto Public School, which is located in Sierra Drive and services the West Dapto population.

Currently Dapto Public School has 14 demountable classrooms on site. An upgrade was announced in late 2017. I saw all the glossy pictures, cardboard cut-outs and slide shows, yet here we are in 2021 and still nothing has happened. The project would include the construction of an additional 20 classrooms, associated practical activity spaces and an extension to the existing library and administration facilities—a little bit of "rob Peter to pay Paul", although in this analogy Peter did not start with anything and, by the look of it, is not likely to get anything for a long time. By funding an upgrade to Dapto Public School, the State Government has recognised the need for schools in West Dapto, as the increased capacity is aimed at the schooling needs of West Dapto and not Dapto. Building capacity off the back of population projections and where population is rapidly growing makes sense; building in an area that will stay static and then decline in need—apart from those students bussed in from West Dapto—is a misguided, stopgap attitude.

NSW YOUNG LIBERALS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (20:29): The challenge to leaders is to create more leaders and not more followers. This is certainly an important call to young people to get involved in politics and the affairs of our community. As a graduate of the Young Liberal Movement, I am proud of the movement that was formed in 1945 and has seen many great people come through this Parliament and others around the nation to play important leadership roles in government. Last Saturday 13 March I was pleased to attend the recent Young Liberals annual general meeting. For the House's benefit I list some of the people who were elected to the executive and who have done an outstanding job to reach the heights of this State organisation, an organisation once led by our Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, who showed her tenacity and leadership skills at a young age.

I am absolutely thrilled with the election of Deyi Wu as the president of the Young Liberal Movement. An Asian woman and somebody who is incredibly passionate about being the change that she believes in has become president of the NSW Young Liberals. I have no doubt that she will leave her mark and one day serve in Parliament. The metropolitan vice-presidents of the Young Liberal Movement will be Natalie Hissey and Dimitry Palmer. The country vice-president is Reanna Earl and the Young Liberals secretary will be Jean-Claude Perrottet. Directors of the Young Liberals council include Lachlan Finch, Gebran Habib and Lauren McGrath-Wild. Officers of the Young Liberals council include Georgia De-Mestre, Chanum Torres and Dimitri Konstantinidis. Delegates to Young Liberals Federal council include Hugo Robinson—who I will say more about in a moment—Jean-Claude Perrottet, Liam Kiss, Timothy Millar and Laura Middleton. The Young Liberals policy committee, of which I used to be a member, includes Keenan Smith, Tamika Dartnell-Moore, Joel Savage, Abby Donaldson, Aiden MacReadie, Luke Perrignon and James Skibinski. The tertiary institutions liaison officer is Cameron Hay.

At the meeting, power was handed to Deyi by Hugo Robinson, who has been an outstanding Young Liberals president for the short time he has been in the job. I have no doubt he, like Deyi, will do great things and serve in Parliament one day. We are incredibly proud of Hugo, as we were of Chaneg Torres, who served before him. I acknowledge all of those great leaders of the Young Liberal Movement who are making a huge difference. I am sure many members of Parliament served in their youth. I remember joining the Shoalhaven Young Liberals at the age of 16 and became the branch president after much branch development.

Mr Jihad Dib: That's a Labor play.

Mr GARETH WARD: You call it stacking; some call it branch development. It was about not only bringing people to the party but also inspiring people to make a contribution, to be the change they wanted to be and talk about policy ideas. I know that in this place we have debates—

Mr Mark Coure: Weren't you a vice-president?

Mr GARETH WARD: Here is a former person I served on the Young Liberals executive with. I was not going to mention him but I acknowledge the member for Oatley, who was also a member of the Young Liberals executive on which I served. He was an exceptional development vice-president of the Young Liberal Movement. That was his title.

Mr Jihad Dib: He was the branch stacker.

Mr GARETH WARD: Don't judge him by your degraded standards. I know that Deyi Wu has plans to have a mock preselection, continue mock parliaments and also encourage more women into politics. I am sure that is something that all members of the House will agree is incredibly important: not just talking about it but ensuring that we see more leaders from our community, particularly more women leaders, and encouraging them to achieve their full potential. I congratulate the new incoming Young Liberals president on her election. I have no doubt that she will go on to do great things. It is incredibly important to play a role in politics. Too many members of Parliament get into this place and burn the ladder of opportunity from behind them. The challenge

for all of us is to make sure that we encourage young people to achieve their full potential. I know that those young people will do exceptional job and one day be great leaders of our State and our nation.

Motions

TREE CLEARANCE ZONES

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh): I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council advising that it has this day called on the Minister for Transport and Roads to withdraw his ministerial directive issued to the Secretary of Transport for NSW on 27 February 2020.

Community Recognition Statements

VISSLA AND SISSTREVOOLUTION CENTRAL COAST PRO

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:34): In the first week of March the Vissla and Sisstrevolution Central Coast Pro events took place at Avoca Beach. I am absolutely delighted that the Central Coast played host to this Qualifying Series 3,000 rated event, which was the final of the four events in the 2021 NSW Pro Surf Series. I am also delighted that women and men received equal prize money in this competition—a long-overdue decision. Today I bring to the House's attention the performance of two Central Coast locals, Molly Picklum and Macy Callaghan, who battled it out while enjoying being cheered on by locals. At just 18 years of age, Molly performed brilliantly to secure the Pro Surf Series victory, with a final score of 14.96. This is incredibly impressive given that she was up against world title contestants like Sally Fitzgibbons. The men's final included Matt Banting and Jacob Willcox. I congratulate Matt, who was the final winner, and Jacob, who was runner-up. The Central Coast has been incredibly fortunate to host the world-class event for the past three years and I will be fighting to ensure that it returns in 2022.

CHEREE TOKA

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (20:35): I am proud to announce that the 2021 Summer Hill Woman of the Year is Cheree Toka, a Kamilaroi woman of the inner west. She is a formidable inner west activist and entrepreneur, leading an extraordinary campaign to fly the Aboriginal flag permanently on the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Cheree's "Fly the Flag" campaign started in 2017 and acknowledges that the Aboriginal flag only flies 19 days a year over our city. Cheree's petition to permanently fly the flag on the harbour bridge has been signed by over 165,000 people and was debated in Parliament in 2018. She is now crowdfunding the \$300,000 the New South Wales Government has told her it will cost to permanently fly the flag. It is clear that nothing will get in Cheree's way. In addition to her activism, she manages an Indigenous-owned company specialising in providing services to government and which has many commercial clients. She is an inspirational young woman. I congratulate her on being the Summer Hill Woman of the Year.

REBECCA HOBBS AND JUSTINE O'BRIEN

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (20:36): It was International Day of Women and Girls in Science on 11 February, and a great opportunity to celebrate our women scientists and their successes. Dr Rebecca Hobbs and Dr Justine O'Brien of the Taronga Reef Recovery Project have been working on the preservation of coral species from the Great Barrier Reef. The collection and preservation of coral is based between the Dubbo and Sydney Taronga zoos, and has been a collaborative, female-led effort for over a decade. Thanks to the ingenuity of Dr Hobbs, Dr O'Brien and the rest of the team, the beauty and genetic diversity of the Great Barrier Reef is being safeguarded for future generations—and it is all happening from Dubbo. Most people find it quite difficult to believe Dubbo holds this incredible coral collection, but it shows what can be done with dedication and the right people involved. I thank everyone involved for all the work they do. It is one of Australia's most iconic sites and they are setting an incredible example for our young, budding scientists.

MATT HATCH

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (20:37): Central Coast Mariners debutant Matt Hatch wrote another chapter in the Central Coast Mariners fairytale 2021 season on Monday 8 March. Hatch entered the contest in the eighty-first minute and just seconds later the 20-year-old slotted home the deciding goal in a memorable win after just 25 seconds on the field—an inspired substitution by Mariners boss Alen Stajcic, who has taken the Mariners from the basement to the A-League penthouse this year. I am particularly proud as Matt is my nephew and he is a great local kid who has played all his football on the Central Coast. Matt started with the Woy Woy Roosters, and moved to Kincumber before moving to the Mariners' youth set-up. Matt scored twice in the National Premier League's NSW 2 Grand Final last season and secured a scholarship contract with the Central Coast Mariners this year. Twenty-five seconds is the fastest ever A-League goal on debut and it was also his first touch in his senior A-League career. I know his mum, Suzie, her partner, Jason, sister Sarah and grandmother Maureen are all super proud, as is his uncle. I congratulate Matt.

KATHRYN WOOD

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (20:38): Tonight I recognise Kathryn Wood of Burrawang in my electorate of Goulburn. Kathryn is an active member of the highlands community. I particularly recognise her role on the Wingecarribee Traffic Committee. Kathryn brings extensive experience to the committee, serving as a representative for a number of members, including Gareth Ward and Pru Goward, prior to representing me. During this time Kathryn has always shown genuine concern for any issues that are raised and always provided comprehensive responses that were very well researched. This amazing effort and the many hours dedicated to the community that it reflects is significant. I publicly congratulate Kathryn today. I congratulate and thank her so much for the work she does in the community.

DIANNE ELVY

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (20:39): This evening I recognise the 2021 Wollongong Electorate Woman of the Year, Dianne Elvy. Dianne is the president of the Illawarra District Netball Association, a position she has held since 2010. She started her involvement in netball at age 11 at the encouragement of her sister and has spent the majority of her adult life volunteering for the netball district to spread a love of sport among generations upon generations of children and adults throughout the Illawarra. It is a nearly 50-year involvement. Around 3,000 women and girls are involved in the association and thousands have come before them. Dianne has been able help to provide everyone who has been involved in netball competitions in the Illawarra over many years with the confidence and camaraderie that being involved in team sports can bring. These skills and life experience have helped the young women flourish in all parts of their future lives. Last year was testing for the association, but under the guidance of Dianne it remains as strong as ever. The lifelong dedication that Dianne has shown to netball and to our community is nothing short of astounding.

MOSMAN FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (20:40): I congratulate the Mosman Football Club, which recently donated \$15,000 to Bear Cottage—a very special place dedicated to caring for children with life-limiting conditions. The club was able to donate some of its refunded savings from the disrupted 2020 season to Bear Cottage to support its efforts in providing respite to families and end-of-life care and therapies for children in a warm, homelike environment. Mosman Football Club has been a much loved part of the North Shore's sporting community for over 50 years. The club provides skills training and support for MiniRoos, kids aged from five to 11, and youth teams, players aged from 12 to 18, and the Premier League catering to men and women of all ages, including over-35 men's and women's, and over-45 men's competitions. It has even welcomed me for an open. I hugely thank president Richard Pike and the extensive volunteer network who donate their time to the successful operation of the club, and for the generosity of the club and our community in supporting a worthy cause such as Bear Cottage.

PORT STEPHENS FAMILY AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (20:41): Right now in Port Stephens we have a housing and homelessness crisis. Standing on the front line trying to ease the impact of the crisis is the Port Stephens Family and Neighbourhood Services, or PSFANS. With the economic effects flowing from COVID-19 and now a housing crisis, Port Stephens Family and Neighbourhood Services has never been busier. I acknowledge the tireless, heartbreaking work of the team at PSFANS. They offer over 40 different programs to tackle the high rates of domestic violence, poverty, addiction, financial insecurity, homelessness and mental illness. The manager of Port Stephens Family and Neighbourhood Services is Sue Pollock. Sue leads the team of hardworking and dedicated workers who deliver critical services relied upon by many vulnerable families in Port Stephens, so I was pleased to recognise her as Port Stephens Local Woman of the Year for 2021. I thank Sue for her dedication to women and children escaping domestic violence, working miracles where she can with inadequate resources. I congratulate her on being the Port Stephens Local Woman of the Year.

BIRDON

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (20:42): My contribution in the House this evening has been prompted by the appalling commentary by the member for Swansea in relation to Birdon in my electorate. For those who may not be aware, Birdon is a family-owned business that has been operating in Port Macquarie since 1977, working across the maritime, military and resource sectors. It is a company that employs dozens of local people and is a local business that our community is very proud of. We are proud of its story and achievements and that it is an industry leader, showcasing its expertise to the world from the banks of the Hastings River in Port Macquarie. We are proud that it makes it happen. The description of the new ferries by the member for Swansea as "cheap junk" is disgraceful and insulting to the 54 people from my electorate who have worked on those ferries.

Every person who has been involved in and who has worked so hard on the river ferries from design to fit-out are proud of their achievements—and rightly so. But today those on the opposite side of this Chamber, who purport to represent the workers, denigrated and belittled those achievements. I have no doubt that the member for Swansea has never visited Birdon, never met with the management team, including Jamie Bruce and Terri Benson, and certainly has never spoken to the local people who work there. The member for Swansea owes the hardworking, dedicated and very skilled workers at Birdon in my electorate an apology.

3BRIDGES

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (20:43): Last Thursday the member for Rockdale, the member for Oatley and I visited kids at the 3Bridges centre's Youth Zone. It was great to put politics aside and support young people by cooking them a great meal—actually, I cooked the meal and the members for Oatley and for Rockdale seemed to enjoy it very much. Somehow both of them seemed to go missing when it came time to do the dishes. All jokes aside, I thank 3Bridges for its work in the community. 3Bridges is a not-for-profit charity caring for young people with disabilities as well as the elderly. I focus particularly on the great extracurricular activities and support this organisation provides to kids in the community, including vacation care, providing a youth zone, early years support, and before- and after-school care. Organisations like 3Bridges are so essential in taking care of those who are struggling in our community. It is not the first time that I have been there, and it certainly will not be the last. Maybe next time I might even get to show the boys and girls my pool-playing and Xbox-playing skills, and the member for Oatley and the member for Rockdale can cook for us. All three of us love 3Bridges' work.

THOMAS SEYMOUR

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (20:44): I acknowledge an outstanding and inspiring young member of our community, Thomas Seymour from Mortdale Public School. On 10 March this year Thomas participated in the Shave the World event as part of the World's Greatest Shave, which is an initiative designed to raise money for blood cancer research while providing support for families and individuals who are affected by blood cancer. I am pleased to announce that Thomas raised over \$1,200 to support those in need. That is simply incredible. Considering he is just nine years of age, I have no doubt that Thomas will continue to share his community spirit and commitment to others well into the future. In Australia 45 people are diagnosed each day with blood cancer. That is one person every 31 minutes. That number is simply too high, and programs like the World's Greatest Shave can make such a difference to the lives of those affected. On behalf of all members of this House, I congratulate Thomas on all of his hard work and on being an outstanding asset for our local community.

KIM SATTLER

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (20:46): On behalf of my community I congratulate Ms Kim Sattler on being named Shellharbour's 2021 Local Woman of the Year. Kim has an extensive background in the community services sector and is a key employee at the Illawarra Women's Health Centre in Warilla in her role as a disability and domestic violence worker, where she provides vital support and services to local women. The findings from her groundbreaking 2015 research project working with women with an intellectual disability who have experienced domestic and family violence entitled *Breaking the Silence* were instrumental in developing an Australian-first personal health and wellbeing program that can be delivered in a workplace setting. More recently, she was a driving force behind the development and implementation of the A Little Bird Told Me initiative. The provision of that information would have helped save so many desperate women. Kim also regularly volunteers with SCARF Refugee Support, visiting local Syrian and Iraqi families in their homes. She has worked with the union campaign to save our hospital and much more. I thank Kim so much for being our Shellharbour Local Woman of the Year.

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (20:47): Clean Up Australia Day was held on 7 March and I was gratified to host my annual clean-up site again this year at Bondi Beach, with the support of the North Bondi Surf Life Saving Club. Special thanks goes to Joanna and Brad Cole and Klara Janickova, who were first in line to help on the day. Although the beach was relatively clean, the grassy areas had lots of cigarette butts, bottle caps, wipes and wrappers. Sadly, some of our community do not consider those items to be actually litter. I acknowledge Woollahra Municipal Council for hosting two Clean Up Australia Day sites at Tingira Memorial Park in Rose Bay and Robertson Park in Watsons Bay, both supported by a \$59,000 New South Wales Government grant. The residents in the electorate of Vaucluse value their green space and their blue space, which is why we all get out on Clean Up Australia Day to help. I thank all of the local residents who did just that.

NORTH ARM COVE

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (20:48): In Port Stephens there is a small, beautiful hamlet called North Arm Cove. For the past 23 years the residents of North Arm Cove have hosted an International

Women's Day function that has collectively raised over \$75,000 for United Nations programs for women and girls in developing countries throughout the world to achieve gender equality. This year the International Women's Day event was organised by a committee led by Jan Peeters, Jan Walker, Robyn Gee, Angelique Schirk and Coralie Wilks. Every year the event is a sellout, as it was again this year. This year's guest speakers were Ronelle McKay and Anne Turpin. Both locals inspired and confirmed what I often think about people in our community: Scratch the surface and you will be amazed by people's experiences and achievements. I congratulate the organising committee and the community of North Arm Cove on hosting and supporting this long-running event recognising International Women's Day and generously supporting women elsewhere. As always it was an uplifting, positive and supportive occasion—a perfect reflection of the North Arm Cove community.

KERRY CLANCY

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (20:49): New South Wales Women's Week was the perfect opportunity to showcase and celebrate the magnificent women of the Coffs Coast. One who has worked incredibly hard in our community for many years is Sawtellian Kerry Clancy, a Surf Life Saving NSW stalwart, who is the 2021 Coffs Harbour Electorate Local Woman of the Year. Kerry embodies passion, dedication, patience and good humour in the many leadership roles she has had with Surf Life Saving NSW. She has proudly paved the way for female representation in the organisation, being the first woman to be elected to both the North Coast branch and then to the board of Surf Life Saving NSW. Kerry loves the Coffs Coast and loves making it an even better place to live. She deserves every accolade that comes her way. It was great to spend time with her at last week's NSW Women of the Year Awards ceremony.

JANE STRATTON

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (20:50): I take this opportunity to congratulate Ms Jane Stratton, the recipient of Western Sydney University's Woman of the West community award. Jane is the founder of Think+DO Tank Foundation and is the woman behind Lost In Books, the multilingual kids' bookshop and community hub in Fairfield. Along with her many community initiatives, Jane Stratton has done a considerable amount of work for the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, the Australian Human Rights Commission and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Jane has served the Fairfield community for many years and I am proud to have been involved in many initiatives spearheaded by her. We are very grateful to Jane for coming up with the Lost In Books concept and creating a space that is welcoming and conducive to social interaction. Jane is always looking for new ways to connect people from multicultural backgrounds in the Fairfield area and I am sure we will be seeing much more from the Think+DO Tank Foundation in the near future. I congratulate Jane once again on her award and wish her the very best of luck in her future endeavours in the Fairfield electorate.

CAMDEN WOMEN'S BOWLING CLUB

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (20:51): I recognise and congratulate the Camden Women's Bowling Club, which celebrated its 60-year anniversary. "The club is going from strength to strength with continued growth to our membership," said Camden Women's Bowling Club member Elizabeth Smith. The club was founded in 1961 and officially opened by the NSW Women's Bowling Association. Within the second year of opening, Camden won its first district pennant in 1962-63 in the district singles. Over the years, Camden Women's Bowling Club has won numerous district titles and represented the State at other championships. I again offer my congratulations to the Camden Women's Bowling Club and I thank them for representing our community for all these years. I wish them the very best of luck in the future.

LAKE HAVEN BREKKIE & B-BALL CLUB

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (20:52): Lake Haven Brekkie & B-ball Club has resumed at Lake Haven Recreation Centre after being in hibernation for a year due to COVID restrictions. The club is run by Y Space Central Coast, focusing on food insecurity and mental and physical health among 12- to 18-year-olds in the Lake Haven region. Australian charities report that demand for food relief has increased by 47 per cent, with young people the hardest hit by the impact of the pandemic. On Monday and Wednesday Brekkie & B-ball is a social occasion to meet up with other young people, starting the day with healthy food and fitness. That has the benefit of a great health boost in the morning. The club has been running for over 12 years with the support of Central Coast Council's Lake Haven Recreation Centre and volunteers. Y Space Central Coast officially opened in 2019 and has delivered 107 sessions to 5,048 participants, averaging 47 young people per session. Partners and supporters include Gorokan High School student support staff, Ability Options, IGA Xpress Kanwal, Lakelands and Toukley neighbourhood centres, The Benevolent Society and the Rotary Club of Northlakes Toukley.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:53): A number of International Women's Day events were held throughout the electorate recently and on Sunday 7 March it was an honour to be involved in the special

event at the Cowra Information and Neighbourhood Centre [CINC]. Celebrating with about 40 other guests, it was a very pleasant afternoon of great food and even greater company, with the fabulous team at CINC once again outdoing themselves. Special thanks must go to Marion, Fran, Katie, Jess, Tess and Zeeden of CINC—what a team. Thanks also go to Margaret, Linda and Rosa—I understand they were responsible for the food served on the day—as well as to the very fabulous and very talented Raintree band, who provided the entertainment. Thanks to Heath, Will, Viv, Graham, Phillipa and Rachel. Finally, a big thankyou to hostess Cheryl Speechley for kindly opening up her home and garden for this special occasion. The value of simply getting together cannot be underestimated and the CINC team does it so well, time and again. I congratulate them.

EAST GOSFORD COMMUNITY GARDEN

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:54): I send the fondest of greetings to every community member who participates either regularly or irregularly in the joy of the East Gosford Community Garden. Locals from near and far join this gorgeous group every Saturday morning between 9.00 a.m. and 12.00 p.m. to rake leaves, weed gardens, sample the harvest, admire the garden, learn about plant species, trim trees and enjoy the company and the serenity on the corner of Wells Street and Henry Parry Drive. I congratulate and thank Cheralyn Darcey from Coast FM for running a fabulous Gardening in Small Spaces workshop last month. I also express gratitude to the East Gosford Lions Club for its generosity in supporting the ongoing existence of the community garden and for its wonderful catering. I compliment Carole for her delicious green tomato and orange jelly, alongside all the other garden harvest chefs. Gardening joy, soothing souls and a tasty harvest are all available free every Saturday at the East Gosford Community Garden. I thank everyone involved.

CLEM AND THERESE GORMAN

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:54): I acknowledge two gifted writers, Clem and Therese Gorman, both of whom are constituents of mine in the electorate of Terrigal. In 2020 their book *Intrépide* was published by Monash University Press. *Intrépide* focuses on the stories of female Australian artists in France in the early twentieth century. The book ensures that their achievements and their contributions to art are not forgotten. The book also highlights how those artists brought modernism and modernist art styles home to Australia. Clem has been an admirable member of the arts community, pioneering experimental theatre in Australia and writing nine non-fiction books. Therese has also written many stage plays. They now co-author books on the visual arts and they are currently working on a biography of Sydney artist Wendy Sharpe. I congratulate Clem and Therese on their impressive book sales and for their dedication to Australian art history. Again we are very proud to have them as members of the Central Coast.

GREEK INDEPENDENCE BICENTENARY

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (20:55): On 25 March we celebrated the 200th anniversary of Greek independence, the bicentenary of the Greek revolution, which saw that proud country rise up against Ottoman rule in 1821. For generations my electorate of Summer Hill has been home to the Greek families who built our suburbs and who have played a key role in creating the vibrant and diverse melting pot that our community has proudly become. The Inner West Council took the historic step of renaming the Marrickville Road precinct Little Greece to honour that important anniversary and to recognise the cultural influence of the Greek community, including amazing businesses—some of my favourites—like Lamia Super Deli, the Hellenic Patisserie, the Athena Cake Shop—I have to say that it is very good—Faros Brothers Seafood and the Corinthian Rotisserie Restaurant, which has been there for almost 40 years. In Little Greece you will also find the beautiful St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, the ATLAS Community & Cultural Centre and the Greek Welfare Centre, which all provide vital services and support to our diverse community every single day. This Greek Independence Day let us all celebrate the rich contribution of that community. Happy independence day to all Greeks who call the inner west home.

MUDGEES INDOOR SWIMMING CLUB

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (20:56): I recognise the recent success of the Mudgee Indoor Swimming Club. In February the western area championships were held in Dubbo. The Mudgee team claimed an impressive 28 first places, 20 second places and 19 third places. Over the weekend the 14-strong team competed in over 120 events and achieved a total of 40 personal bests. A very special mention to Nate Atkinson, who won all 10 of his races and also set five records in the process. Excellent work, Nate! Kelly Constable, Charlotte Wilson and Alastair Neaverson-Smith all achieved five first-place wins each. It is fantastic to see the Mudgee swimmers reap the rewards of all their hard work and dedication. I give a shout-out to all the parents and congratulate all involved.

ARABIC MEN'S LUNCH

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (20:57): It was a pleasure to be the guest speaker at the Arabic men's lunch hosted by CORE Community Services in conjunction with Mentoring Men, which gathered to discuss the

process of mentoring for men in the Fairfield community. The lunch was well attended and was carried out in a COVID-safe environment. I offer my gratitude to Mr John Buraho and the team at CORE Community Services, and Ms Angela Guestrau, Mr Ian Westmoreland and Mr John Milham from Mentoring Men for their support of the local refugee men who attended the workshop and lunch. We are very grateful to have the services of Mentoring Men in the Fairfield community. The organisation provides vital assistance to raise awareness and lower the rate of Australian male suicide, which is currently over three times that of the female rate of suicide. In the words of Mentoring Men, "Men being supported by men creates a community of care." I congratulate Mentoring Men and CORE Community Services on a successful event.

LEANNE IVANOFF

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:58): I congratulate Ms Leanne Ivanoff, who has expanded her small local business from her back shed into a shopfront on the main street of Narrandera. Leanne's story is one of great success after starting out eight years ago in her back shed. Sew Fab is a one-stop shop sewing centre that offers a community space and supplies everything sewing related. Sew Fab offers classes for those who want to learn how to use sewing machines as well as dressmaking classes, bag-making classes and quilting. Those workshops are a wonderful initiative for women of all ages within the Narrandera community who want to learn those very useful skills. Well done to Leanne. I love hearing about small businesses that are succeeding and growing in our regional local government areas as a result of hard work and with the help of local support.

SALVATION ARMY

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:59): I say a massive thankyou to the Salvation Army at Erina for all the amazingly generous work that they do to support members of our community across the Central Coast. I also thank our active soldiers across the coast, including older active soldiers who contribute generously to the Soup, Soap and Salvation program on a regular basis. We are honoured to have Captain Carole Smith leading our community. She provides visionary support to create solutions for homelessness across the coast as our real estate market becomes more costly and unaffordable for those on lower incomes. She also provides great leadership within the Salvos. I encourage the team to continue to investigate and create innovative solutions to the existing housing crisis and to reach out with hand and heart to support those in need. We are very privileged to live in such a wonderfully caring, giving and loving community. I thank all those at the Salvation Army for their incredible work and for their generosity in our community.

CENTRAL COAST RFS BRIGADES

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (21:00): As Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast I congratulate and acknowledge the three Central Coast RFS brigades and their members, who were highly commended for community service and activity as part of the annual Australia Day awards. Patonga Beach RFS is an integral part of the isolated Patonga community; Berkeley Vale RFS has been operating for 65 years, performing emergency response, hazard reduction and community education and engagement; and Spencer RFS provides peace of mind to the isolated community in Spencer and surrounding suburbs. All three brigades provide fire and emergency services and also training, community education and prevention work. During the devastating 2020 bushfire season, members and volunteers spent countless hours diligently and selflessly keeping their respective communities safe, as well as lending a hand to others in need across New South Wales. On behalf of the Central Coast community I congratulate those three outstanding brigades for being highly commended at the Australia Day awards.

WE CARE CONNECT

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (21:01): The Central Coast primary and high schools donated over 200 back-to-school backpacks, which included lunch boxes, drink bottles, stationery items and workbooks through We Care Connect. Many families found it difficult to provide their children with the basics they needed to return to school, from pencil cases and drink bottles to uniforms, backpacks, socks and shoes. We Care Connect shared its campaign with community organisations that were willing to help with back-to-school donations. The Wyong Rugby League Club's grant program helped with the purchase of items, community members donated \$4,400 to the fundraising appeal and many local residents donated new items as part of the campaign. The families were over the moon at receiving back-to-school packs, knowing that their kids would return to school with the same supplies as their classmates. We Care Connect supports thousands of children across the Central Coast, providing items for families who need help urgently.

MATHEW MILLER

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (21:02): It is fantastic to see the work that has been done by Skillset in our regions around training, employment and career development. It is great to see that it is helping to make a difference to people like Dubbo's own Mathew Miller. Mathew was awarded Skillset Apprentice of the Month in

January for his positive approach to work, his natural aptitude for his trade and, most recently, for his outstanding scores in his TAFE assessments. Mathew is currently completing his fourth year in a light vehicle mechanical apprenticeship with Dubbo City Toyota, where he is described as being an exceptional and committed apprentice. The State Government is a proud supporter of Skillset, which is helping to create meaningful pathways into training and employment across the region. It is wonderful to see people like Mathew benefit from that. I congratulate Mathew on that well-deserved award and wish him the best of luck in his future career.

ASHFIELD PIRATES

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (21:03): Congratulations to the Ashfield Pirates, one of the fastest growing soccer clubs in the inner west. The club has signed over 500 new players for the 2021 season. Recently I had the pleasure of meeting with the ever-enthusiastic President of the Ashfield Pirates, Jean Kouriel. I learnt more about his ambitious plans to grow the club and develop soccer in Ashfield. In addition to its six men's and 18 junior teams, the Pirates have made a real effort to encourage girls onto the pitch by hiring a women's technical director and hosting a women's football weekend. There is a field dedicated solely for junior girls to get their skills up to play this season. The Pirates are also working on an exciting new outreach program in local schools, including a breakfast club that uses the club's canteen on wheels, to ensure that no child in Ashfield faces a day at school without breakfast. I was inspired by the energy and excitement in the club and I am thrilled to see soccer go from strength to strength in Ashfield. I wish the Pirates the best of luck for this season.

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (21:04): I make special mention of the lovely village of Galong for its efforts on Clean Up Australia Day, Sunday 7 March. Galong locals Kerry Luke-Browning, Tina Cooney, Jodi Beavis, Jono Pitt, Seamus and John Killick, and Ayeisha Atallah joined forces to pick up rubbish around the village, which by all accounts was much improved from previous years. On the day the hard workers were rewarded with a barbecue lunch hosted by volunteers to show their appreciation of the efforts made for Galong. It is important for communities both large and small to come together and take pride in the appearance of their town or village by doing what they can to help on Clean Up Australia Day. I wish them all the very best in their future endeavours. Galong is a beautiful little town. I love visiting and I look forward to going back there soon to see the fruits of their hard work.

Community Recognition Notices

DALE DONADEL

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I am proud to congratulate Ms Dale Donadel on her nomination for the 2021 Local Woman of the Year Award for Bankstown. Ms Donadel has been a long-standing pillar of the Bankstown community. As the manager of the Chester Hill Neighbourhood Centre, she has proved invaluable to the Centre and the services it provides to residents in Chester Hill as well as the broader Bankstown community. For over two decades, Dale has provided immense guidance and support to the organisation, enabling the Centre to thrive. The theme for International Women's Day 2021 is 'Choose to Challenge', a reminder for all women to take a chance and follow their dreams. In our local community, Dale is an inspiration for all women. Ms Donadel has consistently demonstrated her passion and dedication towards the local community, organising several community initiatives as a committee member of the Canterbury Bankstown Local Government Area 'Connecting' Program. I congratulate Ms Donadel on her well-deserved achievement, and I commend Ms Donadel for her tremendous contribution and commitment towards the local community. I also wish the many inspirational women in my electorate a Happy International Women's Day!

DICK PAYTEN PARK

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I was honoured together with my husband, Alex Kuskoff, to attend the renaming ceremony for Dick Payten Reserve on 1 March 2021, where I had the opportunity to pay respects to a World War II hero, a noble Bankstown resident and a dear friend. Mr Dick Payten OAM was a brigadier during the World War II, serving his nation in the Middle East, Borneo, and New Guinea. Upon his return from war, Mr Payten moved to Bankstown and became a dedicated advocate for recognising and honouring the sacrifices of his fellow soldiers. He was the President of the 7th Division AIF Association and a longstanding member of Bankstown legacy. Mr Payten was committed to serving his community and I am proud that his sacrifices have now been officially and permanently recognised by the renaming of this park, located at the intersection of the Hume Highway and Miller Road. I would like to thank Mr Payten's children and their partners, Mrs Jen & Mr Paul Krahn, Ms Lyn Brown, Mrs Sue & Mr Ian Swinfield, and Mr Rod & Mrs Judy Payten, as well as Dick's grandchildren and great grandchildren for their efforts in preserving his amazing legacy.

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY 2021

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—I acknowledge those that took part in Clean Up Australia on 2 March 2021. In particular I would like to highlight the work of the NSW SES Swansea – Catherine Hill Bay Unit which removed car parts, tyres, household furniture, bottles, cans, and other rubbish from both the Wallarah National Park and Catherine Hill Bay. It is pleasing to hear there seems to be a reduction in rubbish and waste in the national park due to efforts to combat illegal dumping. Clean Up Australia Day is an important community initiative that helps promote not only cleaning up our local environment but also raising awareness about the environmental impacts of littering and illegal dumping. I would like to thank the hard work of all those across the Swansea electorate that took part in Clean Up Australia Day 2021.

ZACH MITCHELL

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—I congratulate Zach Mitchell from The Lakes Surf Life Saving Club for his victory at the 2021 New South Wales Age Surf Life Saving Championships. Zach took out the Under 10 board race in a highly competitive race. The victory was Zach's first state medal. After the race Zach told the Central Coast Community News "I was just, no matter what, coming down that wave I knew I had a state medal" going on to state "it feels amazing and I'll never forget that race". The victory is not only a fantastic result for Zach but also the Lakes SLSC, that does fantastic work in promoting a healthy and active lifestyle via its nippers program. Congratulations to Zach on his victory and to all the other competitors for getting the opportunity to represent so many great surf life saving clubs from around our state.

AJITA CANNINGS

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)—I offer my congratulations to Ms Ajita Cannings who late last year was selected to participate in the 2021 Bell Shakespeare Regional Teacher Mentorship Programme. Ms Cannings is a drama teacher at the Evans River K-12 Community School and she will travel to Sydney for specialist training in the innovative active teaching of Shakespeare as well as have the opportunity to network with other participating teachers from regional, rural and remote parts of Australia. The Mentorship Programme provides professional development for those teachers who would usually not have access to such opportunities. I wish Ms Cannings every success not only within the Programme but in her teaching career.

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY SITES IN WALLSEND

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)—Clean Up Australia Day recognises the beauty of Australia's natural and built environment and the responsibility of each and every Australian in maintaining the vitality of our pristine natural environment. On Sunday, 7 March, more than 500,000 volunteers put on a pair of gloves and picked up the rubbish littering our local parks, bushland, creeks and streets. Across Australia there were 7,000 clean-up sites with a number across the Wallsend electorate, including Minmi, Fletcher, Maryland, Wallsend, Lambton and New Lambton. Thank you to all the people who have taken the time to get involved and for each suite supervisor who has gone the extra mile to set up a site. Thanks to Kate, John, Liam and Sarah Stokes, Alexis Pagoulatos, Jess Groth, and Jackie, Glenn, Max and Ruby Barrett, Emily, Daniel and Lily Senkalski, Michael and Colleen Abberfield and Rob Campbell, John Jackson and Rochelle Grainger, and the crew from Fire + Rescue NSW Station 377 Minmi, Captain Evan Dowling, Craig Allan, Mick Hodges, Daryl Howard and Graham Moore. It was fantastic to see the community spirit as everyone came together to help out.

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY LAMBTON

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)—Clean Up Australia Day recognises the beauty of Australia's natural and built environment and the responsibility of each and every Australian in maintaining the vitality of our pristine natural environment. On Sunday 7 March more than 500,000 volunteers put on a pair of gloves and picked up the rubbish littering our local parks, bushland, creeks and streets. Across Australia there were 7,000 clean-up sites including one at Ker-rai Creek and Lambton Park Playground. Thank you to all the people who have taken the time to get involved and for each suite supervisor who has gone the extra mile to set up a site. Thank you to Mark, Katrina and Riley Brooker from The Local community newspaper, Tilly Preston, Ian Moir, Lindsay and Leigh Marshall, Dianne Williams, Angela and Richard Smith, Samantha and Andrew Passlow, Harry Harris, Scott Callum, Rebecca Hall, Khuslen Batmandakh, Helen Battchuel, Mary Webster, Lillian and John Harding, Greg and Nate Dixon, Andy McNulty, Jane Book, Andrew, Thomas and Elizabeth Woodcock, Odette, Bastian and Tansy Tonkin, Angela Johnston, Joanne Lamberd, Sanj and Ryan Gupta, Samantha Khoo, Hugb Greene, Tom Rayner, Anne Varela and Councillor Declan Clausen for your great show of community spirit.

MIRACLE MILE

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—There are many unmissable events on the Campbelltown calendar every year. The 24 Hour Fight Against Cancer walkathon, the Campbelltown City Challenge Walk and

the Fishers Ghost Festival – just to name a few. But there is no doubt that the Miracle Mile also belongs on that list. The biggest and most prestigious event at Club Menangle attracts a plethora of locals every year. 2021 was no different. There is always a lot of hype leading into the race. The talented field always means there are a number of horses in with a wonderful chance to take out the coveted race. This year the hot favourite was King of Swing – and when it came time to stepping up on the big stage, he stepped up. There were plenty of happy people at Club Menangle following the result but it's fair to say everyone who attended had a great night. Thank you to all the organisers who helped put on the event once again. It takes a lot of people working in unison to make an occasion run so smoothly and the fact that it did is a credit to you all. I can't wait for the 2022 instalment.

RUSE EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—The importance of childcare, early learning centres and preschools can and should never be understated. As a parent, it's a particularly nerve-wracking when you see your children head off to preschool or an early learning centre for the first time. That's why we are so fortunate to have a plethora of great centres in Campbelltown. Recently I attended the opening of the newly renovated, Ruse Early Learning Centre. I was extremely impressed by the kindness of the children and the care and dedication of the staff. The children were clearly thriving in the learning environment which ultimately is a reflection on the staff. I had the pleasure to chat with a number of the staff while I was there and they provided a wonderful insight into the inner workings of the centre. I also spoke with a number of the children and as you would expect, they had some quirky takes on the world. Thank you to everyone at Ruse Early Learning Centre for having me out and showing me the newly renovated centre. It is a facility that children, their parents and staff can all be proud of.

CHATHAM POST OFFICE

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I congratulate Chatham Post Office after they were recently named the number one post office in the state at Australia Post's Licensee Awards. Chatham Post Office received the award for excellence in customer service and Post Office operations. Australia Post's executive General Manager, Nicole Sheffield praised Chatham Post Office for their unwavering focus on customers and supporting the local community during a difficult year. Our post offices have become an essential hub for the community and I'm proud that the Manning Valley can officially say it is home to the best post office in the State. I commend and congratulate the staff of Chatham Post Office for their outstanding work and hope this award will only further encourage them to continue their outstanding work.

SHELLEY MAY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I congratulate Forster local Shelley May on her first ever art exhibition. The talented graphic designer has created a number of stunning digital illustrations of birds from Australia and across the world for her exhibition called 'Birds Eye View'. The inspiration behind the exhibition comes from Shelley's love and fascination of birds and their funny little quirks and personalities. Each artwork is named after a bird Shelley has met in real life including her birds Lemmy the almost 17 year old cockatiel and Maui the 6 year old Sun Conure. Her vibrant artworks are currently on display at the Hallidays Point library. I again congratulate Shelley on her wonderful artistry and hope she continues to find success in her future creative endeavours.

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL IMAMS COUNCIL - CHRISTCHURCH MASSACRE COMMEMORATION

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I recognise the Christchurch Massacre Commemoration 2021 held at Campsie on 15 March 2021. The event was organised by the Australian National Imams Council (ANIC). It commemorated the second anniversary of the Christchurch massacre where 51 innocent lives were taken and many injured at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. A number of speeches were delivered at the Commemoration, including by the ANIC President, Imam Shadi Alsuleiman and the Mufti of Australia Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammed. The event was MC'd by Bilal Rauf. It concluded with the reading of the names of the victims and a supplication by Imam Ahmed Abdo, President of the Council of Imams NSW. Particularly powerful speeches were given about islamophobia in Australia by Rana Alasmar (herself the victim of a vicious assault) and Ramia Sultan. This event was important in remembering the horrific events at Christchurch and in combatting islamophobia everywhere.

LIVERPOOL NEIGHBOURHOOD CONNECTIONS

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I recognise Liverpool Neighbourhood Connections (LNC), a very impressive organisation based in Warwick Farm within the electorate of Liverpool. On 4 March I attended an event which launched an Evaluation of the effectiveness of LNC's Community Development Program in helping what are termed families in crisis. As the Evaluation notes, the target area of LNC's efforts has been disproportionately affected by poverty and social exclusion. The program has a particular focus on empowering

women and the evaluation finds it in particular has transformed the lives of migrant and refugee women and their families. The evaluation research was carried out by Western Sydney University with a view to developing an evidence base to assist with the funding of LNC. The launch heard that LNC has developed seven social enterprises, sees 22 000 people each year and runs 65 different programs each week. The event also saw a screening of a video about the work of LNC, produced pro bono by the Content People. Central to the success of the LNC is its impressive and indefatigable CEO Pat Hall. The event heard from Pat Hall and LNC's Chairperson Carole-Anne Priest among others.

MEG PURSER

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—Today I'd like to acknowledge 2021 Charlestown Woman of the Year, Meg Purser. Meg, who passed away in January after a short battle with breast cancer, was an extraordinary woman. As a public relations professional she stayed quietly behind the scenes, but she did so much work to benefit our community. On International Women's Day I presented the local Woman of the Year certificate to Meg's husband Scott, her parents Bob and Noleen, and several of her employees and spent some time with them listening to stories of Meg's work and legacy. Meg was on the board of, and part of the organisation of, several charities and not for profit organisations. She did a huge amount to mentor young people looking to enter the PR profession. She sought out, recognised and encouraged talent. I was told she was the best in the business at connecting people, and worked to build mutually beneficial relationships between organisations. I only wish the award had not been presented posthumously—but I cannot think of a more worthy recipient.

RYLAN MCELHONE

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—Rylan McElhone, a student at St Mary's Primary School at Warners Bay, is a member of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle's Virtual Academy, a program aimed at supporting gifted students from years 5-8 across the Diocese. As part of his involvement in the program, Rylan was asked to research a solution to a problem he felt compelled to solve. Interested in growing and cooking his own food, animal rights and welfare and sustainable food production, Rylan has designed a vegan burger that he thinks will challenge people's perceptions of eating plant-based meat. Rylan created an online survey asking peers and adults what it was that might persuade them to eat plant-based meat, analysed the responses and designed a new type of vegan burger. The burger uses kale, spinach, mushrooms and chia seeds as an alternative to beef. Rylan told the Newcastle Weekly, "I first became passionate about the plight of animals when I first went vegetarian for Lent in 2019. That year I introduced myself to plant-based products. I didn't know anything about plant-based products and I thought that meat was the best." Rylan's ingenuity and creativity is an inspiration, and I wish him all the best.

LOU BACCHIELLA

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Lou Bacchiella has dedicated the last decade of his life to supporting new migrants, refugees, and the CALD community here in the inner west. Serving as the CEO of Metro Assist for the last 6 years, Lou has helped Metro Assist go from strength to strength, ensuring culturally and linguistically diverse communities are able to receive critical support, from caseworkers who speak their language. Established in 1986 as Canterbury Bankstown Migrant Resource Centre, to assist new migrants, Metro Assist has expanded its footprint across the inner west helping thousands of migrant families build their new lives in Australia. Metro Assist provides a range of community services including migrant settlement, family support and early intervention, emergency relief, tenancy services, and employment support. While Lou may be moving on, his legacy will continue to be felt and remembered, by all those whose lives have been transformed thanks to Metro Assist. I am told Lou is looking forward to his well-deserved retirement and will be enjoying gardening and home renovations in his spare time. Congratulations Lou for your years of invaluable service and thank you for your important contribution to the well-being of our local communities.

CREW CAFE, ASHFIELD

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Crews Cafe, Ashfield, is helping to break the cycle of poverty by up-skilling the hospitality workers of tomorrow. The Bill Crews Foundation has partnered with TAFE NSW to deliver a 12-14 week in-house program at the Crews Cafe, providing employment and skills opportunities for people who are unemployed or underemployed. The program ensures those currently experiencing social disadvantage are not further marginalised as unemployment continues to rise during the COVID-19 pandemic. The partnership also highlights just how important education institutions like TAFE are at helping to pull people out of poverty by teaching them a job skill. Graduates of the program will be qualified with a Certificate I or Certificate II in Hospitality and will have had hands-on experience serving customers at Crews Cafe. The program also provides students with interview and resume writing skills to aid in gaining future employment in the hospitality industry. Thank you to all the staff at TAFE NSW and The Bill Crews Foundation for your ongoing support in helping some of the most vulnerable inner westies get a fresh start and a new career.

MUNGUNDI COMMUNITY

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise the Mungindi Community for their resilience. With a population of 600, the border town straddles the Barwon River, with half the town in NSW and half, including the Hospital, in Queensland. This town has stuck together through a long drought, the loss of employment, the pre-Christmas fire and then COVID. After the fire that swept through the main street destroying the community's butcher shop, supermarket, and haberdashery, the community would have to travel over an hour for essentials at the nearest town, Moree. A town meeting was called, the local Council made contact and with the assistance of the NSW Government, soon there was a complete market set up in the RSL which has become a meeting place and a platform for locals to learn new skills. As this was happening, the repercussions of COVID hit the remaining businesses and the effect of border closure for the NSW side of town prohibited those people from accessing the hospital on the Queensland side. In spite of it all the town continued to work together. A store manager from Queensland asked to help run the community store remarked that he was "just gob-smacked at how resilient and adaptable everyone was." I congratulate Anna Harrison and Steve, Jack Picton, Scott Brown, Shane Taylor, Pete Prosser and the entire Mungindi community. I commend Mungindi in Anna Harrison's words "because we are a community that would just not sit back and let it die, we have too much spirit for that."

CEDDA O'NEILL

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise an extraordinary man on the land, Cedda O'Neill, for his example of resilience, honesty, integrity, and maintaining a gentility that I hope is not lost in our modern times. Cedda is a local, born and bred, of my electorate and has raised sheep and cattle all his life. He works primarily alone, maintaining the house, sheds, shearing shed, yards, fences, bridges and machinery that either he or his father built in the early 1900s. He has built and maintained a successful line of breeders in spite of the recent drought, hand feeding and scrub cutting on his own. His busy life includes a community that respects him for his hard work, his devotion to church, and exemplary courtesy. I don't think Cedda has ever refused a request for help. I congratulate Cedda O'Neill for the prosperity he brought to "Banyandah" and in demonstrating enduring self-sufficiency. I commend Cedda for his resilience during the challenging times of drought and flood on the Moree Plains.

RECOGNISING CHRIS CLEARY

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the Rotary Districts of NSW 2020 Inspirational Woman of the Year and Health Inspirational Woman of the Year Christine Cleary, a Hills District Local. Chris was acknowledged for her 2014 founding of the charity 'StreetMed', a medical charity working on giving homeless people the opportunity to get medical check-ups and mental health support. Having been homeless herself when she was younger, before retraining as a medic, Chris knows all too well the difficulties that accompany living on the street, and as such her Charity is tailor made to provide the right support. Blood pressure and blood sugar tests are the main form of testing that StreetMed provides, but has now branched out and created StreetPets that, with the support of Petbarn, are providing food and veterinary support to the animal companions of the homeless, who are often their only support structure. Recently, StreetMed were awarded a defibrillator by St Johns Ambulance in order to continue to provide the best care they can. Once again my congratulations go to Chris, it is well deserved.

RELAY FOR LIFE LAUNCH

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I recently had the pleasure of attending the annual Hills Relay for Life Launch at the Event Cinemas in Castle Hill. Once again the event was a tremendous success, and, as we now enter the 20th year of the charity making great inroads into cancer research, the team continues to grow. Despite only having the launch a few weeks ago, they've already raised \$17,000 this year, with much more to go, adding to the \$4 million raised in the last 2 decades. This is all leading up to the relay itself, which will be back at the Castle Hill Showground following last year's innovative Relay from Home. It will be a 5 hour socially distanced event on May 15 and I'd encourage everyone who can to get involved. I would like to thank Ruth Didsbury and Bev Jordan for their continued hard work, and also acknowledge the Castle Hill Bowling Club who recently gave a \$1000 donation to the cause. Once again my best wishes go out to the charity for the relay, and I thank them for all the hard work they have done and will continue to do.

GRIND ESPRESSO

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—I congratulate Grind Espresso owners and Cronulla icons Richard and Donna Calabro, who were recently nominated to receive the 'Local Hero Award' from the Cronulla Chamber of Commerce. The nomination recognises the Calabros' enormously successful Christmas Day charity drive, Grind 101. For the last

seven years, Grind Espresso has opened its doors for one 'power hour' on Christmas Day and donated all the proceeds from their sales to a charity. In 2020, they raised more than \$3,000, which was donated to the Steve Waugh Foundation to support children with rare diseases. In past years, funds have been donated to Orana Sutherland Services, One Meal and the 2019 bushfire appeal.

BLAKE "TEDDY" RHODES - LISMORE YOUTH FESTIVAL

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I wish to congratulate Bundjalung man Blake Rhodes on his extraordinary contribution to engaging and empowering young people in our community. Blake is a well-known and successful hip hop artist in our region. Blake has had a long standing commitment to working in the community and has made a lasting impact on so many young people. He has done this through many initiatives including the Lismore Youth Festival, Dream Bigger and NORPA. This year he is breathing life back into the Lismore Quad, organising the Lismore Youth Festival on April 15 and 16. He seeks to give confidence back to local young artists after a year not performing due to COVID-19. I commend Blake on bringing his work with Dream Bigger and NORPA to the Youth Festival which will platform local Indigenous young people. Bringing culture to centre stage. Blake talks about growing up in Lismore and the need for more opportunities for young people, particularly to express themselves creatively. He is taking that initiative and bringing such great opportunities to young people growing up here now. I commend Blake on his work and look forward to seeing what he achieves in the future.

HARRIS CYCLE CO - 103 YEARS IN KEEN ST LISMORE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I wish to congratulate Harris Cycle Co also known as Harris Cycles on 103 successful years of trading at 85 Keen St, Lismore. They are now moving across the river to 63 bridge St, North Lismore. Harris Cycles has been an institution in Lismore for over a century. It is a go to bike shop for riders of all abilities. I congratulate owner Darryl Pursey and partner Jo Bonaccorsi, mechanic Darren Speers and all the staff on keeping the business going strong during COVID 19. I'm told they had a surge in business as many during lockdown sought to take up cycling as a fun way to keep fit. Harris Cycles was founded in 1918 by Harold Wotherspoon and Cecil Harris. It has been in the Wotherspoon family ever since. As part of this rich history they have an 1884 penny farthing suspended from the ceiling. It is one of the longest continuously operating bike shops in the country surviving two world wars, pandemics, floods and more. I wish Harris Cycles well in their move over to North Lismore. I look forward to seeing another 100 years of Harris Cycle Co.

SUNRISE MEDICAL

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—Sunrise Medical, an Australian leader in disability services, recently opened their brand new facility at Wetherill Park. Sunrise Medical is a world leader in the development, design and manufacturing of manual and powered wheelchairs as well as other mobility products. The new facility will allow the company to expand its offering to customers by creating a one stop shop for people to create, design and purchase a brand new wheelchair. The new showroom will feature 14 family brands, with 27 wheelchairs available on display. It will also allow the company to increase capacity and provide a happier working environment for the employees, with more space and breakout areas. It is the culmination of the hard work and substantial growth of Sunrise Medical in recent years. Thank you to the team at Sunrise Medical especially Managing Director, Justin Wanschers for your commitment to our community and customer service. It was exciting to be present for the new chapter of Sunrise Medical with the official opening in Wetherill Park and it will bring more jobs and investment to the Electorate of Prospect.

ST ANTHONY OF PADUA CATHOLIC SCHOOL, TOONGABBIE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—St Anthony of Padua Catholic Church Toongabbie is a wonderful parish that is ably led by Father Joby Kadambattu. The commitment to benefitting others that is shown by the team at St Anthony's is to be commended. I know from firsthand experience how much it is appreciated by the Toongabbie and wider Western Sydney community. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic St Anthony's continued to serve the community through hosting live streamed masses, to allow people to remain connected to their faith, throughout the challenges of lockdown and public health restrictions. St Anthony's charitable work helped those who were greatly impacted financially in 2020 and was vital in helping people get back on their feet. The work they do in fundraising for the St Vincent De Paul Society with the 'Vinnie's Basket' and Caritas Australia directly impacts people's lives by providing support services as well as goods such as clothes and food to those in need. Thank you Father Joby Kadambattu and the team at St Anthony of Padua Catholic Church, Toongabbie for your commitment to community service.

ST GEORGE PRIVATE HOSPITAL

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, it is an honour as a local Member of Parliament to promote the fantastic health facilities that we have readily available throughout the St George area. In October last year,

St George Private Hospital opened their \$26 million day oncology centre which provides a state of the art cancer treatment centre for our local community. The new centre is six times the size of the previous facility allowing 35 to 45 patients to access treatment every single day. Chief Executive of St George Hospital, Peter Ridley, has done an outstanding job at getting this centre open and it is has been highly anticipated for a number of years. The nature theme throughout the facility makes patients feel more at ease and the larger floor plan allows them to have more personal space and more room for loved ones. This is an outstanding development and I look forward to hearing all the positive stories and great feedback on the precinct. Well done to the entire team at St George Private Hospital.

MARIST COLLEGE KOGARAH

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, we all know that the HSC can be a difficult time for all students but it is also a great opportunity for students to push themselves and achieve new academic heights. Today I am proud to recognise a number of students from Marist College Kogarah on some outstanding results in last years' HSC. These include:

- Andrew Kozarovski- Monsignor O'Driscoll Award
- Dean Stoupis- Cardinal Gilroy Award
- Patrick Smith- Creative and Performing Arts Award
- Hugh Africa- Sportsman of the Year
- Daniel Barrett- Excellence in Vocational Education
- Christopher Grasso- TVET Award for Most Outstanding Student
- Dylan Beretov- Daren Byrne Award for Fraternity
- Danny Nikolovski- ADF Long Tan Leadership Award
- Chester King Damaso- Archbishop's Award for Student Excellence

I would also like to acknowledge House Captain's: Hugh Africa, Jimmy Vettom, Matthew Daniel and Samuel Bertuzzi for their role in building comradery and mateship at the school. These are all outstanding achievements and I wish them and their classmates all the best in their future endeavours. Well done everyone.

AUTISM SPECTRUM AUSTRALIA LOFTUS CAMPUS OPENING

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—Last month I attended the Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) official opening of their Loftus Campus. Aspect is Australia's largest autism-specific service provider delivering services for people with autism of all ages. The new Loftus campus is part of the Aspect South East Sydney School and is replacing the Kirrawee campus which had been rented for many years and I am thrilled Aspect now has a permanent home in Loftus. There are six classes at Loftus ranging from Kindergarten to Year 6. Last year I was happy to be able to assist Aspect in the 2020 Community Building Partnership Program with a grant for \$20,000 for an electric sign. I commend Aspect on their crucial service to the community and look forward to continuing to work with them into the future.

IMOGEN ANDREWS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I would like to congratulate Mulgoa electorate local, Imogen Andrews, who was part of the Children's Week Parliament in 2020 alongside ninety other outstanding children and representing eighty-nine NSW electorates. This year's Children's Week Parliament was held online due to COVID-19, but all the participants were given the opportunity to deliver a one minute speech about an issue they are passionate about that affects children and young people in NSW. Imogen shared confidently her perspective on animal cruelty and how children treat their pets today will determine how they treat them in the future. Her inspiring passion for this topic was evident and I commend Imogen on her ability to present her thoughts in a clear and direct way. Well done to all the children who participated in Children's Week Parliament in 2020 and a big thank you to Imogen for raising her voice on this important matter.

KAREN FOUNTAINE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I wish to acknowledge Mulgoa resident, Karen Fountaine, who has created the Mulgoa Community Book Exchange to encourage local readers to share their books with other like-minded people in the community. In October last year, Karen had the idea to create the Mulgoa Community Book Exchange when she came across a man looking for a new book to read and she shared with him how she used to buy used books for her father to read. From there, Karen took the initiative to create her own signs that read 'Take a Book, Leave a Book', she gathered together some of her own books and approached the owners of

local store, The Friendly Grocer, to ask if they would be willing to allow the exchange to take place on their cart outside the store. Thanks to Karen's simple and brilliant idea, local avid readers have been sharing their favourite stories with others for three months and new stories are always appearing. Congratulations Karen on this wonderful idea and its success so far! I hope to see it continue for all to enjoy.

QUEDESHA GOLLEDGE - ACT WEEK OF GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I congratulate the winner of the ACT Week of Golf Girls Championship for 2021, Quedesha Golledge taking out the tournament by four shots in early January. It has been a stellar start to the golfing season for 16-year-old Quedesha who travelled to Canberra to compete in the 2021 Harvey Norman ACT Week of Golf tournament, claiming victory and taking home the Jack Newton Junior Golf Title. At the tournament, Quedesha's impressive shot making was clearly dominant on the green as the teen soared through three golf courses in Canberra before clinching the win in a nail-biting final at Queanbeyan to secure her maiden major JNIG title. Quedesha is now officially ranked 3072 in the world amateur golf rankings following her success at the ACT Week of Golf and has since joined the Pymble Golf Club through a scholarship to play major pennants as part of the amateur team. Locally, Quedesha is the reigning Kew Country Club women's champion and is highly regarded and respected by golfing members from all across the Mid North Coast. Quedesha clearly has a bright future ahead of her in the golfing world.

EBONY NICHOLAS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I rise to recognise former Camden Haven High School (CHHS) student Ebony Nicholas for her incredible academic achievements in the 2020 High School Certificate, registering the highest ATAR score ever recorded at the School of 97.55. Not many school leavers today can attest to claiming the pinnacle of all honours in academic excellence but Ebony certainly can with her phenomenal ATAR results that has leaped her ahead of any other student at CHHS. Now studying as a first year student at University of New South Wales, Ebony was overjoyed in her overall ATAR score of 97.55 which not only cemented her name into the record books at CHHS but assisted her in obtaining a \$55,000 scholarship towards her university fees. The engineer and science university student recalls fondly the extra primary school science lessons on photosynthesis to high school robotics teams, referring to them as amazing incentives for young girls who wish to pursue a career in STEM, traditionally a male dominated environment. From coding, electronics and mechanics to now building robots at UNSW, Ebony credits where she is today to the tremendous support provided by the teachers at CHHS and her own commitment and drive to succeed in the classroom.

DR MARK FERSON

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron)—I congratulate Dr Mark Ferson, Director of the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, on receiving the Mayor's Award at Randwick Council's Australia Day Community Service Awards. Dr Ferson and his team have been at the forefront of keeping my community safe during the Covid-19 pandemic, overseeing a team of nurses, doctors, epidemiologists, and contact tracers, who have worked assiduously to suppress the virus, and contain its spread whenever a positive case appears. Dr Ferson was the first person to be appointed Director of a Public Health Unit in NSW, over 30 years ago. He also teaches at the UNSW School of Population Health, and the Notre Dame University School of Medicine, and has authored and contributed to more than 150 scientific papers in the field of public health and infectious diseases. Last year was an enormous challenge for our public health system and health professionals like Dr Ferson. The District rose to that challenge and our low case numbers and high degree of freedom is a testament to their success. I congratulate Dr Ferson on his receipt of the Mayor's award and commend his service to the House.

RANDWICK PETERSHAM CRICKET CLUB

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron)—Congratulations are in order for the mighty Randwick Petersham Cricket Club, who are the 2020-21 1st Grade Limited Overs Cup Champions. The Randy-Petes defeated red-hot favourites Sydney away in a nail biter at Drummoyne Oval, posting 232 in their innings and dismissing Sydney for 224 off the second last ball of the match. Anthony Sams was a deserved man of the match, posting the team's top score of 44, taking 6 dismissals including a stumping at keeper. This is a great achievement for this proud and historic Club and I know their exceptional President Mike Whitney will expect nothing less than for the team to go back-to-back next year. Congratulations to all the players, their coach, and their support staff.

CAMERON JOHNSTON, CJ SIGNS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—I congratulate Cameron Johnston, owner and operator of CJ Signs, who recently won the Cronulla Business Chamber's 'Local Hero' award. At the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Cameron did complimentary sign-writing work for local businesses to help them promote their products and services during a time of unprecedented downturn. Receiving his award, Cameron said: "People are doing it a bit hard. I thought

I could give something back, just for the love of it. It'll put a smile on people's faces." He also acknowledged current Chamber President, Mark Aprilovic, who helped him to buy some ladders when he first started his business in the early 1990s. Cameron is now a firm believer in the philosophy of 'paying it forward'. He is very deserving of this recognition from the business community.

SHELLHARBOUR CULTURAL TREASURES FESTIVAL

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—Congratulations to Shellharbour City Council ALP Mayor Marianne Saliba for again inviting residents to come together to celebrate multiculturalism at this year's Cultural Treasures Festival during Harmony Week. COVID-19 hasn't hindered Mayor Saliba's determination to celebrate the rich cultural diversity of the Illawarra region and as she said "it will be a feast for the senses". The official opening was held yesterday with an Aboriginal Welcome to Country and traditional cultural dance from the Aboriginal experience and education group, Gumaraa. During this week there will be Aboriginal story time and craft, an African bead bracelet workshop, movie screenings, Indian cooking classes, a bread making workshop plus lots of entertainment including a Mexican Mariachi band. All these activities will be free and they ultimately encourage the coming together of friends, neighbours and loved ones to join in the fun and experience the splendour of different cultures. Multiculturalism is an important feature of Shellharbour and I believe that we should take every opportunity to celebrate it and never forget how much it enriches our lives. So again congratulations to Mayor Saliba for continuing to show us the way it should be done.

BEACH STREET SURF SCENE SHELLHARBOUR

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I extend my congratulations to Beach Street Surf Scene Shellharbour for their continued commitment to the community of Shellharbour for the last 30 years particularly their sponsorship of sporting organisations, simply staying in business for that long is an achievement in of itself. As I understand it your company has been supplying the people of Illawarra with good quality surf, skate and life style brands firstly in Warilla in a small store, moving to where you are now at Surra place Shellharbour. You have been the exemplar of community values, a family business owned and operated throughout its fruition. It's always heartening to see local businesses giving back to the community and as I understand it you have sponsored numerous sporting clubs in our community and are currently sponsoring the Shellharbour Sharks. It is so important for good living and community cohesion for businesses like yours to give back, it not only strengthens and helps sporting organisations that would others struggle, but establishes your business as a good corporate citizen, thank you for your continued support of the community of Shellharbour.

THUNDERBOLT LOCKSMITHS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I recently had the pleasure of meeting with Darren (a.k.a Macka) from Thunderbolt Locksmiths in Fairfield. Macka has been servicing his community for a massive 32 years, working 7 days a week. He specialises in lockouts, repairs, rekeys and keys cut. Macka is a strong supporter of community groups in and out of the Fairfield electorate. For 30 years he has provided his expertise to Bonnie Woman's Refuge and has supported Lifeline, the Cancer Council, and various local sports teams from a range of codes. Although Macka insists he is 'not one for awards', his tireless service and contribution to Fairfield deserves to be commended. I congratulate Macka for the longevity of his business and for sustaining it through the COVID-19 pandemic.

MUSICIANS AVENUE

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I recently had the privilege of visiting Mr Sam Haifawi from Musicians Avenue in Ware Street, Fairfield. Sam opened his store in 1996, having previous retail experience from working at Fairfield Retravision since the 1980's. From guitars to accordions, Sam provides a holistic store experience specialising in all musical instruments and P.A Systems. Tuition and repairs are also available at Musicians Avenue. As the sole owner of Musicians Avenue, Sam has worked vigorously to sustain business throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and for that I commend him.

ARTHUR ONGLEY OF NORTHMEAD

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—I acknowledge Northmead resident Arthur Ongley for his contribution to the New South Wales Government's Seniors' Stories Volume Six. The theme for the 2020 book was Resilience. Mr Ongley's story was titled My Grandmother's Gift of Resilience. The story is about his grandfather, Arthur Frank Wood, who served in the British Admiralty and then in the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Force during the Second World War where he was captured as a prisoner of war. Mr Ongley's grandmother, mother and uncle came to Sydney during this time. In 1943 his grandfather succumbed to malnutrition and diphtheria. The British were able to secure a diary kept by Mr Ongley's grandfather which remains in London. When his grandmother visited she rewrote the diary as she was not allowed to keep it. Mr Ongley typed a copy of the diary from his grandmother's notes as a present for his mother to read. In this process

he learnt about the struggles of being a prisoner of war and his grandfather's resilience and life of service. Well done to Mr Ongley for his contribution to the 2020 Seniors' Stories book.

WESTMEAD HOSPITAL COVID-19 VACCINATION HUB

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—On Monday, 1 March I was delighted to meet with the Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, and the Minister for Health, Brad Hazzard, at Westmead Hospital's COVID-19 Vaccination Hub. We were able to walk through the facility in the old emergency department at the Hospital and see local frontline healthcare workers be vaccinated. The Vaccination Hub was very efficient and saw scores of vaccination during the visit to Westmead Hospital. The Seven Hills Electorate is home to many doctors, nurses, allied health workers and hospital administrative and environmental staff. The COVID-19 vaccine helps to protect them, their family and friends, and the wider community. I thank the Seven Hills Electorate healthcare staff for their dedication to our local community through their work across the Western Sydney Local Health District at Auburn Hospital, Blacktown Hospital, Cumberland Hospital, Mount Druitt Hospital, Westmead Hospital and The Children's Hospital at Westmead. COVID-19 is still a public health matter but the vaccine and its delivery at key sites across the Seven Hills Electorate are benefitting the community in overcoming this pandemic.

COOLAMON HOTEL REVAMP

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—It gives me great honour to announce that the Coolamon Hotel is getting a revamp. The Coolamon Hotel is a historic building within the town and has been around since the 1880's. The hotel is currently co-owned by Craig Patterson and the team at Harrison's Joinery, Wagga Wagga. The plan for the refurbished Coolamon Hotel is to make it a family friendly, tourist attraction and top accommodation venue. The revamp of the Coolamon Hotel will give the people of the Coolamon Community something to be proud of and become a new spot to go to with their families and friends. It is always wonderful to hear about community projects that occur within the Cootamundra Electorate. Especially when it allows for community growth and involvement. I am looking forward to working with the co-owners to revamp the Coolamon Hotel.

TEMORA TENNIS LEGENDS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I would like to acknowledge two legends of Temora tennis, Alan Bent and Jack Boyton who recently both celebrated their 90th birthdays. Alan moved to Temora in the 1950s and played tennis for almost 60 years when he was forced to retire for health reasons. Jack started playing tennis in 1945 and only retired when he turned 86. Both men have been involved with the Temora Tennis Club and spent many years on the courts playing the game they loved. Congratulations Alan and Jack and I hope you'll enjoy many more yarns, laughs and fond memories with friends at the Club.

ANNABELLE KINGSTON

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Annabelle Kingston may be only 17, but she has already demonstrated a remarkable degree of kindness, strength and courage. The teenager, who lives on a property at Tootool in the Wagga Wagga electorate, was selected as a finalist in the "one to watch" category of the 2021 NSW Women of the Year awards in recognition of the passion and dedication she has shown in supporting people in her own community. Annabelle started a not-for-profit organisation, called Fetch It For A Farmer, which sells merchandise, including caps, online and then puts all the profits towards buying \$200 grocery vouchers for struggling families. In doing this, Annabelle's not-for-profit is not only helping individual families, but has been providing much-needed support for drought-affected towns and businesses. So far, Annabelle's hard work and dedication has helped more than twenty struggling families. She has continued her fundraising work while studying for the Higher School Certificate and devoted her entire Christmas school holidays to the Fetch It For A Farmer project. The courage, hard work and kindness Annabelle has demonstrated, particularly throughout the latest drought, is inspiring and her commitment to assisting those in need is truly commendable.

CANCER COUNCIL VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Undergoing treatment for cancer is extraordinarily stressful, and the COVID-19 pandemic has only added more layers of concern and complication. Thankfully, there are still many volunteers who go out of their way to help others in a time of need, like the NSW Cancer Council's volunteer transport drivers. When the pandemic hit in 2020, the Cancer Council made the difficult decision to stand down some of its volunteers to keep them safe from COVID-19, leaving numbers in Wagga Wagga severely depleted. Despite the pandemic, people from across the region still needed to attend vital treatment appointments, so the call went out for suitable volunteers, and Wagga Wagga responded. New volunteers, many with cancer journeys in their own families, stepped in to help ensure that patients were transported between their homes and their treatment appointments at the Riverina Cancer Care Centre. When the cancer care centre had to temporarily shut down its own transport service, the Cancer Council volunteers redoubled their efforts and helped to transport

patients not only around the Wagga Wagga region, but across the city as well. I commend these wonderful volunteers, whose efforts have lifted some of the burden from people undergoing cancer treatment.

MARK REEDMAN

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter)—I would like to inform the house of the sad passing of Mark Reedman, Arts Upper Hunter Regional Arts Development Officer and Executive Director. Mark was a great supporter of the Arts in the Upper Hunter and he will be remembered for his outstanding contribution to local performing arts. He championed all those wanting to express their creativity in any medium. Mark was also active in developing projects to support those living with a disability. He will be sadly missed within the Electorate of Upper Hunter. Vale Mark Reedman.

LYNETTE FLANAGAN

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to recognise Lynette Flanagan of Balranald. Arriving in Balranald in 1966 after marrying a local gentleman, Mrs Flanagan began a career in the health sector that would continue for than 40 years, culminating in the role of Nurse Manager for almost three decades. Possessing a remote operator's licence for X-raying, Mrs Flanagan's willingness to make herself available has saved many from travelling with broken bones. An inaugural member of the hospital auxiliary, Mrs Flanagan held this position for over 30 years. A driving force in the community, Mrs Flanagan coordinated eight rodeos, raising some \$40,000 for the hospital to purchase vital equipment. In 1971, Mrs Flanagan was the first Meals on Wheel co-ordinator. Mrs Flanagan has been the chair of the Far West Primary Health Network Community Council, since its inception. Outside of health, she has been an active member of the community, taking on the role of inaugural pre-school committee member and, in 2019, becoming the first female President of the Balranald Ex-Services Club. I congratulate and thank Lynette for her community spirit.

NEWTOWN HIGH SCHOOL OF THE PERFORMING ARTS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY BREAKFAST

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—I draw the attention of this Parliament to the International Women's Day Breakfast held at the Newtown High School of the Performing Arts. I had the pleasure of attending the breakfast and speaking on a panel with three other incredible women, Camilla Schippa, CEO of the Social Outfit, Hannah Zaslowski, an actress and alumni of the school and Elinor Wilcken, a Lead Project Coordinator at LGBTIQ+ Health Australia. The breakfast was hosted by students and school captains, Nona and Sophie. The audience was made up of students from year 7-12 as well as staff and the panel particularly appreciated the chance to reflect on the things they are hopeful will change in the next four years which was asked by a student in year 8 who asked what they hope will happen by the time they finish high school. Thank you to Principal Sharon Roberts and Deputy Principal Karl Pico as well as all the teachers, parents and students involved in putting the event together.

EASY CARE GARDENING, LEE DICKSON

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)—Today I would like to acknowledge Lee Dickson of Berowra who has been volunteering for Easy Care Gardening since 2005. Lee has volunteered over 643 days, contributing more than 1918 hours of weeding, raking, mulching, clipping and tidying in other people's gardens. In her role as team leader she joins her team of 6 every Tuesday morning attending to gardens in the Hornsby area. Lee has a genuine caring nature which makes her popular amongst clients and volunteers. Lee's colleagues describe her as having a green thumb and when it comes to gardening she knows it all. As well as her gardening knowledge she always has time to listen and provide support for her clients as well. Lee is a quiet achiever and has had an enormous impact on many people's lives and gardens. I want to thank Lee for her dedication and service to our local community.

DANN KING

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—This month, Umina Beach local Dann King will be taking on two mammoth rides as part of the "Tour de Cure" initiative. Dann is a registered nurse from Wyong Hospital's emergency department, which I'm sure is partly why he is so passionate about raising funds for cancer research, support and prevention. Dann will take on a 356 kilometre ride over a period of three days. He started on the 14th of March in Forster headed for Sydney via our beautiful Central Coast community, before cycling from Newcastle to Coffs Harbour which is 952 kilometres. That's a massive 1,308 kilometres across a 10 day period. Cancer has touched many in our community. Everyone has family and friends and colleagues and neighbours who are impacted it. My family is also impacted by cancer, and my wife is truly the most strong and courageous person I know. I thank Dann for giving up his time and energy for such an important cause, and wish him all the best on both of his rides.

VISSLA NSW PRO SURF SERIES 2021

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I would like to extend my congratulations to both Molly Picklum and Reef Heazlewood for their victories at the Great Lakes Pro, which took place on the 19th of February. The Great Lakes Pro, held at Tuncurry, was the opening event of the 2021 World Surf League Qualifying Series and the first of four events making up the 2021 Vissla NSW Pro Surf Series. Despite the immense challenges caused by COVID-19 such as many event cancellations as well as a shoulder injury, Reef started 2021 in a strong way by achieving the highest heat totals at the Great Lakes Pro. I also want to acknowledge Molly, who achieved her first ever World Surfing League Qualifying Series 1,000 ranked event win, posting the highest heat total in the final. I am also delighted that the Central Coast is playing host to the fourth event which took place in early March.

ASQUITH BOYS HIGH SCHOOL

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)—I would like to acknowledge the wonderful achievements of the Asquith Boys Class of 2020. The students have excelled yet again, which we have come to expect from the students at Asquith Boys. Max Xiong, who was awarded Dux of the School in 2020, achieved an ATAR of 98.75 along with 5 other students who achieved an ATAR of 90 or above. Matthew Hiebl received 97.25, Zoulin Wang 94.3, Jayden Camp 91.75, Tom Hardwick 90.75 and Corey Miller 90.7. The Year 12 students of Asquith Boys achieved 25 band 6's across 14 different subject areas, including Chemistry, Physics, English, Mathematics Advanced, Mathematics Standard 1 and 2, Mathematics Extension 1 and 2, Engineering Studies, Food Technology, Construction, Music, PDHPE, Chinese and Literature. I would like to congratulate the students and dedicated teaching staff who have helped ensure these amazing results for Asquith Boys High School.

JODIE MCGUREN

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—On Thursday 11th of March I had the honour to announce the Camden Local Woman of the Year, Jodie McGuren. We celebrated the night at the International Women's Day Gala at Gledswood Homestead and Winery and also had the chance to hear from great speakers. Jodie has consistently been an active member in the Camden Community by raising funds for a number of organisations and charities. Five years ago, Jodie started the Cobbitty Community Choir, in the first event, the concert raised \$12,000 for the organ restoration needed in St Paul's Church. Jodie is an artist, a singer, a teacher and an inspiration to all the women in the Camden Community. Congratulations Jodie on your well-deserved award.

FIT FOR LIFE

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I take this opportunity to congratulate Lauren, Georgia and Steven of Mount Annan High School on their successful completion of the Fit for Life program in late 2020. The Fit for Life program aims to improve overall wellbeing as well as prevent and divert youth from offending behaviours and is organised by the Police Citizens Youth Club NSW (PCYC). The program enables students to complete their First Aid training, Certificate II in Sports and Recreation and achieve a White Card. I personally congratulate Laura, Georgia and Steven on your hard work and dedication in completing such a program. I wish you all the best in your future endeavours and I look forward to seeing more students complete the Fit for Life program.

CLYDE CAMPBELL RECEIVES AUSTRALIA DAY HONOUR

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Mr Clyde Campbell was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia for his significant service to community health, particularly to people living with Parkinson's disease. Clyde is a Mosman resident who was diagnosed with early onset Parkinson's in 2009 after noticing a tremor in his left hand while holding notes during a company meeting presentation. Deciding not to sit back and wait for the rest of the world to find a cure for Parkinson's, Clyde joined in the action. He founded 'Shake It Up Australia', a non-profit that partnered with the Michael J. Fox Foundation, with the aim of promoting and funding Parkinson's disease research and cures in Australia. Since 2011 the foundation has co-funded more than \$15 million into Parkinson's research in Australia and is now the leading non-government funder of Parkinson's research across multiple institutes. Clyde wanted to ensure that one hundred percent of all donations received went to Parkinson's research, and this commitment was only made possible by Clyde and his brother Greg funding all the administration and overhead costs of the foundation. Congratulations to Clyde for this well-deserved recognition in the Australia Day 2021 Honours.

MOSMAN HIGH ARTEXPRESS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Congratulations to the students of Mosman High School's Visual Arts class of 2020 for their incredible achievements. As many would know, Mosman High is renowned for its creative students. Last year's HSC students were no exception and they faced a difficult school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many students were placed in the top 2 bands, with six students achieving a band 6.

Every year a small number of HSC Bodies of Work from around the state are selected to be showcased in the ARTEXPRESS exhibitions. Congratulations to the three students from Mosman High who were chosen to have their works exhibited this year; Anabel Burrows for her work 'Contemplation of Space', Alexander Songeon-Senzaki for his work 'Detarame: Of the Correct Use of Symbols', and Anderson Guo for his work 'Gone'. Congratulations again to these students on their incredible achievement, and I look forward to seeing Mosman High School perform at an outstanding level again for the 2021 HSC.

VALE WULF REICHLER, OAM

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—It is with the greatest respect that I recognise Mr Wulf Ernst Reichler OAM, former Mayor of Brewarrina Shire Council. Mr Reichler was born in Germany and moved to the Western Division of New South Wales in late 1953. He worked on various properties before moving to the Brewarrina Township in 1960 with his wife Ursula whom together had 3 sons - Eric, Peter, Ralph and 1 daughter – Enid. In 1987 Mr Reichler was elected to Council and in September 2012 he was elected Mayor of Brewarrina. In 2013 after many years of service to the Brewarrina Shire and Local Governments across the state, he was awarded the Order of Australia Medal. Along with his Mayoral duties Wulf was involved with many organisations both within and outside of Council. He was a member of the Brewarrina Bush Fire Brigade, President of the Brewarrina Clay Target Club, Founding committee member of the Brewarrina Festival of the Fisheries and many more. I would like to extend my condolences to Mr Reichler's family and thank him for his service to the Brewarrina community.

KYLE LOUGHRAN

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—Kyle Loughran is a local Cobar man who stands out in the community for his positive attitude to life and commitment to the town. Kyle is a Director on the Board of the local RSL Club and also owns and operates a window cleaning business which allows him many opportunities to engage locals or visitors in conversation about his real passion sports – be it local or international competitions. This year Kyle has been appointed the role of Manager to the Cobar Roosters under 18's side this follows years of refereeing and assisting the Junior and Senior football sides. Kyle has also been involved with the local Tennis Club and loves a good fair game of Pool. His positive attitude is an inspiration to all, young and old of Cobar and the surrounding communities. I would like to congratulate Kyle for being a fantastic asset to the community of Cobar. Kyle recently celebrated his 30th birthday and his engagement to his lovely partner Taylah. I am proud to wish Kyle all the best in his future ventures along with a long happy and prosperous married life.

MICHELE MCKENZIE

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House an outstanding community leader, Michele McKenzie. Michele McKenzie was one of the founders of Friends of Callan Park in 1998, and was one of its most active members including serving as the Vice-President for many years. For over 22 years she has fought for the safe-keeping of this exceptionally significant and remarkable public space for community and for mental health services. Michele has organised countless rallies, connected with local residents and lobbied decision makers over the years. Indeed it was her commitment to Callan Park and community engagement which saw her elected to Leichhardt Council in 2004 and elected as Deputy Mayor during the 2008-2012 Council. On behalf of the Balmain Electorate I thank Michele McKenzie for her ongoing advocacy, compassion and dedication to making our community a better place to live.

DARIAN LENTON

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate Darian Lenton of Kirrawee on being a finalist for the NSW Young Woman of the year. Darian founded We Future Leaders, a tutoring organisation dedicated to educating young people and equipping them with leadership tools to feel heard within their world. Through We Future Leaders, Darian has employed 25 casual staff members and helped over 150 students improve their grades. She also launched a free Access Program during the peak of COVID-19 and continued it for students in need. Darian's passion for helping young people stemmed from her own experiences. Growing up, Darian moved through 26 different foster homes and drawing from her life journey, she now imparts her wisdom and mentors her students who may be experiencing similar challenges. Darian aims to reach 100,000 young people by 2026 and hopes to publish an autobiography to inspire Australia's youth including those who are living in out of home care. I commend Darian for her dedication and support to young people in our community.

BONNET BAY SUMMER SPORTS CLUB

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge Bonnet Bay Summer Sports Club for securing \$14,134 under the NSW Government's 2020 Community Building Partnership Program. Home to the Bonnet Bay Beavers, the baseball and softball Club is a tight-knit, family-focused community, who celebrate their volunteers and develop each individual player. Through this grant, the Club will upgrade the clubhouse with new ceilings

and flooring to create an improved communal space for members, visiting teams and supporters, along with new lighting to ensure added safety and security. Of course none of this is possible without the hardworking Club volunteers. I commend President Tom Evans, Vice Presidents Peter Noakes and Brian Schwartz, Secretaries Brain Saville and Chris Lane, Treasurer Dave Richards, Kate Montague, Gay Evans, Craig Bowers, Rebecca Afonso, Matthew Puntoriero, Brent Rogers, Julie Southwell, Paula Noakes and Stephen and Mary Ross. I thank Bonnet Bay Summer Sports Club for bringing the importance of this project to my attention and look forward to its completion. Go the Beavers!

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—I acknowledge Moorebank Sports Club, for hosting a beautiful afternoon tea in honour of International Women's Day on 8 March 2021. Moorebank Sports Club put on a lovely afternoon tea for their employees, sporting representatives and community members. It was great to be part of this local event that supported local women who do so much for our area. Kylie Pussell, Co-Founder of the Miracle Babies Foundation, was the guest speaker of the event and she was the perfect choice! Kylie is a hard-working member of our community and through Miracle Babies, continues to support women, children and families from the Holsworthy electorate and beyond. I was pleased to attend the afternoon tea and say a few words in honour of the day; highlighting the need for male champions of change and encouraging women to strive to be all they want to be. Once again I would like to thank Moorebank Sports Club for hosting this special afternoon tea for the 2021 International Women's Day and for inviting me to come along.

NSW SENIORS FESTIVAL GRANTS PROGRAM

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—I congratulate Liverpool City Council for being successful in receiving funding as part of the NSW Government's Seniors Festival Grants Program. Council have received \$8,300 to fund a 'Seniors Tea Break', which will be held across two days. Local seniors from the community will be able to enjoy a High Tea, some entertainment and an exhibition of local service providers. This will be a perfect opportunity for local organisations and businesses to showcase what they offer to seniors in the community. This includes various fitness programs, classes and social events. Not only will this event allow seniors to connect with others but it will also encourage them to take part in some wonderful local initiatives! Once again I congratulate Liverpool City Council for receiving this funding and for taking part in the NSW Seniors Festival Grants Program. I know that the Seniors High Tea will be well received by the community and hope that everyone involved has an enjoyable time. Thank you.

BONDI CHAMBER INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY LUNCH

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—On Wednesday, 3rd of March the Bondi and Districts Chamber of Commerce hosted a wonderful lunch to celebrate International Women's Day, overlooking the iconic Bondi Beach. The theme of International Women's Day 2021 is #choosetochallenge and so the theme of our Long Lunch: Choosing to Challenge and The Power of Community, looked to celebrate the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of local women in the eastern suburbs. The event was hosted by TV anchor and Women's Fitness Coach, Anna Kooiman and included an incredible panel of fascinating women who have all chosen to challenge in their own way. The Panel included Paula Masselos, Mayor of Waverley Council, Ronni Kahn, social entrepreneur and founder of OzHarvest, Pip Edwards, Director and Founder of active-street-wear label P.E. Nation, Leah Simmons, founder of KAALAA, a transformative practice for the mind, body and soul and Dulce Munoz, National Convenor of Mums 4 Refugees and City of Sydney Humanitarian Award winner 2018. This incredible panel shared their stories and experiences in the business and not-for-profit world and like many women, balanced this with many unpaid commitment. Their stories should inspire young women everywhere to choose to challenge.

RANDWICK RUGBY ANNUAL LUNCH

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—On Friday, 12th of March, the mighty Randwick Rugby Club hosted their annual lunch to welcome the 2021 season. The lunch previewed the club's approach to the 2021 Shute Shield and examined the chances of the Shute Shield once again making its way back to the Galloping Green trophy cabinet. The competition will be stiff in 2021, with the big questions being can the Wicks wrestle the cup out of the hands of a resurgent Gordon and by doing so, can they continue to chase down the all-time leading Shute Shield premiership title holders, Sydney University. I also wish to congratulate the club's newest life members, former Wallaby's Coach, Michael Cheika, former Wallaby's coach and current England Coach Eddie Jones, and long term Treasurer and great clubman Ian Bonnette. All eminent names in rugby union in Sydney and each with a story of deep dedication to this great and historic club. Best of luck to Club Coach, Morgan Turinui, 1st Grade Head Coach Ben McCormack and all of the coaching and administrative staff at the Galloping Greens for the upcoming season. All the best for the 2021 season. Up the Wicks!

PAULINE MENCZER

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I celebrate the achievements of Pauline Menczer, an Australian sporting champion whose successes are only just being recognised in practical and equitable ways. Pauline started surfing aged 12. As a teen she had to put up with abuse from male surfers in the Bondi break – a "hard knocks" environment examined in the recent film, "Girls Can't Surf". I grew up surfing with Pam Burrige in Manly in the 80's and relate to Pauline's tales of the incredible sexism of the era towards women surfers. In 1988 Pauline won the Women's Amateur World Title and in 1993 she blitzed the field to win the Women's World Championship, but received no prizemoney. For two decades, she was a competitor on the women's professional tour, winning 20 Women's Championship Tours and eight Women's Qualifying Series events, including the 2002 Hawaii event. Super talented and courageous in the face of extraordinary personal challenges, Pauline is one of the reasons female surfing enjoys such popularity and respect today. I am delighted to see Pauline receive credit for her place in surfing "herstory".

ROTARY CLUB OF BALLINA-ON-RICHMOND

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I congratulate the Rotary Club of Ballina-on-Richmond as they celebrate 100 years of Rotary in Australia. Rotary Clubs throughout the country have been influential in driving change and supporting social justice causes in communities. I want to specifically thank the Ballina-on-Richmond club for the support they have given to worthy causes such as the Breakfast Club, the Women's Refuge and Ballina Hospital among others. Above all, I appreciate the club for being the leaders in raising awareness of Domestic Violence and coercive control. It is no wonder that part of their Centenary celebrations will be a walk to further reinforce that violence against women is completely unacceptable. I applaud their successful school program; "Love Bites" which aims to prevent Domestic Violence before it starts. It has been a fruitful 100 years of this phenomenal club; and with great pleasure, I congratulate all the members, board members, committees past and present on reaching this great milestone! I wish you all the best with the R100 Baton relay, the no domestic violence walk, all other planned events and look forward to many more years of successful Rotary led projects in our community.

ELAINE ANNE EVANS

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—Western Sydney recently lost one of our giants. Elaine was a long-time member of Labor's Toongabbie Branch. Elaine took her battles for fairness and justice for her beloved western Sydney and served as a Councillor on Parramatta City Council (1987-91) and Board member of Parramatta Park Trust (2001-11). I am saddened to hear of the Elaine's passing on 26 February 2021 from cancer and I send my sincere condolences to her family and loved ones. Elaine was passionate, caring and loving. Elaine enjoyed discussion and debate on the need for both Labor and Liberal to achieve fairness and equity for those in need. Elaine received an inaugural Justice Medal awarded by the Law Foundation of NSW at Parliament for "outstanding contribution to justice in NSW" which arose from her decade of work at the then Women's Legal Resource Centre supporting women, especially in Western Sydney. Elaine was a fighter and battler right through to the end and she will be missed immensely. Her contribution to the people of Western Sydney will not be forgotten and may she rest in peace. Elaine is survived by her beloved husband Bill, her three children and her siblings. Vale Elaine Anne Evans.

BHARATHI RENGARAJAN

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—In light of International Women's Day, I acknowledge the contribution of Ms Bharathi Rengarajan, an active member of my community and her recognition as Granville's Local Woman of the Year. Ms Rengarajan was an outstanding President of the Rotary Club of Granville-9675, which strives to represent the highest ideals of Rotary International through its programs. As a long-term member of Rotary, she exemplifies the voluntary organisation's commitment to bring communities together through service, goodwill and friendship. The Club focuses on making a difference in the local community through professional development programs, fundraising, community support, women's empowerment, youth leadership development and senior wellness programmes. Ms Rengarajan is also a National Chair for Women's Empowerment in the Hindu Council of Australia, a national organisation which connects women with the broader community and advocates for issues common to women across Australia. Professionally, Ms Rengarajan is a Lead Civil Engineer and Fellow of Engineers Australia. She works at the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation and is Treasurer of the ANSTO Toastmasters Club. Ms Rengarajan also volunteers as the Public officer for Sydney Sri Ayyappa Swami Centre, a Hindu temple in Wentworthville. Congratulations on being Granville's 2021 Local Woman of the Year.

**The House adjourned pursuant to standing and sessional orders at 21:06 until
Thursday 18 March at 09:30.**