



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 18 March 2021

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 18 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.

Motions

SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HARASSMENT

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council regarding addressing sexual harassment and assault.

[Notices of motions given]

Budget

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2020-2021

Debate resumed from 17 March 2021.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (09:49): I will resume my speech from where I was interrupted yesterday. I spoke about the balance between the medical safety of people in New South Wales and protecting the economy, and that it had been the best in Australia. That was a function of the Government team led by the Premier. With my remaining time I will make a few points. Continuing with that topic, it is instructive to look at a comparative analysis of New South Wales with a population of over eight million people, Victoria with a bit under 6½ million people and London, England, with over nine million people and dramatically different COVID infection rates. The death rate in Victoria is 15 times greater than that in New South Wales and in London it is more than 200 times greater than that in New South Wales. The numbers do not lie and they are significant matters. I bring to the attention of the House a few of the additional provisions that are specific to Ku-ring-gai in addition to health, roads and education that I have spoken about.

The budget provides for a significant electrical upgrade for the heritage-listed Rose Seidler House. It was designed by Harry Seidler and built from 1948 to 1950. It is an architectural icon and a viewing chamber into postwar New South Wales life. There is allocation of capital expenditure for lift upgrades at Wahroonga, Waitara, Pymble and Killara stations. The budget will kickstart the New South Wales economy and drive a strong economic recovery post the pandemic. The people of Ku-ring-gai are appreciative of what has occurred locally and on a macro scale, and for what this excellent budget has done for the New South Wales economy.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (09:53): It is a pleasure to speak about this budget and all of the previous budgets handed down by the Coalition Government since it was elected in 2011. State governments are all about delivering frontline services and infrastructure, particularly in roads, police and health. That is exactly what the Coalition has done since it was elected in 2011. During the lean years with New South Wales Labor from 1995 to 2011, that delivery did not happen outside of Sydney—quite frankly in my electorate we got jack diddly. I have lived in the Clarence Valley for 40 years and I can honestly attest to that. We heard promises that were never kept and very little was delivered. There was a talkfest that went on and on with very little delivery. Work on the Pacific Highway is one example. It ground to a halt when Labor reneged on the funding deal it had negotiated with Canberra, despite two major accidents occurring in 1989. First, it was the Cowper bus crash, which resulted in the nation's worst accident to date at that time, with 21 people killed and 22 injured, followed two months later in December 1989 by the Kempsey bus crash, which resulted in 35 people killed and 41 injured.

Those accidents were the catalyst to duplicate the highway, but it took 32 years to complete. Those are the types of tragedies that we suffer in the regions because we do not receive the funding needed to deliver the infrastructure and services we deserve. When funding announcements that will save lives are made, such as duplicating the Pacific Highway, it is called pork-barrelling. It is a shame that that term is used when funding occurs in regional communities that deserve the funding. In 2003 Bob Carr visited Grafton and gave an ironclad guarantee that he would build a second crossing over the Clarence River, yet eight years later not a pencil had been lifted, let alone a girder being laid. It was an ironclad guarantee to deliver a second crossing, but it was another broken promise by Bob Carr. We had the worst preschool education participation of any jurisdiction in Australia and our public schools were falling into disrepair because of a multibillion-dollar maintenance backlog. The police in regional New South Wales were stretched to breaking point—literally. Many officers broke down and we had record numbers on sick leave. In some commands the numbers reached 25 per cent of the total

command. There had been no significant new investment in health infrastructure in the Clarence or Richmond valleys for well over a decade.

If we move on to 2021, how times have changed for the better thanks to The Nationals in the New South Wales Government. I was lucky enough to be first elected to this place in 2011 shortly after the people of New South Wales gave the Labor Government, including its cohort of convicted corrupt felons, the boot. They deserved it quite frankly. The current cohort of Labor MPs is not performing much better than those given the boot in 2011. New South Wales elected a strong Coalition Government led by strong partnerships. The first was Barry O'Farrell and Andrew Stoner, then Mike Baird and now the dynamic duo of Gladys Berejiklian and John Barilaro. Premier Berejiklian has shown her competence throughout the bushfires and the pandemic. Deputy Premier Barilaro has been nicknamed "Pork Barilaro" and I note that the Deputy Premier regards this title as a badge of honour.

Mr Adam Crouch: So do I.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: As do we in the regions because we deserve every announcement and funding project that we receive. John Barilaro has fought hard for us in the regions. I find it insulting that when funding announcements are made for the regions it is called pork-barrelling and when infrastructure announcements are made in the city it is scorned as being too little too late—there is no mention of pork-barrelling. That is not enough. The fact is that in the city it is too little too late. It is insulting to country people who have waited decades for services they desperately need such as safe roads, twenty-first century health services, modern education facilities and police for their police stations. All of this changed in 2011 when the Liberal-Nationals Government was elected. I will mention some of the improvements that have occurred in the Clarence and Richmond valleys.

The Pacific Highway was a massive infrastructure project, the largest regional road project in Australia and almost entirely built in my electorate from Woolgoolga to Ballina with \$5.5 billion. There were 3,500 jobs created throughout its construction as well as training programs with TAFE in collaboration with industry and the Roads and Maritime Services [RMS]. It created local jobs, boosted the economy and stimulated every little community along the route from Woolgoolga to Ballina. Now that we have seen the official opening in late December, we have seen how it has transformed our region. It is a shame that it has taken 32 years since those initial bus crashes in Cowper and Kempsey for that transition to be made, but we certainly welcome it. It was opened on 17 December 2020 with the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the roads Minister, former roads Ministers, Bob Higgins, mayors, councillors, subbies, businesses, community members and the lovely McClymont sisters all present. I am happy to say that I was a bit of a lead-up artist for the McClymonts with a rendition of *Highway to Hell* because that is what we used to drive on prior to the highway being upgraded. It was a highway to hell.

Mr Victor Dominello: Can you give us a tune on that?

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: I probably should.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh): I will allow it.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: Maybe I should sing the song that we are singing now. You probably remember it from one of the opening scenes in *Easy Rider*: Steppenwolf's *Born to be Wild*. That is exactly what we are right now on the highway. "Get your motor runnin', head out on the highway, looking for adventure", that is what we see on the highway now. It is a terrific transformation. It is safer, quicker and easier for every community and transport business that uses the Pacific Highway.

The Grafton Bridge was funded and constructed at a cost of \$240 million. Bob Carr failed us and we will never forgive him for that. Thanks to The Nationals for committing to the project and seeing it through to fruition. Thanks to Andrew Stone and Duncan Gay; they recognised that the regions had been overlooked for decades and this needed to be rectified. They started the infrastructure build that would see the renaissance of regional New South Wales. The new bridge has made an incredible difference to Grafton and the Clarence Valley. It has changed the way we get about. We no longer have a bottleneck. It is attracting new businesses and it has given us confidence in a secure future.

The Government was quick to realise that we needed to have a new correctional centre in the Clarence Valley. I am glad it chose the Clarence Valley for Australia's largest correctional centre, where a \$700 million investment in a public-private partnership between the New South Wales Government, Serco, John Laing and John Holland saw the correctional centre completed in 2020. It has been a massive investment into the community, with over 1,100 jobs created during construction and local businesses involved in procurement and the delivery of sub-contract services. It has delivered 600 jobs to the region. Grafton has been a jail town for well over 100 years. We recognise the important role a jail plays in delivering jobs, boosting our economy and the

responsibility that is associated with a place of incarceration. The community knows we have a responsibility to treat the inmates fairly, humanely and to do everything we can to rehabilitate them and to reduce recidivism.

The Government has funded many regional communities to stimulate them. Earlier this year the Deputy Premier announced that Casino would become an activation precinct, one of four throughout the State. It is a stamp of confidence in Casino, a vibrant country town with a great future which was affirmed by the Deputy Premier. In November 2020 I joined with the Federal member for Page, Kevin Hogan, in announcing \$9.969 million from the New South Wales Government's Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund to provide major upgrades to the Casino industrial precinct.

At the same time there was also an announcement for funding a modern sewage treatment system in Rappville at a cost of \$3 million. There was also a package of \$742,000 to support jobs at the Rappville sawmill. The multimillion dollar investment will help the Richmond Valley Council get back in the game after a horrendous couple of years of drought, bushfires, flooding and the pandemic. The Casino Industries Activation project will establish a strong competitive advantage for businesses to locate to the Richmond Valley, in particular manufacturing businesses. The \$9.9 million will be spent on road, water, sewer and power infrastructure upgrades to facilitate significant economic, social and environmental outcomes for the Richmond Valley.

The \$3 million allocated for the construction of the new sewage treatment system for the Rappville community was identified in council's Rebuilding the Richmond Valley Community Revitalisation Plan from 2019 Bushfires released in February. It will help to encourage more people to make the village their home after the fires destroyed half the town. A new sewage treatment system will have the capacity to service the existing and planned extended population. The Rappville sawmill was severely impacted by the devastating Black Summer bushfires. It is vitally important to industry and the community, supporting over 100 local jobs. The \$742,000 investment package for the Rappville sawmill is a timber processing resilience project which will ensure the long-term viability of the Rappville sawmill, securing local jobs in the area. It is about securing local jobs in the area. That is what this Government is focused on and I am glad it is focused on doing that in my electorate.

The Rappville sawmill will use the funding to provide static and mobile fire protection, including the expansion of its water holding capacity and firefighting infrastructure, such as fire hydrants, overhead sprinklers and four mobile firefighting pods designed to extinguish spot fires. It is a hugely positive outcome for the community and comes at a critical time after back-to-back challenges triggered by natural disasters. It is important to back projects that put people back in work, retain existing jobs and stimulate local economies. That is exactly what we are doing. An excavator and two log skidders will be purchased to harvest logs from the forest and additional staff will be employed to operate the machines, adding reliability and efficiency to the supply chain.

Another funding program that was long-awaited in the Clarence electorate was the Sportsman's Creek Bridge. The \$26 million project was talked about for years but never delivered until Duncan Gay, former Nationals roads Minister, announced the Bridges for the Bush program. I recall attending meetings in 2000 as mayor of Maclean about the replacement of the Sportsman's Creek Bridge. It was basically a talkfest and there was every reason under the sun not to fund it, but it was funded by The Nationals in government. My thanks go to Duncan Gay for funding the Bridges for the Bush program.

We have not forgotten the northern end of my electorate. There was a \$7 million funding announcement to the Casino saleyards. It was identified as one of the major projects in the Northern Rivers for many years and there was never an appetite by government to fund this project until the New South Wales and Commonwealth Governments partnered with the Richmond Valley Council. The Federal Government put in \$3.5 million and the New South Wales Government gave the Richmond Valley Council a \$3.5 million low-interest loan and provided the balance of \$7 million to complete the saleyards, which has made the saleyards one of the best saleyard facilities in the country. The soft flooring and covered roofs improve stock condition by up to 3 per cent, which is money for jam for sellers, and makes it comfortable for buyers, sellers and staff.

Casino is renowned as the beef capital of Australia and the Northern Co-operative Meat Company is located in Casino. It employs about 1,000 staff and the saleyards complement and enhance Casino's reputation as the beef capital. The facility is a massive boost for Casino and the broader region. It has been made possible only because of the investment by The Nationals, who have a committed focus on regional New South Wales. Another funding project that I am really pleased to talk about in the House today is the Big River Way. The Big River Way is that section of the old Pacific Highway that was bypassed by the dual carriageway upgrade. It is due to be transferred to the Clarence Valley Council, but the Liberals and The Nationals will not leave the council to foot the bill to upgrade it and make it safer. Millions of dollars will be spent on bringing this road back to a high standard to alleviate the impost on Clarence Valley Council. Work has already started and will continue until it meets the standard where it can be handed over to council without any liability.

Recently a timber bridge replacement program was announced thanks to the regional roads Minister, the Hon. Paul Toole. We will see 33 bridges replaced in the Clarence Valley Council local government area and in the Richmond Valley Council area, at a cost of \$31 million, under the Fixing Country Bridges program. Additional funding of \$10 million has been awarded to the Richmond Valley Council to upgrade the Woodburn-Coraki Road. The road was used to haul material for the Pacific Highway upgrade and was completely destroyed by the heavy vehicle traffic. It will now be fixed because of the investment of The Nationals in the bush, and I say thank you to Tooley.

In education, we saw record funding for preschools, which has led to lower fees and nation-leading participation. The your schools your choice policy and increased funding has allowed our schools to be repaired. There has been a massive investment in the maintenance and upgrading of schools throughout New South Wales, and we have not missed out in the Clarence. Some 20 schools will receive \$5 million worth of funding under the Regional Renewal Program. That is very welcome and will certainly help to lift those schools to a higher and better standard. Earlier this month I announced a \$4.88 million grant under the New South Wales Government capital grants program to St Mary's Primary School in Casino. The money will be used to demolish obsolete areas, construct nine new classrooms, two learning commons, three covered outdoor learning spaces and walkways, and refurbish the library and the administration area.

The local diocese will also make a considerable contribution to this significant upgrade. Enrolments have increased by 100 students in the past couple of years and the upgrade is certainly warranted. I have to thank the previous education Minister, Adrian Piccoli, for his efforts in introducing the resource allocation model. The Gonski model has delivered fair funding to schools in disadvantaged areas like those that I represent. [*Extension of time*]

Ms Jodi McKay: Not a video you are going to put on Facebook.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: No. I am thrilled that we reintroduced the Gonski model because it benefits every regional school. We have some of the most needy areas in the country in relation to delivering a high level of education to our kids, so I thank Adrian Piccoli. Of course, the funding allocation to police was very welcome in the region and certainly in my electorate because we saw the biggest increase in police numbers in three decades—\$583 million to deliver 1,500 cops over four years. I am proud to say that I helped to negotiate the deal with Grafton's very own cop who now leads the Police Association of NSW, Tony King. I met with Tony on a number of occasions and arranged meetings between him and the Deputy Premier. Regional New South Wales got a terrific outcome from those negotiations. I know that the local area commands in my electorate—Richmond and Coffs-Clarence—have each received an additional complement of officers. It is about putting more cops on the beat and easing stress within commands, and we are seeing the results with crime rates trending down.

My electorate saw some massive investments in health, with \$18 million spent on a new day care unit at Grafton Base Hospital and, of course, a further \$263 million committed for a major overhaul of the hospital. That is long overdue and we certainly welcome any upgrade to our hospital. We saw an upgrade to the ambulatory care facility. When you go through it and through the old hospital, the comparison is literally chalk and cheese. We saw new community health centres at Coraki at a cost of \$6 million and at Evans Head for another \$6 million. At Yamba we partnered with the Commonwealth Government to deliver the community health service clinic at a cost of \$6 million. Of course, there is a commitment of \$4 million towards an ambulance station at Iluka.

My thanks go to John and Ann McLean who led a very strong community campaign, which attracted more than 13,000 signatures in support of the project. That is quite remarkable because Iluka has a population of only 2,200. But it is such a popular holiday spot, with an ageing population, that everybody saw the need for the station. I welcome that announcement—in fact, we are going to turn the first sod shortly. I specifically thank Deputy Premier John Barilaro for coming to Iluka to listen to the pleas of residents and for working with health Minister Brad Hazzard to secure funding. This is a remarkable example of a community coming together in support of basic services that they desperately need and are entitled to have. They fought tooth and nail for it, and they won. It is insulting to call that pork-barrelling.

A truckload of money has been announced for community assets and services through a number of programs. I am pleased to say that one of those funding programs is the extension to the Grafton Regional Gallery, which received a grant of \$7.6 million from the Regional Cultural Fund to expand its facilities and become one of the major art galleries in regional New South Wales. I offer special thanks to gallery foundation members, Friends of the Gallery and the Myer family for their continuing support of the gallery. This would not have been possible without their support. I also acknowledge that arts Minister the Hon. Don Harwin will be in the electorate tomorrow to officially open the extension to the Grafton Regional Gallery.

Regional communities are very proud of their showgrounds and it would be remiss of me not to talk about the funding that we have received for showgrounds in my electorate. All three showgrounds—being Casino,

Maclean and Grafton—have received funding for upgrades within the past 12 months. They were granted a total of \$619,000. Works at the Casino Showground included replacing the floor of the Ray Mison building, installing a new kitchen, refurbishing the main pavilion's floor, upgrading lighting and fans, and fencing. At the Grafton Showground works include new roofs on five cattle sheds and the old tea rooms. Damaged concrete flooring will be replaced as will timber seating on 10 portable grandstands. The toilet block is also up for a makeover. The funding for the Maclean Showground will be used to strengthen its arena fence posts, put in a new awning and relocate a gas bottle in the Jim Thompson Pavilion, seal the showground entrance and access road, and construct kerb and guttering. A month after the announcement of those upgrades the three showgrounds received further funding of \$75,000. Maclean Showground was even more fortunate, receiving a third grant of \$108,000 to fund an extension of the Clydesdale building with more office space and a new kitchen.

To top off showground funding in my electorate, Casino Showground has received \$8.2 million, co-funded by the Federal and New South Wales governments, to build a modern equestrian precinct. The funding will allow the development of a high-quality facility that is suitable for major equestrian competitions and other high-profile events. Country shows and events are the beating hearts of any regional community, which is why the members of The Nationals in the New South Wales Government are so committed to upgrading our showgrounds. We are very proud to be country.

The community funding from the budget also extended to Jacaranda Park. The Stronger Country Communities Fund was created to deliver infrastructure to improve the lives of local residents. Some \$500,000 was invested in the Jacaranda Park redevelopment at Grafton, which is just one of the hundreds of projects being funded across regional New South Wales. At a cost of \$1.26 million, the park has been designed to be inclusive and accessible for all children and their parents and carers. It is a safer and more comfortable park for all and it will attract kids from all over the local government area.

In January this year I was thrilled to announce \$500,000 to upgrade public land in the Clarence and Richmond valleys. The Broadwater Koala Reserve is one of more than a dozen community-owned land assets across the Clarence and Richmond valleys and will benefit from a total investment of more than \$500,000 from The Nationals and the New South Wales Government. The money from the Government's Crown Reserves Improvement Fund will mostly be used to improve public access and to eradicate weeds. Successful projects include those at Grafton Showground and the Grafton Vintage Motor Vehicle Club at Jabour Park. In addition, the Yorklea Fire Control Centre will receive \$52,760 for repair works, a new footbridge costing nearly \$44,000 will be constructed at Corcoran Park in Grafton, walking tracks will be upgraded and weed eradication will take place at Dirawong Reserve and a number of other reserves will each receive an amount between \$20,000 and \$40,000.

In every regional community sport is a major pastime. I thank the Liberals and The Nationals for the significant support provided for the sporting venues and organisations in my electorate. We have made a significant investment in the sporting facilities at Rushford Park in South Grafton. The Nationals and the New South Wales Government have invested \$500,000 in a new facility, which includes two unisex change rooms, two referee rooms, a competition office, storage space, accessible public amenities and two canteens as well as a huge community space and first-aid room. We did this because soccer—or football, as the true believers call it—continues to grow in popularity for both boys and girls across the country. The project was funded through \$500,000 from the Stronger Country Communities Fund and the Clarence Valley Council invested \$1.134 million. It follows earlier New South Wales grants totalling more than \$400,000 for upgrades to lighting on the fields. My kids used to play soccer at Rushford Park more than 25 years ago and the facilities were dated then. This funding has had an enormous impact on soccer for players, coaches, sports officials, mums and dads, and spectators.

I note I only have a few seconds left. There are still many other funding projects I would like to talk about, including the Yamba Sporting Complex, the Harwood Cricket Club and funding for youth projects, including the PCYC. I will quickly mention the funding for the regional seniors travel card. It is one of the best regional funding programs to come out of Macquarie Street and it is thanks to The Nationals in the New South Wales Government. It is our initiative and our baby. Our seniors love it.

Ms Jodi McKay: Your time has expired.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: I know you don't want to hear it because it is a great initiative for regional New South Wales.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh): The member for Clarence will conclude his remarks.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: Thank you. It was my pleasure to speak about what the New South Wales Government has done.

Debate interrupted.

*Bills***INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION AMENDMENT (PUBLICATION OF MINISTERIAL REGISTER OF INTERESTS) BILL 2021****First Reading**

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

Second Reading Speech

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (10:23): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Publication of Ministerial Register of Interests) Bill 2021 that we introduce today is one of five bills we now have before the Parliament. We bring up this legislation because it has become abundantly clear that this Government has no interest in disclosing, managing or avoiding conflicts of interest. We know that because time and time again the Premier has ignored the basic principle of transparency. That is why this Parliament must act. Let me remind the House of what we have learned over the past six months. The revelations have been shocking and the repercussions are still reverberating around this place.

In October Premier Gladys Berejiklian appeared before the Independent Commission Against Corruption, having been called to give evidence about Daryl Maguire—the former Government Whip, and member for Wagga Wagga, and her partner. We discovered during that inquiry that the Premier knew about the property deals he was doing. She knew what he was up to, much of it illegal. She knew about it, and she did nothing. She did not disclose the conflict of interest she had in being the partner of Daryl Maguire. Daryl Maguire took secret commissions from property developers. We know from a telephone intercept played to the Independent Commission Against Corruption that the Premier not only found out about those commissions but also congratulated him on them.

Ms Anna Watson: Woo hoo!

Ms JODI McKAY: Yes, woo hoo! That was great. It was sensational evidence going to the heart of what is wrong with the way this Government operates. She knew in 2014 and did nothing, even though the evidence to the Independent Commission Against Corruption clearly showed that what he was doing was wrong. We know that the Premier failed to disclose to the Independent Commission Against Corruption her personal relationship with Daryl Maguire. We also know that she failed to disclose what she knew.

I will never forget the day that the Premier came into this Parliament and when asked a question about Daryl Maguire stood up and said, "If you know anything, you have to report it to ICAC. That is your responsibility. You must report it to ICAC." She stood and waved her finger at us and said, "You must report it to ICAC." But she knew exactly what he was doing and did not do anything about it. It was the ultimate hypocrisy. Junior staff and senior bureaucrats across ministerial offices have made disclosures to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. But the Premier, the leader of this State, has not gone to the Independent Commission Against Corruption and made a disclosure. That is why we bring five bills to this House seeking to restore integrity in this Parliament and make it accountable to the citizens, not to members opposite.

In the months that have passed since the Premier appeared before the Independent Commission Against Corruption questions have been asked about much of the information that we have not been able to get from the Premier. Last week in budget estimates the Premier was asked a number of questions again about what she knew on two issues specifically: an investment into the Cobb Highway and in regard to Country Garden and what it knew about the M9 orbital route. Last night the Legislative Council took the unusual and unprecedented step to refer the Premier to the Independent Commission Against Corruption because when she appeared before budget estimates she simply did not answer those questions. Again it came back to the fact that she knew, but she did nothing. She did not report her conflict of interest and she did not report what she knew to the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

The Premier time and time again is turning a blind eye to corruption. Under this Premier it was okay for her partner to run a cash-for-visa scam 20 metres from where I am standing. All of us in this place should note that. When we sat in this House, we had no idea of what this man was doing. The Premier knew exactly what he was doing. Under this Government, property developers' interests are put ahead of the public interest. That is unacceptable. Members on this side will not sit back quietly and do nothing. Under this Premier it is okay to use your position to make millions of dollars for yourself. Under this Premier it is okay to run a grants program to make sure that 95 per cent of a quarter-of-a-billion dollar program goes to Nationals and Liberal Party electorates to benefit the Government's electoral chances. And then what happens? The documents are shredded, the emails are deleted and there is apparently no trace because it is all about the cover-up. It is up to this Parliament to shed

light in the dark places that this Government has created. The Premier has set an impossibly low standard in this place, and that standard then guides how members on the government side of the House operate.

If the Premier can get away with it then Ministers can say, "If she is going to get away with it, then I am going to get away with it. If I get caught then she cannot do anything to me because she has done exactly the same thing." That is the mentality on the government side of the House, and that is exactly what is happening. That is why time and again these scandals and corruption are being exposed and the Premier does nothing. She has not sacked one Minister—although, she may have sacked John Sidoti. We do not know because the information he gave to the media two weeks ago is very different to the information that she gave to the media. According to her, the facts do not matter. That is what is wrong with the Government because every fact matters; integrity matters. It matters what you say. As leader of the Labor Party I have made a commitment to our party and to the citizens of New South Wales that we will act with integrity because what the leader does and says matters.

In just two weeks the Independent Commission Against Corruption will begin an inquiry into the member for Drummoyne, John Sidoti. The Labor Party reported John Sidoti's activities to the Independent Commission Against Corruption because across the road from my electorate, in Five Dock, a metro station will be built. Yet somehow John Sidoti and his family managed to buy land around that metro station and make money from that metro station. How is that acceptable? We know that disclosures were not made. This bill is required because conflicts of interest should be disclosed and managed and the Premier has not done that. We see that pattern of behaviour time and again. As a Parliament it is incumbent upon us and incumbent upon all Government members to do something about that.

That is why the Parliament must act. The Premier's actions have had a chilling effect on ministerial standards. We have seen the quarter-of-a-billion dollar grants program rorted and, just one month after that, we found out that the bushfire grants were also rorted. I never thought that in this place we would see State emergency funds being rorted to benefit electorates. But that is what we have seen. Hundreds of homes across the State have been destroyed and communities impacted, yet when it came to handing out those grants the Government looked to its own electoral chances and allocated that money.

Ms Anna Watson: Politics before people.

Ms JODI McKAY: The member for Shellharbour is absolutely right. We have seen in the Treasurer's office the Treasurer use funding from icare to pay a political operative in his office. That happened while 52,000 sick and injured workers were not paid what they were owed. They were ripped off \$40 million while he used that money to put a political operative in his office. That goes to the heart of what is wrong with the Government. Sick and injured workers were pushed out the door while he put through his door a political operative to help him. We have seen it with Minister after Minister. Let us talk about the police Minister. What a piece of work he is. That Minister impersonated a police officer and then had his police force investigate him. Again, the Premier said, "It is fine." Do you know why she said that? It is because she knew exactly what was coming for her and if she dealt with the Treasurer or the police Minister then she would have had to deal with her own misbehaviour.

Let us talk about the transport Minister. What did he do? He gave an illegal directive to the secretary of his department to remove 16 million trees. When the secretary did not follow through with that, he sacked him. He sacked him because he would not pursue an illegal directive. That is what happens when the Premier sets an impossibly low standard, and it is what we see time and again. It falls to this Parliament to raise the bar. It is incumbent on all members on this side of the House and all members of the crossbench. Labor has four bills before the House. This will be the fifth bill in a suite of integrity measures that we feel we have to bring before the Parliament because these issues are not being addressed. The NSW Ministerial Code of Conduct, mentioned in the bill, is an appendix to the Independent Commission Against Corruption Regulation 2017, and made under the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988. Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries must follow that code of conduct.

We know that in that code of conduct there is the obligation to disclose and report, which the Premier has not done. The code sets out the obligations of Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries, including disclosures of conflicts of interest. It also outlines the steps the Premier must take in relation to their interests and, in some cases, the interests of other members. The bill I have introduced today covers the publication of the ministerial register of interests. Currently that ministerial disclosure of interests is kept secret: We cannot access it and the public cannot see it, so we do not know what is on it. We do not know whether it is being followed or whether it is following the rules set out under the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act. The bill will provide transparency over all current disclosures as well as mandating the publication of future disclosures made by Ministers. It will also require any rulings made by the Premier on ministerial disclosures to be published.

We know there was a lot of murkiness around the disclosures of Daryl Maguire—whether she gave him a direction in regard to the disclosure of interests and whether he disclosed his interests. The bill will fix that by shining a light on the register to make it public so that we could access it, the public could access it and, if the Premier gave a directive, that would also be made public. The onus would be on the Premier to publish that register. It is an important integrity measure, and I hope members on the other side of the House support it. But I fear, like the other four bills that were brought before the House to deal with integrity, they will not. One thing we know about this Government is that it looks after itself and its mates. The Government will not support the bills because it is beholden to vested interests and supports shadow property deals, which we are seeing all over Sydney.

We are seeing that in property deals across the State, from Camellia all the way through to the aerotropolis, including involving Landcom. Yesterday we found out that a quarter-of-a-billion dollar property deal was made between Landcom's CEO and the CEO of a development company, and their personal friendship was not disclosed. Every day it seems another dirty deal is uncovered because the Government puts the vested interests of others before the people of New South Wales. It comes at a time when the performance of our schools is in freefall and when we have overcrowded schools across Sydney, particularly in western Sydney, where the Government has promised upgrades that have not been forthcoming.

Parents are crying out for help to ensure that their students, no matter where they live, receive the same education as every other student. That is not happening. It comes at a time when TAFE is being privatised and 700 staff are losing their jobs—on top of the 5,400 who have already lost theirs. It comes when health care is being compromised by a government that does not care about what happens in western and south-western Sydney or rural and regional New South Wales. Tomorrow we will see the start of a rural and regional health inquiry pushed by Labor—not by The Nationals but by Labor. These are some of the issues that we are seeing uncovered in New South Wales—and they matter to people. When you are so focused on property deals and vested interests, you are not going to focus on the ordinary folk. You do not care about the ordinary folk.

In this Parliament we have a responsibility to make sure every person is looked after. Labor is introducing this legislation today because we know the sole focus of government should be on supporting the people I just mentioned. We get up every day, walk into the office and know our role is to support the people we all have in our electorates—the vulnerable and the disadvantaged. It does not matter how much money they have, where they come from, their cultural beliefs or their religious beliefs. We support them. That is our job. That is not the job of those opposite. Unless you have a way of operating and a model of delivery that has integrity at its heart, you are not going to get this right, and the people we represent get left behind. Sunshine is the very best disinfectant in dark places, and that is what this bill attempts to provide by saying to the Government, "Publish what you have that is currently secret: the register of interests and the Premier's direction in regard to it." It is not too much to ask. It is quite extraordinary that we have to bring legislation into Parliament to try to achieve that.

As I said, this legislation does not stand in isolation. It is part of a wider suite of integrity measures that we have before this Parliament. They include the banning of the receipt of commissions from property developers, making it a crime to recklessly shred important Government documents—I mean, who thought we would actually have to do that?—and a ban on property developers serving in Cabinet. I call on the Government to support those measures. I call on those opposite to join us in ensuring that we have integrity once again in politics. This Government has been in office 10 years, and there has been scandal after scandal. Those opposite have lost sight of what they are meant to do and the people they are meant to serve. It is incumbent on all of us on this side of the House to change that. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

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

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 18 February 2021.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (10:43): I want to speak on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Coercive Control—Preethi's Law) Bill 2020 because it is such a significant issue for us in society. There are a number of things I wish to say from the outset. Firstly, I know there is not a single member in this House who is not extremely concerned about the atrocious and unacceptable rate of domestic violence against women and the seemingly worsening severity of that violence. There is no-one here who would condone that behaviour or who does not recognise that coercive control is a significant part of violence against women. There is also no-one who wants to sit around quietly and allow the problem to worsen.

I thank the member for Shellharbour for preparing this bill. I know it reflects her dedication and passion for doing something about this very serious issue. I absolutely understand and respect the bill's intentions and the

enormous amount of work it has taken to reach this stage. As we have heard from other speakers, and indeed as I have learned through my own research with victim and survivor groups, and organisations such as the Law Society of New South Wales and Domestic Violence NSW, this bill does, however, have some flaws and in my view fails the practical application test in a number of ways.

The issue of coercive control is a very significant issue, and I do not want that significance understated in any way. It is also a very complex issue. It is clear from discussions I have had and from listening to considered contributions to this debate that it is a difficult issue to legislate around. As I have said on a number of occasions previously, it troubles me when we see an Opposition bill or indeed a private member's bill like this which, while well-intentioned, will always fail, not necessarily because of lack of merit but because it is an Opposition bill. Rightly or wrongly we know that a bill coming from the Opposition is not going to pass, and that is the unfortunate fact of the matter. However, that is not something unique to this Government or Opposition. We all know there is no way a Labor government would accept a non-government bill from a Coalition in opposition. It is just the way it is.

On an issue as important as this, if the Opposition is serious about fixing the problem it makes far better sense that those opposite actually work with the Government and expert agencies to address the problem and come up with a bill that is suitably nuanced and appropriate. It has to be done wholeheartedly in concert with Government, and that takes the Government to also reach out across the aisle. Sadly, as I said, we are now debating a bill that fails the practical application test on a number of fronts. That is the view not only of the Government but also of a number of the expert agencies I have spoken to. We need a law that works. We know that Tasmania criminalised coercive control in 2004 but, as Renata Field from Domestic Violence NSW has pointed out, it is an offence that is simply not used the way it was intended. That is for a number of reasons but primarily because it casts too broad a net, it is difficult to fit into a legal framework, and police and the judiciary are not educated in ways of properly interpreting it or using it.

This bill, as in the Tasmanian experience, risks being under-utilised by police and the courts because the proposed offence becomes too broad and unwittingly captures behaviours that are outside of the intended target. The issue of domestic violence and coercive control is too important and too significant for us to fail on. Again, while I acknowledge the intentions of the member for Shellharbour, we need to get this right. I believe we should all wait for the parliamentary committee's report before moving forward. The committee, as I understand it, has received almost 200 submissions from victims or survivors, expert legal agencies, domestic violence organisations, police and other frontline responders. We will have a much better view of the required path ahead than what we have in front of us now.

Having said that, I also believe that the Government could have been moving far more quickly than it has on this issue. I note the Government released its initial discussion paper in October 2019 and that a joint select committee for further inquiry into coercive control in domestic relationships was later ordered. But, while I acknowledge the extraordinary events over the past year, we are not likely to see the committee's report until June, or almost two years after the discussion paper was released. I would have hoped for a more urgent response on this issue, notwithstanding the fact that a large number of stakeholders needed to be engaged on the matter and the complex nature of the issue itself.

I note the Attorney General's role in that long and difficult process, and I acknowledge his efforts to formulate or guide new legislation. The evidence is very clear: Coercive control is a significant component in a large percentage of domestic violence cases. There is also no doubt that it is an identifiable precursor to domestic partner murders. We know the gut-wrenching figures, and they have been repeated a number of times during this debate. The most heartbreaking of all is that a woman is killed by a current or former partner in Australia every nine days, on average. A man is killed by a former or current partner every 29 days.

Australian Bureau of Statistics reports show that one in six women aged over 18 have experienced violence from a current or former domestic partner. That is disgraceful. Figures from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research show that a record number of sexual assaults occurred in the Hunter region over the past year. Those figures were highlighted again today by the *Newcastle Herald*. They showed that the number of reported sexual assaults in the Hunter has risen about 10 per cent a year for the past five years. In 2020, 849 sexual assaults were reported in the region. That is an appalling figure and is 13 per cent higher than the 754 assaults reported in the previous year. The only positive in those figures is that some counselling and support groups are saying part of the increase is due to more women, in particular, finding their voices and coming forward to report their experiences.

That is to be further encouraged, of course, and I am pleased that more victims and survivors are feeling comfortable with coming forward. But it also reflects the extent of the problem. There were 849 sexual assaults in the Hunter region last year, or more than two a day. There were also 258 in the Lake Macquarie local government area alone, and the figure is rising. We must acknowledge the problem and get on with fixing it. I am

loathe to oppose this bill because it could be seen as further delaying a response or decisive action, but the need to get the response right is first in my mind. It is paramount, and I cannot overcome the flaws that the experts and frontline responders say this bill contains.

The horrific abuse that is happening within our communities must be stopped. I have heard unimaginable stories of abuse, particularly of local women. I cannot imagine the grief and trauma that Dr Preethi Reddy endured. Nor can I imagine the grief and trauma experienced by her family and friends. I do not have all the answers. I do not even know why these levels of violence happen at all, but I know they happen. I also know that our response must be workable, and it must create a framework that genuinely protects, deters and punishes. Coercive control is an extremely complex problem that presents significant legal and practical difficulties to fix. I believe it is imperative that we get all those complexities and nuances on the table and that we work with the experts, frontline staff, victims and survivors and create something that is not open to abuse and actually works for victims.

The parliamentary committee has been charged with doing that and has been doing so for the past year. As grateful as I am to the member for Shellharbour for the work she has done in this area and as keen as I am to see relevant legislation, I believe we should at least wait for the report and recommendations to come back from that committee and resist moving forward with a bill that so many experts say will not adequately address the problem. When that report is tabled, I trust the Government and the Attorney General to move quickly to act on its recommendations. In the meantime, I believe the member for Shellharbour has done a great service by bringing this bill forward as it has exposed an awful truth that exists for too many in our community, mostly women, and allowed for a more meaningful debate than might otherwise have occurred on this important matter.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (10:52): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Coercive Control—Preethi's Law) Bill 2020. At the outset I congratulate the member for Shellharbour and thank her for bringing this bill forward and for having the courage to share her experiences meeting with people—the real reason behind this bill. I pick up on the point that the member for Lake Macquarie made. Unfortunately, when the Opposition presents a bill to Parliament it is a fact that more often than not it is rejected. For whatever reason, there may be flaws in the bill. But let us try to fix them through amendments. Let us try to make the legislation clear. We sit in this place charged with responsibility for eight million people. That is really important. The statistics, particularly around domestic violence, are horrific. The previous speaker and many other speakers in this debate have cited the statistics, which result in murder and displacement. That is important and a starting point for us moving forward.

Like the member for Lake Macquarie, I say well done to the member for Shellharbour for bringing this bill forward. The Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control has a job to do. I hope that does not mean this matter will be kicked down the road a bit more. We cannot afford not to deal with this and simply sit in Parliament and leave things for future generations of leaders to deal with. Too many women are in desperate need of help. Sadly and tragically, too many women are killed—on average, one every nine days or so. Obviously, rather than go through the details of the bill and the amendments that it proposes, I make clear that when we address domestic violence and coercive control we are taking a step forward in making sure that everybody feels safe. We talk about women, but we must also be cognisant of the fact that this has a massive effect on children, who have done nothing other than be dependent on an adult. We must make sure that they are protected from any sort of aggression towards them.

I think the defence of reasonableness is a good one. We know that sometimes people are fearful and think, "Well, someone will bring a charge against me." You have to at least have a chance to defend yourself, and that is where the defence of reasonableness comes in. I also know that there has been reflection on the memory of Preethi Reddy, who was murdered by her ex-partner in June 2020. In many ways that was a catalyst for this bill. All members of Parliament have heard stories about domestic violence and gendered violence or have had constituents come to us in desperate need. We have all met somebody who is in desperate need of instant support. I think of one particular constituent, who is a very confident and independent person. But when her marriage broke down her now ex-husband used incredible coercive behaviours to freeze her out of all the things that could help her start a new life, including controlling bank accounts, watching where she went, spreading all sorts of rumours about her, humiliating her in the community and telling the children a whole heap of lies.

This person was confident, independent and financially secure but she quickly became fearful and was continuously looking over her shoulder. She changed and became a shadow of her former self. Victims come to see me because they are lost, even to the point where they need financial and government assistance. There is no easy path for them. They must try to find a way to get the documents they require. We must consider all those many nuances. We can change the laws and make them better, but we must think about how we implement those laws. I am disappointed that the easy option is always to oppose rather than to try to fix the problem. I reiterate that the joint select committee's report and recommendations should be addressed quickly. I know that there is an extensive consultation process, but we cannot afford to keep kicking this down the road. Once again,

I acknowledge and thank the member for Shellharbour for bringing this important discussion to Parliament. I thank every member who has contributed to the debate, regardless of how they may end up voting. This issue is beyond politics and affects all in our society.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (10:56): Our society has failed to deal with family and domestic violence. Rates of partner, former partner and child abuse remain shockingly high, with the number of murders horrifying. The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that one in six women over the age of 15 has experienced physical or sexual violence from a current or previous cohabiting partner and ACON estimates that one in three LGBT+ people experience violence from a partner, ex-partner or family member. Family and domestic violence has serious lifelong impacts on health, wellbeing, education, employment, relationships and housing outcomes. It goes beyond physical and sexual violence and often involves a range of behaviours aimed at inciting fear, cementing power and control over someone, and crushing their confidence. Coercive control includes controlling access to finances, monitoring movements and isolating a person from their friends and family.

Coercive behaviours often occur slowly and build up over time. In LGBT+ relationships it can take unique forms through identity-based abuse, including coercive actions to pressure someone to conform to gender norms, undergo surgery they do not want, or threaten to out their LGBT+ status. We need to address the broader framework of coercive behaviours if we are going to keep people safe. I support the introduction of a new offence of coercive control. It would fill a gap in punishing some of the sinister behaviours exerted over partners and family members. A new offence would provide an important opportunity for early intervention to help people leave abusive relationships before they escalate into violence. I commend the member for Shellharbour for introducing the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Coercive Control—Preethi's Law) Bill 2020, which will make coercive control a criminal offence. I also commend the Attorney General for his commitment to reform through consultation, including through the joint select committee process. An informed and consultative approach is needed.

Any new offence must not create new risks that could see victims and survivors charged. The new offence must not provide a loophole for perpetrators to target victims and survivors, and should exclude dysfunctional relationships that are not coercive. It should be sensitive to LGBT+ relationships, in which police and services often report difficulty determining the primary aggressor. Extensive consultation with the domestic and family violence sector will help address those matters. I note that Domestic Violence NSW is calling for the introduction of a civil offence while further work on drafting a criminal offence proceeds. New South Wales police will require training, with input from the sector when an offence is introduced.

Not all people who experience domestic and family violence will go through the criminal justice system, and that system will never be the silver bullet to ending this form of abuse. We need a fully funded domestic and family violence sector to ensure that people impacted receive effective specialist support. The priority for funding should be primary prevention and early intervention programs, and services and education campaigns to stop violence before it starts and achieve cultural change. The Government should work collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations to address the impact of domestic and family violence on their communities. New dedicated social housing is essential. We still lack safe and appropriate temporary housing for women and children seeking to flee a violent partner. Because most women with children will not sleep rough, they may not get priority for social housing. Almost 28,000 people sought housing assistance in the last financial year due to family and domestic violence, and the majority of homelessness service clients are women and children escaping domestic violence—about 38 per cent of all clients.

Everyone deserves to feel safe and have autonomy over their life. Cultural change towards respect for all, regardless of their sex, gender, LGBT+ status, marital status or age, is key. We should start by addressing the laws and social structures that foster discrimination, such as allowing gay teachers to be sacked, not giving trans and gender-diverse people up-to-date birth certificates and excluding women from senior positions of power. Current gender biases help perpetrators of abuse justify their actions. We have seen, with the recent exposés in schools, how sexist, misogynistic and sexually predatory behaviour can start young. On Monday I joined women and people of all genders from across Sydney to call for more work to protect women and people who are gender diverse from violence and sexual assault in their homes, workplaces, schools and the public domain. We must make more progress in this space. I thank the member for Shellharbour for bringing this important matter to the House. I will not oppose the bill.

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (11:02:0): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Coercive Control—Preethi's Law) Bill 2020. I thank the member for Shellharbour for raising this matter by bringing this legislation forward. I understand that that has been a challenge for her, and I acknowledge the important work she has done in this regard. I also acknowledge the victims of domestic violence and all that they have suffered. After decades of talking about this, we seem to have made almost no progress on this issue. The concept of coercive control is a recognition that the physical violence

that winds up in the courts is really the endpoint of a process that starts many years before in ways that are psychological, subtle and emotional, and ultimately probably go back to the way that relationships and behaviours develop in our society. The discussion around coercive control is very important because it highlights how deep the problem is and how simply addressing instances of physical abuse misses the root cause of what is happening here.

In that context, I mention briefly a project that is happening in my electorate that goes some way to illustrate this point. According to the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, in 2019 there were 514 domestic violence assaults in the Wagga Wagga local government area—and they are only the incidents reported to police. As the Attorney General commented recently while on a visit to Wagga, it is quite possible that half of the police work done in this State is responding to incidents of domestic violence. I thank the police for playing that frontline role but, when we talk about needing resources for crime prevention, the fact that we cannot prevent domestic violence is a real concern. Again, that is why the introduction of the concept of coercive control to our thinking is so important.

On that note, research conducted by the Wagga Women's Health Centre in 2016 and 2017 found that many Wagga Wagga residents have a poor understanding of, and hold attitudes subtly supportive of, domestic violence. The research found that perhaps one in four Wagga men thought that men should be dominant in relationships and one in 25 people in Wagga thought domestic violence was okay in certain circumstances. I do not think those statistics are unique to Wagga. It is a lens on the antecedent issues here, the culture in our society that does not respect women, particularly in relationships. The Wagga Women's Health Centre received funding from the New South Wales Government's Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund to implement a three-year funded gender equity project, called theDVproject:2650—2650 is the postcode of Wagga. That project has focused on primary prevention strategies to address the high rates of domestic and family violence.

The project is coming to an end in June 2021. The Women's Health Centre partnered with Wagga Wagga City Council on the project, and the council established a cross-sectional steering committee with leaders and ambassadors of the community to support and guide the project delivery. I have been privileged to be a member of that committee. The project has focused on changing attitudes, recognising that rigid gender stereotypes and norms and gender inequality are the drivers of domestic and family violence, and create a violence-supportive environment. That is why I think this legislation is so important, because it highlights that we are trying to address the environment in which women and other domestic violence victims live in an attempt to get to grips with this problem. The project in Wagga had a number of objectives: to create attitudinal change in the community; promote and normalise gender equity and respect in public and private life; increase support for gender equality; and change attitudes and beliefs that create this violence-supportive environment. The project focused on three pillars—organisational change, sector engagement and community-wide campaigns.

The organisational change component was very interesting. It was aimed at creating an equitable and respectful workplace within Wagga Wagga City Council. A lot of work was done around policies, internal culture and practices, and supporting staff, including education programs and fact sheets. It is hard to believe a project was needed in 2019, 2020 and 2021 to do this after the decades of discussion we have had about this issue. But the fact is that is what has been required, and I congratulate the council and all the staff who have participated in the project. The project went further and involved sector engagement and working with local businesses, local government organisations, educational institutions and sporting clubs. In other words, it went beyond the council and into the community with respected organisations to promote ideas around respect for women and, importantly, introduce prevention strategies and model behaviours within those industries.

We had champions who did that. There were particular efforts with the Southern Sports Academy, the schools and the Wiradjuri and First Nations youth. Finally, there were a number of community-wide campaigns. There was a 16 Days of Activism campaign promoting the importance of equity and respect in building stronger communities. We have a Reflect Respect campaign and a We Do Respect campaign. The Reflect Respect campaign is a three-year media and online campaign with some very hip advertising. It involves extensive engagement with the community. My own family have recognised the ads. There are coasters in pubs, there are television ads and there are bus ads. It is all going back to this issue of how we treat women in our society and the respect that they deserve. I believe that campaign has reach beyond our local government area. In terms of community campaigns, I am pleased to report that the project has also been engaging with Wiradjuri and First Nations youth through an Enlighten for Equity project in primary and high schools. That sort of intervention and engagement with the community is incredibly important.

I report on that to the House today because my understanding from my involvement with this project and my support for this legislation relates to the important need in our society to recognise that the physical violence women suffer comes at the end of a process and that that process starts with the cultural attitudes and behaviours that we endorse in our society. It beggars belief that we are at this point after decades of discussion around this

issue. We do not seem to have made any progress, and I think that is because we have a hidden curriculum in our society and a bunch of hidden messages that subtly condone coercive behaviours towards women. I congratulate the member for Shellharbour on bringing forward this legislation because I believe this is calling that issue out—shining a light on it. Only by doing that can we come to grips and tackle this evil scourge in our society.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (11:09): In reply: I will finish where I started, and that is by discussing Dr Preethi Reddy. Preethi was born in India. She moved here to Australia with her family when she was nine years old. In later life Preethi was described by her family as elegant, bubbly, social, kind and witty. She was a practising dentist. Preethi attended The Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne in late 2013 and early 2014. During the course Preethi met and commenced a relationship with Dr Narde, who was also a practising dentist. Observations of the couple together were that Preethi was not her usual bubbly self while she was with him. According to Preethi's sister, Nithya, Dr Narde was not as confident as Preethi and had relied on her both socially and emotionally. After an argument in 2015 the relationship was an on-again off-again relationship. The couple were separated by some distance, with Preethi living at her parents' home in Sydney and Dr Narde living in Tamworth, New South Wales. They never lived together.

In November 2018 Preethi commenced a new relationship. Her new partner lived in Melbourne. Preethi was looking to move to Melbourne as she had been successful in gaining employment there. In February 2019 Dr Narde told an acquaintance that the girl he loved was Preethi and that she was going to get married to somebody else. On 1 March 2019 Preethi and Dr Narde attended the same two-day dentistry conference. Preethi stayed in a room with two others at the Hotel Urban St Leonards and Dr Narde stayed in a room on his own. The conference finished on 2 March at about 6.14 p.m., and CCTV footage shows Preethi and Dr Narde entering the lift with others. At 6.22 p.m. CCTV footage shows Preethi driving her vehicle out of the underground car park of the hotel. At that time a passenger was seated in the front passenger seat. The footage shows Preethi's vehicle entering a car park in Alexandria Street, Crows Nest at 8.32 p.m. Both Preethi and Dr Narde were seen getting out of the car.

At about 9.45 p.m. they entered a restaurant in Crows Nest. The owner observed little conversation between the two. In fact he did not even think that they were a couple. In the owner's observation, there was no happiness or laughter between them. Preethi sat with her arms crossed. It appeared to him that they had entered the restaurant to talk rather than to eat. Preethi paid for the meal with her credit card, and they left the restaurant at 10.16 p.m. At about 10.32 p.m. they re-entered the car park and appeared to be talking. It appears from the footage that at one time Dr Narde extended both his arms towards Preethi and she took a few steps backward. They exited the car park at 12.32 a.m. on 3 March. They then drove to the city and parked until 1.53 a.m., where they talked and consumed two bottles of water that Preethi had purchased. They then drove to the Swissôtel Sydney. Dr Narde had booked a room at the hotel the day before.

Dr Narde registered his name with reception at 2.46 a.m. but did not register Preethi as a guest. Both Preethi and Dr Narde entered the hotel room at 3.06 a.m. The following morning at 10.57 a.m. Preethi called her father to tell him that she would be having breakfast and returning home. At 11.06 a.m. Preethi called her partner and told him that she loved him. That was the last time Preethi was known to be alive. Dr Narde re-booked the room to stay another night. Later that day Dr Narde was observed purchasing a number of cleaning items, black plastic bags and a large suitcase from nearby stores, which he took up to the room that he and Preethi had occupied the night before. On 5 March 2019 at 9.19 p.m. Preethi's vehicle was located in Strachan Street, Kingsford. Preethi's body was located in the boot of the vehicle in the suitcase that had been purchased at Myer by Dr Narde on 3 March. The Coroner was satisfied that Dr Narde took Preethi's life in the bathroom of the hotel. Her death was violent. It was reported by the Coroner to be "truly tragic and horrifying".

New South Wales is currently in the same position that Scotland and the United Kingdom found themselves in a number of years ago. We know that what we are doing does not work. The escalating incidence of domestic and family violence in New South Wales attests to that fact. As I said earlier, we here in New South Wales are bucking a downward trend of domestic violence in Australia. We need to take a positive step. In this bill we have the formula to do that. The Attorney General, Mark Speakman, knows that there is a lot more to do in this area—hence the introduction of his own bill, the Stronger Communities Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Bill 2020. We are playing catch-up and tinkering around the edges. We are not addressing the real issues here.

I know that the Attorney General, Mark Speakman, did not "have an appetite to support this bill". He told me that in those very words. I was horrified, to be honest. As I understand it, the difference between bad behaviour and a breach of the law is what the courts determine every day. That is their job; that is what they do. To stand in this place and say that the courts could not determine the difference between the two is obscene. It would be difficult to imagine that a police officer would take the time to make an arrest for what is bad behaviour without probable cause—some evidence that a crime had been committed—nor for a prosecutor to prosecute if they were not confident that they could prove a suspect guilty beyond reasonable doubt. It is not unreasonable to assume,

based on this, that one would not be arrested or convicted for what people would simply regard as bad behaviour. Paul McGorrery, a lawyer and legal policy expert and a PhD candidate exploring coercive control, supports the laws as a course-of-conduct model as opposed to one of incident-based criminalisation. He says:

We are then looking at the relationship as a whole, the pattern and culmination of behaviour. It moves away from the incident-based model of offences and into a course of conduct model, similar to how offences like stalking were introduced in the 1990s.

Today in the New South Wales Parliament, Coalition Government members are about to give victims of domestic violence a huge slap in the face. They will shamefully vote down this bill on criminalising coercive control. Throughout the passage of this bill I have remained resolute to my purpose: getting something done that would relieve the suffering of women in abusive relationships. During this time I have received great support from my Labor Party colleagues, and I thank them for that. I thank crossbench members for their support as well. I thank the many organisations involved in women's health.

The success of this bill was always predicated on the Government's support. That is just a fact. I offered the Attorney General numerous opportunities to put amendments forward so that we could get this bill through because it is so important. We have had a string of misinformation and scaremongering about what the bill would mean to things like acceptable discipline. For example, the Attorney General is quoted in *The Daily Telegraph* on 22 January as saying, "A parent could commit an offence by forcing a child to stay at home or regulating their day-to-day activities." He goes on to say, "It would criminalise parental discipline of children that most people would regard as acceptable."

In reality, the bill says that in criminal proceedings brought against a person for an offence under the bill it is a defence that the conduct was reasonable in particular circumstances, and that an offence occurs when the conduct has, or is reasonably likely to have, a serious adverse effect on the child. That is hardly interfering with or criminalising acceptable parental discipline. I believe that scaremongering and misinformation is a kick in the guts to the women and children who we are trying to protect with the bill. I think the Attorney General needs to apologise to those women, and to the sector as a whole, for those comments.

This should be a bipartisan bill. We should have full support for the bill going forward; if there are amendments to be made, make them. But unfortunately one of the Premier's Priorities is not going to happen in this place today. It is clear that the Government still does not have an appetite for protecting women and children. This change to the law would have helped to create a collective consciousness that coercive, controlling behaviours are wrong. We could have sent a strong message to everyone in New South Wales and denounced that type of behaviour, but instead the Government is more intent on playing politics with people's lives. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

The House divided.

Ayes38
Noes46
Majority.....8

AYES

Aitchison, J
Atalla, E
Bali, S
Barr, C
Car, P
Catley, Y
Chanthivong, A
Cotsis, S
Crakanthorp, T
Daley, M
Dib, J
Doyle, T (teller)
Finn, J

Greenwich, A
Harris, D
Harrison, J
Haylen, J
Hornery, S
Kamper, S
Lalich, N
Leong, J
Lynch, P
McDermott, H
McGirr, J
McKay, J
Mehan, D

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

NOES

Anderson, K
Ayres, S

Gibbons, M
Griffin, J

Provest, G
Roberts, A

NOES

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Barilaro, J | Gulaptis, C | Saunders, D |
| Berejiklian, G | Hancock, S | Sidgreaves, P |
| Butler, R | 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 |
| Dalton, H | Pavey, M | Upton, G |
| Davies, T | Perrottet, D | Ward, G |
| Dominello, V | Petinos, E | Williams, L |
| Elliott, D | Preston, R | Wilson, F |
| Evans, L | | |

PAIRS

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| Hoenig, R | Williams, R |
| Mihailuk, T | Bromhead, S |
| Zangari, G | Hazzard, B |

Motion negatived.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (PECUNIARY INTERESTS DISCLOSURES) BILL 2020

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 15 October 2020.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (11:31): The local government sector is diverse: 128 councils, 1,100 elected councillors and 50,000 employees. It is essential that considered consultation take place with the sector when introducing any change to legislation affecting local government. In this case, the Opposition has failed to do so. For this reason and a number of others, the Government opposes the Local Government Amendment (Pecuniary Interests Disclosures) Bill 2020. Under the amendments proposed in the bill, returns of interests lodged by councillors and other key council decision-makers must be published on councils' websites.

It is clear that the shadow Minister is not across his brief. If he were, he would have known that, as a matter of law, councils are already required to publish returns of interests on their websites. The bill not only needlessly duplicates an existing statutory requirement but also, if passed, will create legal uncertainty where none existed previously. Most importantly, it will potentially put the safety of councillors, council staff, their families and others at risk. Returns of interests are an important accountability mechanism. Before elaborating on the deficiencies of the bill, I will expand on the existing statutory requirements.

Under the Model Code of Conduct for local councils in New South Wales, councillors and designated persons must lodge returns of interests with the general manager of a council within three months of becoming a councillor or designated person and after 30 June each year. When they become aware of new interests, they are required to disclose. Designated persons include the general manager and senior staff of a council and other members of staff, delegates or committee members whom the council identifies as being designated persons because they exercise functions that could give rise to a conflict of interest.

Returns of interests are prescribed as open access information for the purposes of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, or the GIPA Act, meaning they must be published on councils' websites. Those requirements operate as an important transparency mechanism to ensure that councils and other key council decision-makers disclose and appropriately manage pecuniary interests they may have in matters they are dealing with. The existing requirements strike an appropriate balance between transparency and personal safety. The GIPA Act allows the redaction of information from returns of interests published on councils' websites where there is an overriding public interest against their disclosure. For example, information may be redacted because disclosure of the information will reveal an individual's personal information, such as their signature, or expose them to a risk of harm or serious harassment or intimidation—for example, because it discloses where they live.

The Information Commissioner has issued guidelines to assist councils to determine the public interest considerations for and against disclosure of information contained in councillors' and designated persons' returns. The guidelines state that those returns of interests must "be made publicly available on the council's website free of charge". Where there is an overriding public interest against the disclosure of some of the information contained in a return, "the information should be deleted from a copy of the return and the remainder of the return made available on the council's website". As a matter of policy, that allows councils to redact information about people's home addresses and their signatures prior to publishing their returns of interests on the councils' websites, thereby minimising the risk of identity theft and risks to personal safety.

The Opposition seeks to duplicate existing requirements. The bill proposes amendments to the Local Government Act 1993 to require a councillor, delegate or designated person who has lodged a return with the general manager or disclosed their interests under a council's code of conduct to publish the return on the council's website. In effect, that requirement duplicates the existing requirement under the GIPA Act, creating a parallel regime for access to information in returns of interests. Curiously, the bill places the obligation to publish returns on councils' websites on the councillor, delegate or designated person and not on the council. Clearly that is unworkable in practice because councillors and most staff will not have administrator access to council websites to allow them to do so. A greater concern is that the Opposition's bill makes no provision for the redaction of information such as signatures and home addresses prior to the publication of returns on councils' websites. Currently we all have the power to redact our home addresses. Under the bill, that will not apply to council workers.

On a plain reading of the bill, returns of interests must be published in full on councils' websites, including information about people's home addresses and signatures. The relationship between the requirements proposed in the Opposition's bill and the GIPA Act is not clear, nor is the relationship between the operation of those requirements and the GIPA Act. Section 10 (2) of the GIPA Act provides that the GIPA Act will not displace a requirement in another Act to make government information available to the public. That suggests that where there is an inconsistency between a requirement under the GIPA Act and under another Act for the disclosure of government information, the requirement under the other Act will prevail. So this bill will prevail over the GIPA Act.

On that reading of section 10 (2), if the bill becomes legislation it will require returns of interests to be published in full, and councils will not be able to redact information from returns under the provisions of the GIPA Act prior to their publication. On that view, the only circumstance in which information could be redacted from a return prior to its publication on a council's website is where a general manager has approved the redaction of information about a person's home address under section 739 of the Local Government Act. Section 739 allows a person who has lodged a return of interests to make a request to the general manager that information about their residential address be removed from the publicly available copy of their return if the disclosure of that information will put the person's or their family's personal safety at risk. Section 739 is a poor substitute for the safeguards under the GIPA Act. Unlike the safeguards under the GIPA Act, the protection afforded by section 739 cannot be applied by a council proactively to all persons required to lodge returns of interests.

To attract the protection offered by section 739, a person must first go through a cumbersome application process in which they must give the particulars of the relevant risk they face, verified by a statutory declaration. A general manager may only give approval for information about the person's address to be removed from their return if they are satisfied that disclosing the information will put the person or their family at risk. Critically, section 739 only allows information about a person's residential address to be redacted. It does not allow other information to be redacted, such as a signature, even when the disclosure of that information may put a person at risk. Section 739 is a pre-internet provision. When enacted, it would never have been contemplated that returns of interests would be published on councils' websites and that the information included in them could be misused for identity theft by someone on the other side of the world.

I understand that the shadow Minister has been telling local government stakeholders that the bill's proposed requirements will not prevent information being redacted, under the GIPA Act, from returns of interests prior to their publication where there is an overriding public interest against its disclosure. It is not clear on what basis the shadow Minister has formed that view. However, if that was the case, it will mean that if legislated, the bill will result in no net change to existing statutory requirements, which in turn begs the question: Why seek the amendment if it will make no change to existing requirements? It also begs the question: If it was the Opposition's intention to allow information about the home addresses and signatures to be redacted from returns of interests prior to their publication, why does the bill not expressly provide for that?

The Opposition bill will create uncertainty. I have hundreds and hundreds of letters—which I will not read as they could be quite offensive to the Opposition—from councillors, workers, ordinary people out there in the sector who are opposing the bill and are outraged by the uncertainty it will create. What we can be sure of is that

if it is legislated, at the very least the bill will create ongoing uncertainty about whether returns of interests are required to be published in full or whether they may be redacted under the GIPA Act. Even if the Parliament were to accept the shadow Minister's reassurance that information in returns of interests can be redacted prior to their publication on councils' websites and the bill is passed, it would not prevent someone in the future from commencing proceedings in the Land and Environment Court against a council to test that view and to potentially secure an order from the court compelling a council to publish the home addresses of its councillors and staff on its website.

The fear—and there is fear out there in the sector amongst the 128 councils—is that if passed, the Opposition bill will see councils required to publish returns of interests in full, including signatures and home addresses. It has prompted hundreds of council staff to write to me, asking that the Government oppose the bill. Council staff, and in particular those responsible for the exercise of council's regulatory functions, have written to me describing the challenges they face in performing their duties on a daily basis and the threats that have been made against them just for doing their job.

In total, 163 staff have written to me from City of Sydney, Northern Beaches, Ryde, Shoalhaven, Wollongong, Blacktown, Central Coast, Randwick, Shellharbour, Sutherland, Dubbo, Lachlan, Muswellbrook, Byron, MidCoast, Parkes, Blue Mountains, Camden, The Hills, Bega Valley, Ballina, Canada Bay, Hornsby, Snowy Monaro, Cessnock, Ku-ring-gai, Hawkesbury, Cumberland, Tweed, North Sydney, Wagga Wagga, Lake Macquarie, Kiama, Bayside, Lismore, Campbelltown, Wollondilly, Burwood, Liverpool, Queanbeyan-Palerang, Brewarrina, Port Stephens, Goulburn-Mulwaree, Eurobodalla, Hunters Hill, Hilltops, Snowy Valleys, Upper Lachlan and Yass Valley councils because we undertook the consultation that was not taken prior to the bill. Those staff are terrified at the prospect of the bill being passed. They are worried that if councils are required to publish on their websites information about where staff live, it will expose those staff and their families to a risk of harm or of serious harassment or intimidation.

Mr Greg Warren: Because you wrote to them and told them.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: I know that the shadow Minister has received the same correspondence, and it is disappointing that he has ignored the pleas of terrified council staff and is persisting with this misconceived bill. Compliance continues to be an issue. As I have previously noted, currently councils are required to publish returns of interests on their websites under the GIPA Act. The bill has been prompted by media reports of noncompliance by councils with that requirement. I acknowledge that it is of great concern. However, the amendments proposed in the bill will not result in higher levels of compliance by councils. Given the uncertainty it will create, if anything, it will have the opposite effect. Enforcement of the existing requirements is a more appropriate and proportionate response to noncompliance. I can talk to the shadow Minister more about that.

The Information Commissioner is responsible for oversight of compliance with the GIPA Act. The Information Commissioner is currently undertaking an audit of councils' compliance with the requirement to publish returns of interests on their websites, the accessibility of returns on councils' websites and the redaction of information from returns to identify and address noncompliance. Rather than legislating a requirement in the Local Government Act that duplicates an existing requirement under the GIPA Act, with all the confusion and uncertainty that it entails, a more effective and appropriate response to noncompliance by councils with the requirement to publish returns of interests on their websites is to allow the Information Commissioner to do her job. I offer a lesson to the shadow Minister. When presenting a bill regarding local government, it is necessary to consult with the local government sector and take their views into consideration. During my speech, the shadow Minister interjected to say that I have been trying to scare councils; I have not. I have simply presented the bill to them, asked them to consider its ramifications and asked for their feedback, as a Minister should. I was not absolutely scaring them. It seems the shadow Minister does not want to consult.

In this case the shadow Minister has worked backwards, trying to convince stakeholders that he did not intend the serious ramifications that his bill would give effect to. That is the impression he is trying to give. In fact, Labor's bill mandates that council employees publicise their home addresses, phone numbers and other personal details without the ability to redact, even though such protections are provided to members of Parliament, including the shadow Minister. In its current form, the bill is dangerous and ill-conceived, lacking research and consideration of the important views of councils, council staff and the local government sector. The shadow Minister should withdraw this inadequate, hastily constructed bill and go back to the drawing board.

As I have some time, I will read some of the correspondence. I have not tried to frighten the local government sector; I have simply written to them. "I object to the removal of the protections of staff offered in section 739(1) of the Local Government Act. Such protections will prevent the home addresses of staff being published to the entire world." This person goes on, "I vehemently oppose the removal of section 739, protection of privacy in the Local Government Amendment (Pecuniary Interests Disclosures) Bill 2020. This amendment

would remove the protection that I currently have to request my home address be removed from the pecuniary interest register." Another letter states, "Our place of residence is a safe haven for us and our families. Anonymity is our family's first line of safety when we operate in our role. These changes would help facilitate a retaliation effort from a disgruntled applicant to the detriment of our families and the effects could potentially put officers in a compromised position."

These are letters from workers who should be protected. Another letter states, "I write to express my opposition to the bill." Again and again, there are letters opposing the bill. Another example states, "As a designated person with a large number of council staff who are also designated persons, I completely endorse DEPA's letter of 23 October in which they oppose the bill on the grounds of personal safety of my staff and families." It goes on about safety. I did not put words into the mouths of these people who have written to me. I simply consulted with them on the bill, as the shadow Minister unfortunately did not do. I could go on but as some of the letters are offensive, I will not read them out. One letter states, "I believe it is totally unnecessary and fear it leaves the door open to intimidation or violent behaviour from people who simply do not like a decision made by a local government employee."

Our rangers and our planning staff make decisions that some members of the community do not like, and now their addresses will be known. Members of the community can turn up to their homes and cause unnecessary conflict. Those workers should be protected in all cases. Other letters say, "I vehemently object", "I vehemently oppose" and "the privacy provided by this protection is too important to lose." One person states, "I am just a general employee of council. However, I am involved in the assessment of development applications as a designated person. I feel the changes to this protection of privacy places myself and my family at risk of intimidation and potential harm. I note that this fear then also has the potential to impact my ability to operate impartially. My place of residence should not be open for inspection by all and sundry. Accordingly, I strongly oppose the bill."

I could go on. I have received those letters from the local government sector. I did not set out to frighten the local government sector. I put the bill before them, the legal ramifications of the bill and the potential to put people in harm's way—whether it is councillors, general managers, workers or rangers. It does not matter who it is; they will not have the ability to have certain details redacted because the bill will override the GIPA Act, and that is the problem. That is the legal advice on which I am basing my comments and which the Opposition has not based its bill on. I reiterate that this is a serious issue. As I said at the outset, it is serious when you are dealing with the local government sector. New South Wales has 128 councils, 1,100 elected councillors and 50,000 council employees, and they believe this bill will put them in danger. If they believe that, it is up to the Opposition to withdraw the bill or have further discussions about how we can institute a system that strengthens their protections and everybody's desire for disclosures to be mandatory.

There certainly should be a provision for councillors and workers to disclose but not when what is proposed overrides the GIPA Act, taking away the ability of somebody to withhold their home address and phone number. It is simply unacceptable. I have spoken to the shadow Minister for Local Government about this matter, and I am sure that we will have further discussions, but at the moment there has been inadequate research and, most importantly, inadequate consultation by him and the Opposition with the sector and with all those people who are affected. The Government strongly opposes the bill.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (11:52): Before I begin my contribution, I put it to the House and to the Minister for Local Government that the Opposition has no issue around conflict. I circulate some proposed amendments, which have been endorsed by the Office of Parliamentary Counsel, that make it clear that the general manager must publish a return. There is no option not to publish a return. If there is found to be an overriding public interest against disclosure of the information in the return, a redacted return may be published. But the general manager can only redact so much of the return as is necessary to prevent the disclosure of the sensitive information.

Mrs Shelley Hancock: Are you moving amendments?

Ms ANNA WATSON: I have circulated some amendments to tighten up the wording.

Mrs Shelley Hancock: To your own bill? You want to amend your own bill?

Ms ANNA WATSON: Yes.

Mrs Wendy Tuckerman: That's how good it is.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Shellharbour has the call.

Ms ANNA WATSON: Today I speak to the Local Government Amendment (Pecuniary Interests Disclosures) Bill 2020. This amendment will stop many Sydney councils ignoring the transparency rules around

the financial interests of elected officials. These disclosures are designed to share the financial interests of elected officials and senior staff. The posting of their interests would facilitate a member of the public making a relevant judgement call as to whether their local government authority is motivated by the right objectives. Geoffrey Watson, a barrister and public integrity advocate who served as Counsel Assisting the Independent Commission Against Corruption during a string of explosive political scandals, said that compliance with the rules is critical.

An ABC analysis has found that less than one-third of local government areas in and around Sydney have made their register of interests easily available online, as required under guidelines introduced a year ago. Of 32 Sydney-based councils, only nine have published their registers. Some 14 supplied them upon request by the ABC, and nine declined to supply them at all, offering only to make the documents available for inspection during a supervised visit. Several councils that did provide their disclosure forms redacted details, including sources of income, investment properties and other business interests. That is clearly not good enough. That is why the amendment is important. The rules are simply being ignored by authorities. Some councils are complying and providing material but redacting the details. What good is that? I guess we are used to seeing that in Government Information (Public Access) Act—GIPA Act—applications, but it is as bad as not complying at all.

It is still legal in New South Wales to be a property developer and sit on a local government authority, and even develop property inside that local government area. Unless we have a fully transparent scheme, no external person can make a judgement call about it. We heard today from the Leader of the Opposition about letting the sunshine in. This goes hand in hand with that concept. In an interview with ABC Illawarra, the Minister for Local Government, Shelley Hancock, pushed for improved compliance by councils. She said that the number of councils not publishing their registers of interests was concerning. She continued:

While the Information Commissioner is responsible for enforcing the requirement to publish councillor returns of interest online, these findings, if true, are concerning.

She also said:

I have requested the Office of Local Government to work with the Information Commissioner to improve council compliance with the requirement to publish councillor returns of interest online.

The New South Wales Information Commissioner Elizabeth Tydd said that she would conduct a compliance assessment. Under the regulations, councils can only be excused from publishing disclosures if they can prove that it would impose unreasonable costs on the council or that there was an overriding public interest against releasing the details. The commissioner said that her office would conduct a wider examination to assess compliance. Included on the website must be the disclosure of interest returns exactly as lodged—no more and no less. If personal information is not required or can be redacted under the code of conduct or under the GIPA Act or GIPA regulation, then it will simply be omitted or redacted from what is published on the website. In other words, the disclosure of interest return that is published on the website is squarely tied to the disclosure of interest that the code requires in the form required by the code.

The effect of publishing electronically should be no different from giving a person access to a hard copy of the lodged return at the council's office. If certain protections or exemptions are available under the GIPA Act and the GIPA regulation, those protections are not displaced by new section 440AAC. The published returns continue to be regulated by the code of conduct. In particular, as pointed out in the initial instructions, clause 4.27 of the model code says that information contained in returns made and lodged under clause 4.21 is to be made publicly available in accordance with the requirements of the GIPA Act and the GIPA regulation and any guidelines issued by the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner's Information Access Guideline 1—For Local Councils provides:

- In the circumstances where council decides that there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the return, consideration should then be given to whether it is practicable to release an edited copy of the return (for example redacting the individual's signature or residential address) in accordance with section 6(4) of the GIPA Act
- If it is practicable to do so, then the information should be deleted from a copy of the return and the remainder of the return made available on the council's website

The disclosure system is probably one of the most powerful aspects of the right to information legislation in New South Wales. It mandates the public release of specified information—information that goes to the higher order of why we have a right to access information in the first instance. That higher order is about accountable, transparent, fair, effective and open government—how it should be.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (11:58): I speak to the Local Government Amendment (Pecuniary Interests Disclosures) Bill 2020. The debate around this bill is not about whether councillors and key decision-makers in councils should be required to disclose their interests in returns lodged with the general manager or whether this information should, where appropriate, be made public on councils' websites.

The Government sees those requirements as an important transparency mechanism for ensuring that key decision-makers in councils appropriately disclose and manage pecuniary interests they may have in matters they are dealing with. This is why the Government strongly supports the existing requirements that provide for precisely those outcomes.

The debate is about whether councillors, council staff and others who tirelessly serve their communities should be needlessly put at risk through the publication of information on councils' websites about where they live and other information that will potentially expose them to identity theft. It is important to remember who is required to lodge returns of interests. It is not just the elected officials, general managers and other senior staff of councils who are required to lodge returns of interests. It is also anyone whom the council identifies as being designated persons because they exercise functions that could give rise to a conflict of interest. This includes ordinary council staff, including planning officers and staff involved in compliance and regulatory activities such as rangers, food and health inspectors, building inspectors and parking enforcement officers.

The risks of publishing information about where staff who perform regulatory and compliance functions live should be obvious. We have already seen the tragedy of staff involved in compliance and enforcement activities being threatened and, in one recent tragic case, killed as a result of performing their duties. However, the effects of the bill are more corrosive than that. In the 2016-17 local government elections, 37.5 per cent of candidates who stood for election to their local council were women. Of those elected, only 31.2 per cent were women. Councils must better reflect their communities, and I thank the Minister for the discussions we have on that matter. I am interested to know how the Opposition believes requiring councillors to publish where they live on their council's website, potentially putting them and their families at risk, will encourage more women and others to nominate for election to their local councils.

The potential impact of the bill does not end there. Councils, particularly in the western part of the State, suffer from desperate skills shortages. How can councils offer themselves as employers of choice to attract the staff with the skills and knowledge they need if they are required to publish details of where those staff live on their websites, potentially putting them and their families at risk? I am a strong supporter of transparency and accountability but not at the cost of the personal safety of councillors, council staff and their families. The requirements under the existing legislation strike a reasonable balance between transparency and personal safety. I do not see why it is necessary to disturb those requirements with ill-conceived legislation such as this bill and, in doing so, needlessly put councillors, council staff and others at risk.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (12:02): The Local Government Amendment (Pecuniary Interests Disclosures) Bill 2020 will help to improve transparency in councils in New South Wales. I thank my colleague Greg Warren, shadow Minister for Local Government, for taking up this important cause and introducing this bill. Local government plays an important role in ensuring that communities remain suitable and sustainable for our families. However, local councils can come under enormous pressure from developers hoping to construct new projects and earn significant profits, to the detriment of our communities. It is vital that the community is made aware of conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest between a councillor's personal interests and their duty to the council as a representative of our local community. That is achieved through inserting new section 440AAC into the Local Government Act 1993, which:

... requires councillors, delegates and designated persons who have lodged with the general manager of a council a return disclosing interests required under a code of conduct to publish the return on the council's website.

The bill will ensure that transparency by amending the Local Government Act to insert a new clause stipulating the persons required to have their pecuniary interests published and the manner in which they must be published. The core of the issue we have seen across councils is that this information is difficult to obtain for the general public and leaves councillors open to the opportunities of corruption or to being tainted. This information cannot be allowed to be hidden in some obscure page on the council website. It must, as required by the bill, be linked from the council's home page in a prominent manner.

Our local governments are responsible for a great deal of the day-to-day governing and service provision for people's lives. Therefore it is imperative that we ensure that we enshrine the highest standards of good governance. The bill will help ensure that our residents can have trust in the processes for local councillors and that their pecuniary interests are properly and fairly declared. I note that it has been reported that many councils have taken it upon themselves to have such declarations made public. However, it remains well below an acceptable standard. The bill will make those declarations a universal standard across New South Wales, which will benefit our democracy at a local government level.

Repeated acts by members of the Government that have failed the public's expectations of local councils have brought us to this action. Since the Liberal-Nationals Coalition was elected in 2011 we have seen acts that have infuriated the people of this State. The disregard that certain individuals have held for fairness and for the

high standards of government we rightly expect in New South Wales has left a trail of disappointment and anger, and has clouded the political class in corruption and dodgy deals. We have seen too many attempts by developers and their allies to influence council decisions.

In 2018 the former member for Wagga Wagga, Daryl Maguire, was forced to resign from this Parliament after he, along with a local City of Canterbury councillor, was caught attempting to inappropriately influence planning decisions in return for a cut of the profits. To this day the general public has been shocked by the direct involvement of the Premier. The ICAC hearing showed that the Premier's actions call into question her integrity. I know that time is short and this matter must be voted on, so I will leave my comments there. However, it is clear that what we hope to achieve with the bill is greatly needed. A such, I urge the House to support it.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:07): In reply: I acknowledge all my colleagues who have made a contribution to debate on the Local Government Amendment (Pecuniary Interests Disclosures) Bill 2020. This important bill will provide clarity and certainty for communities. At the outset I refute everything that the member for Albury and the Minister for Local Government said. However, I have since spoken with the Minister, and she has now become aware of some wording changes the Opposition will make to provide the sector with the certainty and clarity it was looking for. The legal advice I had at that time motivated these changes. This was not because members opposite asked, "Why change it?" It is simply because we consulted with the sector.

We did what good members of Parliament, what good oppositions and good governments should do: consult, listen to the concerns and then make changes. There is absolutely nothing wrong with that. In fact, I think it is a reflection of good representation, which is something that we on this side of the House are committed to—listening to concerns and providing the representations, amendments or whatever is required to ensure that the community has certainty and clarity. As the member for Shellharbour stated, we have tabled an amendment to the bill. Advice from the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel states:

Subclause (1A) makes it clear that a general manager *must* publish a return—there is no option not to publish a return at all if there is found to be an overriding public interest against disclosure of some of the information in the return. A redacted return can be published but the GM can only redact so much of the return as is necessary to prevent the disclosure of the "sensitive" information. As we know, that is controlled by the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 and outlined by the model code. The proposed changed wording of new section 440AAC (1) to provide that certainty and clarity is:

- (1) The general manager of a council must publish on the council's website returns disclosing interests required under a code of conduct to be disclosed that have been lodged with the general manager by a councillor, delegate or designated person.

That addresses councillors' concerns about having to personally do that. There is no change. They give it to the general manager. The general manager's role is to then publish it appropriately. Secondly, proposed section 440AAC (1A), as I referred to before, reads:

- (1A) Despite subsection (1), if the general manager considers that there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of information contained in a return, the general manager must publish the return on the council's website redacted to the extent necessary to prevent the disclosure of that information.

That includes someone's address, signature or anything, as they currently do now. That provision is there in what is being put today.

Mrs Shelley Hancock: I seek a point of clarification. You are speaking about amendments you have tabled. Are you now putting those amendments?

Mr GREG WARREN: They were foreshadowed by the member for Shellharbour and they have been tabled.

Mrs Shelley Hancock: Tabling is not moving.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: He does not have to move them until we get into the consideration in detail stage, if we get to that point.

Mrs Shelley Hancock: So they have not been moved?

Mr GREG WARREN: No. They have been circulated. The foreshadowed amendment continues:

- (1B) There is an *overriding public interest against disclosure* of information contained in a return for the purposes of this clause if, and only if, there are public interest considerations against disclosure and, on balance, those considerations outweigh the public interest considerations in favour of disclosure.

The Opposition has put provisions in place that refute what the member for Albury and the Minister said. I acknowledge that we have had a discussion with the Minister, and she is willing to consider those going forward. However, at this time I feel it is appropriate that the Opposition, the Government and the crossbench support what is proposed so we can go into the consideration in detail stage. I commend the bill and the proposed amendments to the House.

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

The House divided.

Ayes38
Noes45
Majority.....7

AYES

Aitchison, J
Atalla, E
Bali, S
Barr, C
Car, P
Catley, Y
Chanthivong, A
Cotsis, S
Crakanthorp, T
Daley, M
Dib, J
Doyle, T
Greenwich, A

Harris, D
Harrison, J
Haylen, J
Hornery, S
Kamper, S
Lalich, N
Leong, J
Lynch, P
McDermott, H
McGirr, J
McKay, J
Mehan, D (teller)
Minns, C

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

NOES

Anderson, K
Ayres, S
Barilaro, J
Berejiklian, G
Butler, R
Clancy, J
Conolly, K
Constance, A
Cooke, S (teller)
Coure, M
Crouch, A (teller)
Dalton, H
Davies, T
Dominello, V
Elliott, D

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

Preston, R
Provest, G
Roberts, A
Saunders, D
Sidgreaves, P
Singh, G
Smith, N
Speakman, M
Stokes, R
Taylor, M
Toole, P
Tuckerman, W
Upton, G
Ward, G
Wilson, F

PAIRS

Hoenig, R
Mihailuk, T
Zangari, G

Williams, R
Bromhead, S
Hazzard, B

Motion negatived.

Motions

FREE TO BE ONLINE? REPORT

Debate resumed from 18 February 2021.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaclause) (12:24): I thank the member for Wallsend for moving this motion. It is an issue of deep concern to us all. Whether we are parents, employers, siblings, friends or colleagues, we have seen personally the crushing impact that harassment on social media has had on our young women and girls who we care about. That impact has been made worse because the world has turned online during COVID. Shockingly there has been a 40 per cent increase in reports to the eSafety Commissioner. When I was growing up and young, harassment mainly happened in person. It was deplorable, shameful and demeaning, but these online platforms have now created another insidious way for harassment to happen.

We must clamp down on online harassment. We need to have a clear and consistent regulatory framework and take account of where the Commonwealth has jurisdiction. That joint approach was reflected in a COAG agreement in December 2016, which was brokered when I was Attorney General. It set out principles for nationally consistent offences relating to non-consensual sharing of intimate images. That has been the framework in which we have been working. I will briefly mention some of the things the State Government has done. When I served as Attorney General there were reforms to the Crimes Act 1900 to protect victims of online harassment and abuse. As part of an inquiry we had into remedies for serious invasions of privacy, I met with victims of image-based abuse who gave evidence. I was so humbled by their courage and bravery in advocating for reforms despite the fact that they had such personal pain from that harassment.

That led in September 2016 to announcing that the Government would criminalise the distribution of intimate images without consent, otherwise known as "revenge porn". The Crimes Act had some protections but no offences specifically directed at non-consensual sharing of intimate images. We sought all-of-community feedback through a discussion paper on how best to scope that offence. Then in 2017 new offences were created in the Crimes Act—sections 91P, 91Q, and 91R—that criminalised recording, distribution, and threatening to record or distribute intimate images without consent. The offences are punishable with up to three years' imprisonment. By all accounts that I have taken, those offences and that framework are working well.

I will also talk about an important development. On 24 February the Commonwealth Government introduced a new online safety bill into its Parliament. The Online Safety Bill 2021 sets out a framework for online safety and strengthens the power of the eSafety Commissioner to address cyberbullying, toxic online abuse, harmful content and image-based abuse. The bill introduces a new concept of "abhorrent violent material blocking arrangements" that will allow the Commonwealth eSafety Commissioner to respond to online events such as the Christchurch terrorist attack—which is slightly different but nevertheless deeply impactful to a whole community—by requiring online service providers to block access to sites hosting harmful content.

Under the current Act, prior to this bill and which the bill seeks to amend, social media services have 48 hours to remove serious child cyberbullying material once the commissioner issues a request or notice. Under this bill that time frame is reduced to 24 hours and the maximum penalty will be increased to 500 penalty units. The Commonwealth Online Safety Bill has other features. New online safety expectations for industry make clear what the community expectation is for them providing that safety to our young women and girls. There is a scheme requiring industry to keep users up to date on those industry codes. Then there is a requirement to have app stores remove apps that enable the provision of the most harmful kinds of online content, such as sexual abuse material. The Commonwealth bill is a great improvement. There is still more to go. I commend my comments to the House, and I commend the member for WallSEND for moving the motion.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (12:29): I acknowledge my colleague the warrior for WallSEND, Sonia Hornery, for her motion and for her advocacy. She is someone who takes no prisoners, who fights and gets results. I know that the member for WallSEND will achieve a great result with her motion. This is a very serious issue. We have seen an increase in online bullying and harassment. The eSafety Commissioner's report *The digital lives of Aussie teens* found that 44 per cent of teens had a negative online experience in the six months to September 2020. Thirty per cent reported being contacted by a stranger or someone they did not know, 20 per cent received inappropriate or unwanted content and 16 per cent were deliberately excluded from events and social groups. More than 80 per cent of teens took some form of action after a negative online experience. Those statistics are too high, and I urge the Government to take them into consideration.

We have also seen women from culturally and linguistically diverse [CALD] backgrounds experiencing culturally specific humiliation. For example, women who practise the Islamic faith have had terrible, derogatory images sent to them. Twenty-nine women from CALD backgrounds recently experienced technologically facilitated abuse. That is an absolute disgrace and something needs to happen. I know that we have national laws and that there have been some incremental changes in New South Wales, but it is not enough. As we continue the digital transformation of information online and with the introduction of many platforms over the last number of decades, we need to ensure that our citizens and their information are protected. About four years ago, young teenage girls in my electorate had their images and their Facebook pages altered. It took me weeks to be able to get anything done.

Facebook and other platforms must take more action, but we also need better community awareness about what people can do themselves. In my electorate, a 17-year-old girl doing the HSC had her image stolen and distorted in ways that were absolutely terrible and woeful. I have been speaking to the member for WallSEND about the possibility of Parliament setting up a bipartisan inquiry. We need to take strong and tough action against these perpetrators who use their anonymity to cause a lot of pain for young men and women, and get away with it.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (12:33): It is a pleasure to contribute to this very important motion before the House. I echo the comments made by the member for Vaucluse and also recognise the terrible situations

that the member for Canterbury has outlined, which affect many young people in our electorates. There has been some discussion about Commonwealth legislation in this space, but I will make some comments on the provisions in New South Wales legislation that complement Commonwealth provisions by criminalising serious forms of online abuse. Under section 13 of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007, it is an offence punishable by up to five years' imprisonment, 50 penalty units or both to stalk, intimidate or harass a person with the intention of causing them to fear physical or mental harm. We have just heard classic examples of how that occurs in the community.

In 2018 the definition of "stalking" under the Act was amended to include contacting or approaching a person via the internet or other technologically assisted means. Similarly, the definition of "intimidation" was amended, importantly, to ensure that it included cyberbullying. Those amendments to the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007, are known colloquially as "Dolly's Law" after Amy "Dolly" Everett, who took her own life in January 2018 after being subjected to very significant and persistent bullying and abuse. In addition to ensuring that a person who stalks or intimidates a person by the use of modern technology can be prosecuted, the amendments ensured that the apprehended domestic and personal violence orders could be used to protect victims of serious cyberbullying. An increasingly common form of online abuse today is the non-consensual sharing of intimate or sexual images.

In 2017 the New South Wales Government introduced new offences—and those were outlined by the member for Vacluse—in sections 91P, 91Q, and 91R of the Crimes Act 1900, which criminalise recording, distributing, and threatening to record or distribute intimate images without consent. The offences are punishable by up to three years' imprisonment. Under section 91S of the Crimes Act, a court that finds a person guilty of recording, distributing, or threatening to distribute an intimate image can also make a rectification order requiring the person to take reasonable actions to remove, retract, recover, delete or destroy any such image. Failure to comply with an order is an offence punishable by up to two years' imprisonment. When the intimate image offences were introduced in 2017, rectification orders were limited to the offences of recording or distributing an intimate image under sections 91P and 91Q of the Crimes Act, and were not available for the offence of threatening to distribute an intimate image under section 91R.

In October 2020 the New South Wales Government introduced reforms to close that gap, allowing the court to order that any intimate images in the possession of an offender who threatens to distribute such images be deleted, and ensuring that the offender is unable to follow through on any such threats. In summary, we, as members of this House, must do all we can to ensure that we protect people—particularly young women—in our community from vile acts such as cyberbullying and the sharing of intimate images. I commend members for speaking on this motion.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (12:37): I congratulate the member for Wallsend, who constantly moves relevant and appropriate motions such as this one. She certainly triggers much debate here. Many of us enjoy being online in chat rooms, on Facebook and a myriad of other ways. In fact, you only have to look around this room—people are always on their phones. It is a fact of life now. The ability to connect with loved ones and friends, to simply interact with colleagues or participate in an online debate is made possible by the magic of the World Wide Web. Unfortunately, it can also be a dark and fearful world. Where there should be enjoyment, knowledge and debate, there can be bullying, harassment and abuse, mostly of young women and girls, turning what should be a great adventure into what is sometimes a terrifying experience. This usually ends with them resigning themselves to staying off the internet and Facebook to limit their exposure to abusive behaviour. That is a place where malignant predators are free to roam anonymous and almost invisible to detection.

Girls are targeted online because they are young and because of their gender. If they are politically outspoken, disabled, or identify as LGBTIQ+, it gets worse. Like street harassment it is unrelenting, often psychologically damaging and can lead to actual physical harm. Perpetrators sometimes threaten rape, physical violence, use abusive and sexist language, post manipulated photos and send pornographic pictures and are able to remain anonymous and unconstrained; girls often become afraid and begin to restrict what they post to try to protect themselves. In the worst situations, they feel very unsafe because they are confused about how one man could find out so many details about their lives. It makes them concerned that he could find their address and come to their home. The theme of last year's State of the World's Girls report is *Free to Be Online?*. The research turned up distressing data. I do not think I have time to go through it all, but I will do the best I can. The researchers note:

For this report we spoke to 14,000 girls across 32 countries around the world about their experiences online. This is the largest ever survey of its type. We learnt that more than half have been harassed and abused on social media.

In all 22 countries, girls had been exposed to explicit messages, pornographic photos, cyberstalking and other distressing forms of abuse.

Most commonly girls were targeted with abusive and insulting language, reported by more than half (59%) of girls, followed by deliberate embarrassment (41%), body shaming and threats of sexual violence (both 39%).

The social media platforms designed to connect us as a global community, are drastically failing girls and young women. Inadequate reporting mechanisms are allowing harmful abuse slip through the cracks. Girls in all of their diversity, need to know that when they're abused and threatened online, they can report it. That they'll be listened to. That action will be taken, and that perpetrators will be held accountable.

The report argues:

Governments and society as a whole need to monitor this abuse rigorously and social media companies must use their technological skills and financial resources to put freedom online for girls and young women at the heart of their agenda.

I commend the member for Wallsend.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (12:41): By leave: I thank the member for Wallsend for moving this incredibly important motion. Social media can be a wonderful thing. It can connect friends and family members across vast distances, and certainly during COVID-19 social media was a really wonderful way for people to keep connected. But there is a dark side to social media, and as a member of the Committee on Children and Young People I was involved in the 2016 report into the sexualisation of children. The committee heard evidence that cyberbullying and online harassment is widespread and has serious impacts on our children and young people. In a submission to the inquiry Youth Action, which is the peak advocacy body for young people in New South Wales, wrote:

... a survey carried out by the National Children's and Youth Law Centre found that girls were more likely than boys to report experiencing (or knowing someone who has experienced) most types of cyber bullying. Consequences of this kind of harassment can include emotional distress and shame for the victims, as well as permanent damage to their digital footprint, and of course, potential legal repercussions if either party are under the age of 18.

This is not just a problem in New South Wales. As we know, the internet makes it really easy to interact with the rest of the world. Plan International is a charity for girls' equality and its *Free to Be Online?* report, which has been spoken about previously in this place, illustrates the extent of the dark side of social media for girls and young women. The headline figures from the report are alarming. Thousands of girls and young women across 32 countries were surveyed for the report, and in every country girls reported that they had been exposed to explicit messages, pornographic photos, cyberstalking and other forms of abuse. More than half of the 14,000 girls surveyed—in fact, 59 per cent—reported that they had been targeted with abusive and insulting language, 41 per cent reported deliberate embarrassment and 39 per cent reported body shaming. Most disturbingly, 39 per cent of respondents said they had been targeted with threats of sexual violence.

Locally, one mother recently said that she discovered her 12-year-old daughter had started an Instagram account without her knowledge. When the mum intervened to delete the profile she checked a number of unopened direct messages, and to her horror and disturbance she discovered that many were harassing, abusive and openly sexual in nature. We cannot overestimate the damage that exposure to that sort of harassment can do, and Youth Action identified some of the impacts. Unfortunately the nature of our digitally connected world means that it is often difficult for girls and young women to escape that abuse and harassment. That is why I support the motion's call for the Attorney General to reform the legislative framework to deal with online harassment and violence against girls and women.

There is some good news in this area, as previous speakers have said. Federally comment has recently been sought on the draft Online Safety Bill 2021, aimed at improving Australia's overall online safety legislation. I also recognise the New South Wales Government's previous attempts to address those concerns with amendments to the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 in 2019—the amendments named Dolly's law after Amy "Dolly" Everett tragically took her own life after sustained cyberbullying. But there is more to be done in this State. As the member for Seven Hills said, all that we can do must be done. That is what the motion calls for. Cyberbullying and sexual harassment of young women online is still happening, and we in this Parliament need to do our bit to ensure that young women and girls are provided protection from that. I commend the motion to the House.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:45): By leave: I speak on behalf of The Greens in strong support of this motion and thank the member for Wallsend for bringing it to the Chamber. I also acknowledge the Government's flexibility last week in allowing the very important debate to continue into this session today so that women MPs and other MPs in this place can have their voices heard on the issue of online safety. The *Free to Be Online?* report published by Plan International last year made it abundantly clear that the level of abuse and harassment that women and girls are subjected to online is a huge problem, affecting more than half of all women online.

The report showed that girls and young women were targeted just because they were online. If they were politically outspoken, disabled, non-white or identified as LGBTIQ+ then the levels of harassment and abuse

drastically increased. In 2018 Amnesty International conducted a similar study that looked specifically at experiences on Twitter. My former colleague in London Azmina Dhrodia worked on that toxic Twitter research. It highlighted that violence and abuse were again prominent and dominant, with no accountability. The situation is worse for women of colour. When the report was launched Azmina tweeted:

When I started the #ToxicTwitter work for Amnesty ... one of my key objectives was to show the intersectional nature of abuse on Twitter and how women of colour & women from other marginalized communities can experience abuse that targets every aspect of their identity

Across both studies the abuse and harassment included threats of physical or sexual violence, abuse targeting one or more aspects of people's identity, privacy violations and the sharing of sexual and intimate images of women without their consent. The aim of that abuse is to silence us through shame and intimidation. The worst part is that it is working, with both studies reporting that their experiences routinely lead to women self-censoring, limiting their interactions and even leaving the platforms entirely. I am sure that I am not the only one in this Chamber who makes the decision to sometimes log off social media because it is too intense to be able to continue, which prevents me from doing my job. That is not okay. In 2021 the internet is where we live our lives. It is where we socialise, organise and advocate for change. We use it at work, we use it at home, and it is not acceptable that intimidation is routinely used to limit women's and girls' ability to engage with society. We need to recognise that it is part of our jobs and part of our lives.

Members in this place will recall that I was subjected to sexist and racist online abuse a number of years back from serving members of the NSW Police Force. While the trolling of my online spaces by police seems to have ceased, which is great, the toxic nature of online spaces continues daily. In preparation for this motion I had a look at my own social media, like many other members in this place. On something I wrote about violence against women one person commented, "Shut up, freak" and another just said, "F*** off". On a post about ethical fashion someone said, "I'm going to lick you like a Tootsie Roll". When tweeting about China-Australia relations as I was engaging with debate around geopolitical issues someone said, "You're Chinese then that's it. Never be able to change the squinty lines that can use a shoelace as a blindfold." There have been other similar instances of abuse.

I know that many are subjected to this, and I am in a position of power and authority. I have the power to come into this place and disclose that kind of disgraceful behaviour. So many young women across the community are subjected to the same level of abuse and do not have the same privilege of power that I have. We have resources available to be able to stop that, but what about those young women? It is absolutely crucial, and I urge the Attorney General in this State and others in Government at this time to look at what we can do to provide more support to communities to combat online abuse within our society. I want to recognise the fact is that it was very clear that social media outlets could act to shut down news outlets on their social media feeds and they could shut down the President of the United States when they chose to do that, and yet for years they have consistently allowed abuse and tirades against women to occur unchecked. We must ensure that they are held to account and we must stop online violence and abuse.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (12:49): In reply: I thank the member for Holsworthy, the member for Vacluse, the member for Canterbury, the member for Seven Hills, the member for Shellharbour, the member for Charlestown and the member for Newtown for their contributions to debate on the motion. Let us put the month of March into context and think about what has happened: So far we have had some really serious concerns about the bullying and harassment of women, and worse, in the Federal Government; thousands of women all over Australia, including in New South Wales, marched together in a peaceful manner to seek more protections for women and to ask the Government what it is doing; and then this morning a wonderful coercive control bill, of which Opposition MP the member Shellharbour has carriage, was debated and voted down by the Berejiklian Government.

I am perplexed by that in the context of all that has happened in the past month. While the Government agrees with the first paragraph of my motion, which acknowledges that the *Free To Be Online?* report showed that more than 59 per cent of young women and girls have been harassed online, the Berejiklian Government has moved an amendment to remove paragraphs 2 and 3 from the motion. Paragraphs 2 and 3 are about the Government looking seriously at the problems that are occurring online and doing something about it. We are legislators. If we are not willing to start dealing with coercive control in a serious way, if the Berejiklian Government is not willing to look at its power of legislative process or at how we can protect young women and girls from online bullying, then what is the Government doing?

It really concerns me that despite all the cases that we are now dealing with, which have been going on for a very long time—the recent issue in particular has been made worse by COVID because more women are at home—the Government is reluctant to address harassment, violence and bullying of women. Where are we up to with the Government? Well, where we are up to is a joint standing committee. But what results will that have?

Well, we will see a report. But the question is: What legislation will the Attorney General implement to make real changes to protect young women, women and girls? The question here is about online bullying and what the Government is doing to protect women online. By removing paragraphs 2 and 3 the Government is doing nothing except acknowledging a report, and that in itself is really disappointing. That speaks volumes about the Government's action at the moment: It is doing nothing, and that makes me really sad.

When we bring up issues that concern women we are told by Government members that they support us, but where are they? They are silent or they are writing another report or they have another committee. But when it comes to legislation to protect women, they oppose the legislation, which virtually every other State has either implemented or is implementing. I urge members to support the original motion. I ask the Government to take action to protect young women.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Wallsend has moved a motion, to which the member for Holsworthy has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes43
Noes41
Majority.....2

AYES

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

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

Provest, G
Roberts, A
Saunders, D
Sidgreaves, P
Singh, G
Smith, N
Speakman, M
Stokes, R
Taylor, M
Toole, P
Tuckerman, W
Upton, G
Ward, G
Wilson, F

NOES

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

Finn, J
Greenwich, A
Harris, D
Harrison, J
Haylen, J
Hornery, S
Kamper, S
Lalich, N
Leong, J
Lynch, P
McDermott, H
McGirr, J
McKay, J
Mehan, D (teller)

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

PAIRS

Bromhead, S
Hazzard, B
Williams, R

Mihailuk, T
Zangari, G
Hoenig, R

Amendment agreed to.

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

Motion as amended agreed to.

SHOALHAVEN ANGLICAN SCHOOL

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (13:04): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Reaffirms its commitment to deliver a future education facility on the former Shoalhaven Anglican School site at Milton.
- (2) Notes the Government has committed to relocate Budawang School to the site, with plans to deliver a world-class facility for the southern Shoalhaven well underway.
- (3) Notes the site is not for sale and the Government can be trusted to deliver its commitments.

This Government understands that you can never overinvest in the future of the next generation. Our understanding of the importance of a good education is demonstrated in our continued delivery of educational services right across New South Wales. Just a few weeks ago the Premier joined me on the South Coast to reveal the master plan for Budawang School. The current Budawang site is highly constrained, and the school is unable to take additional enrolments due to its size. Additionally, the land on which it sits is privately owned, with the lease on the school soon to expire. I have had a long connection to Budawang School and particularly enjoy its end-of-year assemblies. For some time parents, teachers and staff at the school have called for a new facility to ensure that they can provide the best education to some of the most beautiful students in our community. The Government is not only delivering them a brand new school but also ensuring that more parents are able to access Budawang into the future.

I am pleased that the Government will deliver a brand new purpose-built Budawang School on the former Shoalhaven Anglican School site, which the New South Wales Government acquired in 2018 after a tireless campaign. More than 30 students will benefit from the Budawang School relocation, and enrolments are expected to increase over the next two years. The relocated Budawang School for Specific Purposes will have an administration block, a hydrotherapy aquatics facility to cater for students with disabilities, a hall, a covered outdoor learning area and seven modern learning spaces. It has been master planned to allow for a possible expansion to 10 learning spaces if needed in the future. We want to provide a unique new school with modern facilities, tailored specifically to the needs of the students in this community.

The next steps for the relocation of the Budawang School for Specific Purposes are to submit the State significant development application, or SSD; award the construction contract; and continue consultation with the community. This will provide another opportunity for the community to provide their thoughts on the process. I assure the community that, despite some discussion and misinformation that has been circulating, the remainder of the site will not be sold and the New South Wales Government will continue to work with local schools and their communities to identify its future use for education purposes. The master plan for the site also revealed that the remaining facilities at the former Shoalhaven Anglican School site will be used for future educational purposes. Let me be clear: The new Budawang School can and will operate on the same site as a future middle, secondary or senior school. This is not a matter of one or another; we will deliver both.

I am focused on ensuring that the education services our Government supports across the South Coast are fit for purpose now and into the future. That is why the Premier and I also announced that the site owned by the Department of Education at Garside Road, Mollymook, would be immediately withdrawn from sale. I was outraged when I learnt, at the same time as the community, that the Department of Education intended to sell the site. The 2.7 hectare site on Garside Road, Mollymook, was acquired by the Department of Education in 1986, and there has been a long-held expectation that it would be utilised as a school into the future.

Despite the Government purchasing the former SAS site in 2018 for a future school, it was simply unacceptable that the sale of Garside Road would proceed without any consultation with the community, nor surrounding school principals and education staff. It is extremely valuable land not just in terms of its monetary value but also the significant environmental benefits it brings to the Mollymook community. I made a strong appeal to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning and the Premier to withdraw the land from sale after the community raised concerns that the Department of Education had failed to consult on the plans for the sale. I thank Minister Sarah Mitchell and the Premier for listening to my community. We will now go back to them and involve them in any future decision around options on this land.

It is essential that we plan for the future. We need to better understand the southern Shoalhaven's education needs and involve the community in developing our future education plans. I will always advocate in the best interests of my community and will be ensuring that the land stays in government hands. It is important that community members continue to share their thoughts, concerns and ideas. We want to provide schools that will

support the potential of our students and benefit the community for generations to come. Consultation has already commenced: The Premier and I joined Ulladulla High School principal Denise Lofts, Ulladulla Public School principal Trent Burns and Milton Public School principal Mark Thomson last month to discuss the future of education in the southern Shoalhaven and get their thoughts on the best use for those government-owned sites. It was a very productive meeting, and I thank the three principals for their time and insights.

As a former public high school teacher, I know the importance of public education and will always advocate for the best facilities and services in my community. Further north in my electorate the State Government is drawing up plans to build a new primary school to educate the booming populations of Worrigee and South Nowra. We expect the new school to cater for at least 500 children, with the capacity to expand for up to 1,000 students. Consultation is underway, with many sites available to choose from, so that an exact location for the new school can be determined in the near future. The New South Wales Government is investing \$7 billion over the next four years, continuing its program to deliver more than 200 new and upgraded schools to support communities across New South Wales. It is the largest investment in public education infrastructure in the history of New South Wales. I am proud to be part of a government that is making plans to educate tomorrow's students today and I will continue to work with the community on these projects for the South Coast.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:11): I contribute to the motion moved by the Minister and member for South Coast. I seem to know almost as much about the schools in the Minister's electorate as I do about my own because of the number of times that she has raised issues and advocated on behalf of her schools, local students and families. Members know about the Shoalhaven Anglican School site, the Budawang School and the work that she is doing to ensure that we support the education facility at the site in Milton. It is part of the Government's commitment to education more broadly. I have often said in this place that the most important task for the Government is to ensure that every child in our State gets the best possible start in life.

Education has been key in my own life, so I believe that children across our State deserve access to quality education. The Government is delivering on its commitments in Shoalhaven and Milton, but also across the entire State and in my own community, by making sure that communities have access to modern facilities and that students can benefit from the latest in school design, educational technologies and contemporary learning spaces. The Minister said "learning spaces"; I am still trying to get my head around the concept of learning spaces rather than classrooms. I am pleased to speak on the motion.

The Government is investing \$7 billion over the next four years to deliver more than 200 new and upgraded schools across our State. Students in New South Wales will reap the benefits of new infrastructure and updated technology as part of the 2020-21 New South Wales budget. Ensuring that local communities have access to modern school facilities will mean our kids have everything they need to excel. This record investment is the largest investment in public education infrastructure in the history of New South Wales. It will give students additional permanent classrooms and learning spaces, and the other facilities that they require to learn and study in an environment that maximises their potential.

My own community of North Shore is seeing the benefits of the investment with significant upgrades to local schools planned and underway. Local families and school staff will soon see work underway on major upgrades at Mosman High School and North Sydney Demonstration School. We have worked with those school communities to co-design state-of-the-art new buildings that will deliver for the learning needs of students and school staff. I thank the Government for the investment it is making in supporting local school communities with those upgrades. The much-awaited upgrade to Mosman High School is progressing, with an early contract awarded and the State significant development application for the project due to be lodged very soon. That will give our local students the latest facilities and will increase capacity to support the growing school community.

The upgrade includes 16 new home-base classrooms, new administration and staff facilities, a new library and a multipurpose gym and hall, along with new canteen facilities, and outdoor and rooftop play space. Some people call it "play space"; in a high school context it seems more like a university campus. With this once-in-a-generation project we are re-envisioning the school as a modern place of learning for generations to come. It is the type of school that most people will never have seen before. It is not the type of school that members were taught in. The exterior design is complementary to the built environment, the natural environment and the village aesthetic of Mosman, which is incredibly important to the community. Inside we are creating a modern education precinct for current and future students.

Debate interrupted.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): 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 East Hills who are watching question time live in the McKell Room. I welcome Councillor George Zakhia from City of Canterbury Bankstown council; Dr Thomas Herrington, Deputy Principal (Curriculum and Compliance), Condell Park Christian School; and school captains Noah and Charlese Fahd. I hope they are enjoying their visit to the Parliament.

Today I attended the Consular Corps diplomatic lunch with the leaders of the diplomatic community in Sydney. In particular, I acknowledge and welcome Mr Karl Hartleb, the Dean of the Consular Corps in Sydney and the Consul-General of Austria, along with executive members Hana Flanderova, the Consul-General of the Czech Republic; Antonio Gelonesi, the Honorary Consul-General of Namibia; and Anthony Knox, the Honorary Consul-General of Madagascar. I thank them and acknowledge their role in promoting good relations between New South Wales—and Australia—and their respective countries and diplomatic corps.

*Question Time***TREE CLEARANCE ZONES**

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:19): My question is directed to the Minister for Energy and Environment. Given Minister Constance's illegal directive to clear 16 million trees would be a fatal blow to the Government's target of net zero emissions by 2050, does the Minister support his plan or the recommendations of the NSW Bushfire Inquiry?

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (14:20): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. It is extraordinary that the Leader of the Opposition would want to talk about clearing this week because those opposite are trying to clear her out. They talk about net zero, but that is exactly what the union movement is trying to do to her leadership.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

Mr MATT KEAN: I was blown away this week. I could not believe the polling. I thought there had to be a huge error. It is not possible that Jodi's support was that high.

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. I think that is pretty obvious. Would the Minister like me to repeat the question?

Mr MATT KEAN: Yes.

Ms Jodi McKay: The Minister is the environment Minister, the Minister for trees. Given Minister Constance's illegal directive to clear 16 million trees would be a fatal blow to his target of net zero emissions by 2050, does the Minister support his plan or the recommendations of the NSW Bushfire Inquiry?

Mr MATT KEAN: I am very happy to answer this question because the Leader of the Opposition is simply upset that we have stolen the title of best environment government in the history of New South Wales. No-one has delivered more to achieve net zero emissions than the New South Wales Barilaro-Berejiklian Government.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order—

Mr MATT KEAN: Our road map will not only see us lower our emissions; we will do so in a way—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Ms Kate Washington: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129: The environment Minister should tell the koalas that.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will continue.

Mr MATT KEAN: I was talking about our work to reduce emissions across New South Wales. The New South Wales Government's energy road map will not only see us reduce emissions in the electricity sector but also see us reduce emissions right across the economy.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

Mr MATT KEAN: On the topic of net zero emissions, I was lucky enough to be down in the Illawarra in the electorate of the member for Keira—

Ms Jodi McKay: Mr Speaker, in accordance with your guidance, the question is specific.

The SPEAKER: We do not need to hear the question again. It has been read twice.

Ms Jodi McKay: Does the Minister support his plan or recommendations of the NSW Bushfire Inquiry?

The SPEAKER: The Minister will continue, and I will listen.

Ms Jodi McKay: Does the Minister support his ridiculous plan to clear 16 million trees?

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

Mr MATT KEAN: No-one supports creating more areas for our environment than I do. That is why we have added over 250,000 hectares to national parks since I became the Minister. And that is not enough: We will double that target. We will hit 400,000. That addition will be a 5 per cent increase to the national park estate in New South Wales.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

Mr MATT KEAN: They do not call me "Green Kean" for nothing.

Ms Jodi McKay: The environment Minister can increase the national park estate, but the transport Minister will tear down all the trees! Does the environment Minister support him?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat. The Minister will continue.

Mr MATT KEAN: The question is: Do I support the transport Minister? He is an outstanding transport Minister. Do members know what he does? He delivers for his community. He delivers for communities right across New South Wales. We are rolling out some of the best transport programs in the State's history. We are very proud to be delivering in the transport area.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order—

Mr MATT KEAN: We are very proud to be delivering for the environment.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr MATT KEAN: We are very proud to be lowering the State's emissions, leading the country in this space.

The SPEAKER: Minister, I have stopped the clock. The Minister will resume his seat. If the member for Port Stephens takes another frivolous point of order or makes another frivolous comment, she will be on a call to order.

Ms Kate Washington: It is Standing Order 129. The question is: Does the environment Minister support the clearing of 145,000 football fields of trees? That is the question.

The SPEAKER: I am aware of the question. The Minister is being relevant.

Mr MATT KEAN: We are supporting improving our environment because we believe in handing our planet to our kids better than we found it. We are supporting delivering infrastructure across New South Wales because we want to make life better and fairer for families across this State. On the topic of support, where is the Leader of the Opposition's support? Who are these mysterious 23.9 per cent of people? They are not the member for Londonderry over there. They are not the member for Maroubra over there. Definitely not the member for Lakemba over there.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

Mr MATT KEAN: I saw him in *The Sydney Morning Herald* offices yesterday briefing journalists.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

[*Interruption*]

Ms Jodi McKay: The Minister can attack me all he wants. The question is—

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

Ms Jodi McKay: —are you going to back him on the clearing of trees? Yes or no?

The SPEAKER: The Minister will continue.

Ms Jodi McKay: Right now you are avoiding it because you know it is no. Answer the question.

The SPEAKER: I have heard the point of order. It is not upheld. The Minister is being relevant and will continue.

Mr MATT KEAN: We have made the biggest contribution to save the trees in living recent times by adding an additional 250,000 hectares to the national park estate. The Premier reminds me that she came to see the Wollemi Pines, speaking of trees. We are a government that cares about trees, and that is exactly why we are protecting them [*Time expired.*]

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (14:26): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier please update the House on how the Government is transforming vocational education and training to provide our citizens with the jobs and skills of the future?

[*Opposition members interjected.*]

The SPEAKER: I remind members that I do not want to hear interjections between the time the question is asked and the time that the Minister commences the response. If I hear them again today, I will call members to order immediately.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:26): As the environment Minister has demonstrated, no wonder we are not only the party for the environment but we are also the party for the workers.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank the member for Holsworthy for her question. In her electorate, I know that many of her constituents are concerned about jobs and skills, and want to ensure their children and future generations have access to the best jobs available. If we are to be the State that leads in job creation and leads in making sure we get those jobs for the future, we need to think more broadly about how we provide tertiary education in this State. On behalf of the people of this State I thank Professor Peter Shergold and Mr David Gonski for working with Minister Lee and me for over a year and putting together their report, which was made public—I hope all members of this place take the time to read their report—about how best our State can move forward in providing the best options of tertiary education.

Today the unemployment figures came out. I do not want to steal all of the Treasurer's thunder, however, New South Wales has equal lowest unemployment in the nation. Even though Sydney was particularly impacted adversely by the lack of international travel, it has remained the State where jobs can continue to grow, even under difficult circumstances. If we are serious about addressing disruption, addressing the fact that many industries will never return to the way they were, that many technologies are advancing, we need to think about how we provide tertiary education.

The report handed down by Professor Shergold and Mr Gonski today gives that clear pathway. I am pleased to say the New South Wales Government and Cabinet have already endorsed this plan. I am very pleased to say that it will help all of our citizens in the future in relation to education. Education and tertiary education are not just about young students transitioning from high school to the workforce or to further education: It is about adults, people of all ages, women who may have left the workforce after a number of years and want to re-enter it. We want to ensure that we are ahead of the curve in providing these opportunities.

There were five main recommendations made in the report and there are three that this Government is going to adopt immediately. The last two are things we are already doing. The first three that I am about to speak about today are not only innovative but also they will change the way we think about tertiary education. We spoke yesterday about Careers NSW and the importance of that. Today Mr Gonski, in particular, outlined why he and Professor Shergold spoke at length about the need for Careers NSW.

No matter what stage people are at in their working lives, they know their occupations, their professions, their career paths may change and they will need advice on how to get skills or how to get the job that they want to satisfy them in a professional capacity and also in terms of providing that adequate income source. Careers NSW will be piloted through Service NSW later this year and the full rollout will occur by June next year. It will involve experts across the trades and industry providing direct advice to citizens on what they can do as their next step in acquiring jobs, keeping jobs and changing their career path. The second very important innovation is in relation to establishing the Institute of Advanced Technology in New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: The member for Rockdale and the member for Canterbury will remain silent.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The second very innovative recommendation that we are adopting is the establishment of the Institute of Advanced Technology. We know in the future students will not want to distinguish between a TAFE and a university; that in the future many courses, many qualifications will require some time at a TAFE, some time at a university and also—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: —we want input from industry. We know in a lot of occupations such as advanced manufacturing, advanced agribusiness there are developments happening—

Ms Anna Watson: What manufacturing? There is no manufacturing and you have a TAFE. What are you talking about?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In case those opposite have not kept up to date, around the aerotropolis or the new city of Bradfield, we already have 18 companies from around Australia and around the world that are setting up an advanced manufacturing hub in that precinct. I say to those opposite, if you are serious about—

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Londonderry to order for the first time. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the first time. I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the second time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: This is why those opposite do not care about jobs. Can I have my time restored, Mr Speaker?

The SPEAKER: No, but you can have potentially another two minutes if it is asked for. There is time, and I will grant the two-minute extension. If you want two minutes, Premier, you have two minutes.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Whilst those members opposite are not demonstrating a lot of interest in this report, I am extremely passionate about it. If we are serious about providing every person in this State with the opportunity to be their best and to get the jobs of the future, we must be committed to—

Ms Yasmin Catley: Change the Government.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Only 23 per cent of the people want to do that. As I was saying, this is an area that the Government is passionate about. All of us appreciate that as we recover through COVID, as we provide those opportunities for our citizens, we need to make sure we have the proper pathways for them. The way the Institute of Applied Technology will work—and there will be a pilot in regional New South Wales, and I thank the Deputy Premier for his contribution in that regard—we will make sure that it gives someone the opportunity not only to perhaps get a certificate-level qualification but also to upgrade that every year and eventually get a bachelor's qualification if that is what they want.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The important thing is this new model allows for direct industry input. The New South Wales Government had already set up a campus at Meadowbank for this process. Those will be the two pilot sites in the city, and we will also be identifying the pilot site in the regions as well. What this will allow is for industry, for TAFE and for universities to work together collaboratively. This is a process whereby you will get qualifications as you move through the years. You will be able to work while you have what Peter Shergold called microcredentials.

[Opposition members interjected.]

I note a lot of interjections from those opposite, but if they care about the future of jobs and education in this State, they should read the report. I thank Professor Shergold and Mr Gonski for their recommendations. The Liberals and The Nationals will always be the party for the workers.

TREE CLEARANCE ZONES

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:34): My question is directed to the Premier. Given the Minister for regional roads, the Commissioner of Resilience NSW, the Deputy Secretary of Planning and the recently sacked Secretary of Transport for NSW have discredited Minister Constance's plan to clear 145,000 football fields of trees, will the Premier insist that he withdraw the illegal directive?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:34): I know some people have not been impacted by bushfires, but many people are still recovering from what occurred. I have had—I will not say the great fortune because it was devastating to see parts of our State devastated by the bushfires—the opportunity to visit many communities. As one of the local members whose electorate—in fact, his electorate was most impacted by the bushfires. When people see that level of destruction we can appreciate what their reaction might be. I ask members to consider it in that context. The biggest challenge for governments is always finding the right balance between keeping our communities safe, keeping jobs and also protecting the environment. Those challenges will

be ongoing. I feel, in my heart of hearts, that our Government always strives to get the right balance. We always try to make sure that we protect those parts of our beautiful State that we need to protect, but also we acknowledge the balance that we need to strike between jobs and industry—

Ms Jodi McKay: Mr Speaker—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I ask those opposite to consider that in relation to this matter.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I have completed my answer.

The SPEAKER: The answer has been completed.

Ms Jodi McKay: Yes, and you did not back him. You did not say you would withdraw the illegal directive. You said absolutely nothing.

REGIONAL JOBS

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (14:36): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade. Can the Deputy Premier update the House on how the Government is stimulating regional communities and also supporting jobs in those communities?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:36): I thank the member for Goulburn for her question. What an electorate and what a city! Goulburn is one of those cosmopolitan cities on the Hume Highway—a corridor of commerce—that is at the heart of this State and that has a future beyond our vision. I believe that Goulburn will become a major player in our diverse regional economies, and we have a great member representing that region.

In light of earlier questions about jobs in the bush, one of our foundation industries has always been timber. Forestry is an important sector in regional and rural New South Wales. Bushfires have impacted our communities and industries. Our forestry industry was damaged in a way that has really impacted on the prosperity of many regional communities, especially on the South Coast where timber is a significant industry. As a State and as a nation, we should be proud of the fact that we are part of that renewable industry. We should be proud of the way in which we manage our forests. As a result of the devastation of the bushfires, 30 per cent of our pine plantations in the regions were destroyed. But through Forestry Corporation of NSW and a \$40-plus million investment injection by the Government, seedlings are being planted at our nurseries.

We envisage that about 14 million trees will be planted each year for the next 10 years as we regrow our State, which is important. Our timber industry, an important industry, creates 20,000-plus jobs in regional and rural New South Wales. Our commitment is to work stronger and better with industry. We will have access to timber. We have partnered with industry to access some of the black timber—the burnt timber—so that we can use it before it decays on the forest floor. But the risk is still there. The risk of future fires continues to threaten our communities and our ability to harvest timber. We harvest timber across our State at the rate of 1 per cent per annum and that is done in a managed way. We control the environment and look after our habitats and Forestry Corporation's role in that area is significant and something of which we should all be very proud.

One of the other areas that the Government spends money on, invests in and focuses on is how to attract industry into regional and rural New South Wales. Our Regional Job Creation Fund works with businesses and directs grants to attract investment into businesses to create future jobs. One such business is Maverick Biosciences in Dubbo, which received some investment by the New South Wales Government to create 60 new jobs. Harvesting parts from animals for the health care of humans is a growth industry that is happening in Dubbo. I raise an issue that unfortunately occurred today because the wife of the member for Dubbo works for Maverick Biosciences. At all times the member for Dubbo excluded himself from any process, and my agency did all the assessments.

Today on Facebook the gutless fringe political propaganda group Anyone But Nats decided to attack the member for Dubbo and his wife. She is an employee in an administrative role—not a CFO or a CEO role. All our disclosures were in line with the processes and protocols to get this particular grant. Charles Tym, the founder of the faceless and fringe political group Anyone But Nats, sponsors and authorises everything that appears on Facebook relating to this campaign. Today he decided to attack an individual, the wife of a member of Parliament, who does not have the ability to defend herself in today's climate where women are being attacked not only in the political environment but also outside it.

It gets worse. This gutless wonder, Charles Tym, decided to look through the Facebook page of the member for Dubbo and saw that two years ago we also funded Dubbo Golf Club to attract the ladies championship or ladies golf to Dubbo club. What did Charles Tym do today? He decided to call that a level of corruption.

He accused the member for Dubbo of doing something wrong—this was before the member was elected—because his 19-year-old daughter got a hospitality job at the golf club after leaving university. Worse still, Charles Tym from Anyone But Nats went onto her Facebook page, took a photo, posted this 19-year-old girl's photo and attacked her because she is the daughter of the member for Dubbo. Charles Tym is a grub. Let me explain why he is a grub and why he hides behind Facebook. [*Extension of time*]

These are the text messages from Mr Charles Tym to the member for Dubbo:

I will spend every day and every penny we have to unseat you. You gutless lying piece of shit. If it takes my last breath I'll make sure you are booted to the shithouse. You are just a parasite. You are a lying piece of shit. Karma will get you. You Nats are a bunch of f-wits—

I will not say the full word—

You weak pricks.

That is what Charles Tym from Anyone But Nats had to say. Do members know who stands with them at press conferences? It is the Shooters. Today I call on Helen Dalton, Phil Donato and Roy Butler to denounce the support they receive from Anyone But Nats as Charles Tym supports or sponsors the Shooters. At a press conference today the member for Cessnock and the member for Barwon stood with a representative from Anyone But Nats in relation to the breach in Dubbo after the vile attack on the wife and daughter of the member for Dubbo.

Charles Tym is a grub. I have detailed this afternoon why he is a grub. Sometimes members of Parliament are attacked when often they sign up for it. But to attack our families, our children or our wives is something that disgusts and appals me. I say to Helen, to Phil and to Roy: Anyone who stands with or receives support from Anyone But Nats—any member of this House at any point—should instead support the member for Dubbo and call out Mr Charles Tym for the grub that he is.

TAFE NSW

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (14:43): My question, which is directed to the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, relates to vocational education and training, TAFE and regional jobs. Given that there is a massive skills shortage and a housing boom, why is he cutting bricklaying and wall tiling apprenticeship courses from Coffs Harbour TAFE, leaving no such TAFE course between Newcastle and the Queensland border?

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, and Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (14:44): I thank the member for her question. TAFE is a great organisation worthy of a question to talk about. I remind the House that this year we have a record budget for TAFE—some \$1.97 billion.

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

Dr GEOFF LEE: As a previous TAFE teacher, there is nobody more passionate about TAFE than I am. My dad was also a TAFE teacher. The Government is investing a record \$1.97 billion into TAFE NSW. We are fully committed to TAFE as a comprehensive public provider of skills training. The Premier has confirmed that in the House, I have confirmed it in the House and we confirm it in our media releases. But many members on that side of the House refuse to accept that. It is appalling.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order—

Dr GEOFF LEE: You mislead the people of New South Wales; you scare the teachers. I would not laugh because I support the teachers.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr Ryan Park: There are a couple of things. Firstly, Mr Speaker, you have said in the past in relation to Standing Order 129 that if a specific question is asked you expect the Minister to be generally relevant. This is not about TAFE in general; it is about a specific course on the North Coast where there are massive skills shortages and there is no course for bricklaying.

The SPEAKER: I do not want an argument. What is the member's other point of order? You said you had two points of order.

Mr Ryan Park: I will start with taking a point of order under Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: I am mindful of what you are saying about the specific nature of the question, but I will hear further from the Minister, given that he is being generally relevant. I expect him to come to the specific matter at some stage.

Dr GEOFF LEE: There is not another State or Territory that supports apprentices and trainees more than New South Wales. We have committed to 100,000 fee-free apprenticeships over four years. We have committed to 70,000 fee-free traineeships. I thank all the employers—

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister is being relevant, if that is your point of order. Is that the member's point of order?

Mr Jihad Dib: It is to a degree—

The SPEAKER: Is there any other point of order?

Mr Jihad Dib: The question specifically talks about—

The SPEAKER: The member for Lakemba will resume his seat. The Minister will continue.

Mr Jihad Dib: —the Coffs Harbour TAFE and the 800 kilometres somebody has to travel.

The SPEAKER: The member will resume his seat.

Mr Jihad Dib: That is not relevant.

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

Dr GEOFF LEE: I am sure the member for Lakemba will eventually settle down. I know that he is passionate about TAFE. I ask him not to confuse people. The Government supports apprentices and trainees throughout the State. TAFE is the largest supplier and educator of apprentices. We do something like 90 per cent of apprentices throughout the State. We deliver some 800 different courses throughout the State. We are focused on delivering for the industries of the future. We have heaps of different courses that deliver for the construction industry. We follow industry and student demand. Sometimes we will change the courses on offer from semester to semester. That is what good organisations do. We do not have a prescription—

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: If you are taking a point of order on relevance, I am going to rule pre-emptively: The Minister is talking specifically about apprentices and I am satisfied that he is being relevant. Do you have a different point of order?

Mr Jihad Dib: That is one point. The question was specifically about the bricklaying and the tiling course you have cut from Coffs Harbour.

The SPEAKER: The member will resume his seat.

Mr Jihad Dib: Why would you do that? Why would you cut the course when you only have Newcastle and Queensland?

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

Dr GEOFF LEE: As I was saying, I thank all the employers for our apprentices. Coffs Harbour is the beneficiary of a nearly \$13 million upgrade to the construction facilities, which we will open soon.

Ms Janelle Saffin: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. My question is specific. It is wonderful that the Minister has roamed us through the virtues of TAFE and who loves it and who does not, but my question was specifically about cutting bricklaying and tiling apprenticeships. I ask the Minister to please answer my question.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will continue.

Dr GEOFF LEE: As I said, we are investing nearly \$14 million in the new Coffs Harbour TAFE facility. The member for Coffs Harbour seems very happy and is a champion.

COVID-19 AND STATE ECONOMY

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (14:49): My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on the progress of the State's stimulus spending?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:49): It is a great question from the member for Manly. I begin by saying that the jobs figures that came out just before question time today were a great result. As the Premier has pointed out, the unemployment rate is down to 5.6 per cent, which is down 0.4 percentage

points. It is the lowest of all the States and is only around 1 per cent higher than it was pre-COVID. I said recently that the jobs we have recovered over this period was around 80-odd per cent. As at today, in New South Wales we have recovered 94 per cent of the jobs lost during the pandemic. Those are incredible numbers. In the monthly change, employment in this State rose by 42,000. In the context of the national change, which had great numbers at around 88,000, almost half the jobs around the country are right here in New South Wales. The participation rate rose 0.4 percentage points to 65.6 per cent. That now sits above pre-COVID levels, so participation rate in the workforce is higher than it was before the pandemic began.

The under-utilisation rate has eased to 13.8 per cent, by far the lowest in the country. The next closest is Queensland at 14.5 per cent. Youth unemployment is also incredibly positive, with the 12-month average rising 0.1 percentage points to 13.2 per cent. Based on that, New South Wales' youth unemployment is the lowest among all the States and well below the national average of 14.5 per cent. So those figures out today are incredibly pleasing. When we look at the employment change since we came to office in 2011, we have created 628,000 jobs in New South Wales. The next closest is Victoria, with 439,000. As the Premier said, we are the party of the worker. Wherever you look across the State more jobs are being created.

The unemployment rate of 5.6 per cent is incredibly low. In fact, it is so low that it is on par with Labor's primary vote, which is 5.6 per cent. I am sure they were looking at these numbers today hoping for bad news for the people of New South Wales. But, no, it is great news. Every time there is great news for the people of New South Wales it is bad news for the Labor Party. The only good news the Labor Party had today is that even in this environment members of the Opposition will probably still get a job post the 2023 election. I am not so sure about all of them. Obviously the member for Keira is interested in bricklaying—he would do well.

Mr Ryan Park: No, I wouldn't.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: You would do well, mate. Even he would get a job because that blue wall through western Sydney is now coming south. It is going down to Keira, it is going down to Wollongong and going north as well. That is because these incredible jobs figures today are on the back of the significant stimulus support that we provided in our State. As we know, as a percentage of own-source revenue, our package is the highest in the country at 11.4 per cent—even higher than the Commonwealth, at 9.6 per cent. We have provided \$29 billion of stimulus investment. The most important part of that, though, was the \$3 billion investment in health. All that support and the great work that our tracking and tracing teams have done have enabled us to open up as much of the economy as possible, and we are now seeing the results.

For many people and business owners across the State, being able to apply for those business grants has kept their businesses going during this difficult time, including Michelle down in Wollongong and Kate from Dubbo, who I spoke about in the budget. The Deputy Premier and I visited her shop Lazy Sunday Lifestyle, which sounds like a Labor Party motto. Small business support grants—

Mr Ryan Park: How is Dom from Epping?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: He is doing really well. Dom from Epping is doing really well. Some 53,000 businesses have taken advantage of the \$10,000 support grants. We extended the \$3,000 recovery grants program and had another 37,000 businesses take up that support package.

Mr Ryan Park: Tell us about the fuel card.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: No, we will not talk about that. [*Extension of time*]

As I raised earlier in the week, I was with the member for Albury at the southern border where 2,258 businesses have taken up the \$10,000 southern border business grants. The other side of that stimulus program has been an infrastructure investment. There is investment in infrastructure worth \$107 billion over the next four years, not only for fast-tracking the construction of hospitals such as the Tweed and schools such as Cranbrook, but also roads and commuter car parks. Everywhere you go, there is something happening. These stimulus projects are continuing to drive jobs growth in this State.

We are the party of lower taxes—\$9 billion in lower taxes. The member for Keira was running around pre-pandemic and the last election, wanting to increase payroll tax on businesses. Imagine how bad they would be in circumstances where Labor won the election. We know what happened—increase in taxes; obsessed with budget surpluses on that side of the House, an increase in taxes on businesses right across New South Wales. What have we done? We have cut the payroll tax rate to the lowest headline rate in the nation at 4.85 per cent. We have increased the threshold from \$750,000 to \$1.25 million, which means that tens of thousands of businesses right across this State are no longer paying payroll tax and the administration costs that go alongside it.

But there are going to be challenges going forward, as we know, over the next 12 months. Some of the industries that required support over the past 12 months will be different from the next 12 months, particularly

manufacturing, construction and the arts. A particular focus will be on Sydney as we go through this year. We know that when Sydney goes well our State and nation go well off the back of it. But the people of New South Wales can rest assured under the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government the New South Wales economy will continue to remain strong, and provide opportunity and prosperity for people right across the State.

WESTMEAD PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (14:56): My question is directed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Westmead Public School is one of the largest public schools in New South Wales, with 1,464 students. When he was education Minister, he promised a new additional public primary school in Westmead. He has now released the draft Westmead Place Strategy for 2036. Where is the new school?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (14:56): I thank the member for her question. I suggest she direct it to the education Minister in relation to the timing and delivery of schools. Something happened in 2019. There was an election. I changed portfolio. We won the election.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Is the member taking a point of order?

Mr Ryan Park: We will ask the question again.

Mr ROB STOKES: Is this a point of order?

The SPEAKER: No, it is not. The member for Keira will resume his seat. I call the member for Keira to order for the second time. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the second time.

Mr ROB STOKES: I thank the member for her question. The commitment remains on foot. In relation to the details of delivery, the member really needs to ask the relevant portfolio Minister. I thank her for her question.

The SPEAKER: The Minister has completed his answer.

SKILLS TRAINING

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (14:58): My question is addressed to the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, and Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is ensuring that the New South Wales workforce has the skills needed for the jobs of today and of the future?

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, and Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (14:58): I thank the member for Riverstone, Kevin Conolly, for his strong advocacy. I know he is Parliamentary Secretary for Education, and I know his interest does not extend only across schools but also post-school, whether it is VET, TAFE or university. I thank him for his contribution and his interest in everything about education. Today was a great day. I, too, echo the Premier's words to congratulate David Gonski and Peter Shergold on their review of the future of the VET sector and how we need, as a Government, to deliver for the future jobs and future skills. What are those recommendations? It is my great pleasure today to speak about three of those initiatives to which we are committed. You do not have to walk out, Jodi. You can come back. Go and do your numbers out there. Thank you.

This is a great day for New South Wales: We have committed to three recommendations. The first one was for the institutes of applied technology. This is going to be a fundamental shift in the way education is delivered. In the past you did a course and then you looked for a job. We are reversing that process. We are going out to industry, partnering with industry and saying "What are the jobs of the future? What do we need in terms of the people, the graduates that you need to employ? What do you need? Can you be part of the design of those courses, the delivery of the course and the assessment?" We are reversing the traditional courses, a new step in the way we are delivering education, using the Institute of Applied Technology.

Industry is a key part but so is the university. Industry is at the cutting edge. We want to bring industry into the classrooms. We want to make sure that industry own the courses. They employ the graduates. They will be committed to those graduates. We are training for the jobs of the future. We are looking at training for jobs, not for the sake of just training. We are involving universities as well. It will be a true partnership of, in this case, TAFE for the first two sites, universities and industry cluster groups. I see Minister Dominello, the great member for Ryde, is here. He is very enthusiastic about the Meadowbank site, the opportunity to have the first pilot site for the Institute of Applied Technology right at Meadowbank. It will be a fantastic day. I think it is in late 2022 when we are actually going to open and deliver the first pilot for the Institute of Applied Technology. I thank

Minister Dominello for his strong support. The second initiative we are adopting, and we announced it yesterday, is Careers NSW. Quite rightly, Professor Shergold and David Gonski identified the gap in the market.

Mr Dominic Perrottet: New careers on the way for them.

Dr GEOFF LEE: The Treasurer is exactly right. I should say Jodi is back again. Jodi, if you have any problems, I will fast-track you to Careers NSW's personalised service. It will assess your skills. Jodi, it was a joke. But it could even help you. Now you're smiling. That's good. I should be serious. Careers NSW is a great initiative, whether you want a first job, a new job or a better job. We will have professional careers advisers consult with individuals about the best pathway forward for the jobs of the future. We have seen, after COVID, whole industries being restructured, whether it is the hospitality industry or the tourism industry. People have great skills but need professional advice to transition to new jobs. Part of the advice, that professional wraparound service, will look at gaps in their skills. They may need to go to TAFE, they may need to go to our institutes of applied technology, they may need to go to university or they may need to do microcredentialing.

It is so important that we give people the opportunities to be the best they can. Our careers advice will be professional advice that encourages people to actually change and move with the times, and take opportunities of the jobs of the future. The Premier mentioned, and it is so important, that many times the caregivers in our community, the women in the community who have left the workforce to look after families, are hesitant about re-entering the workforce. It is about giving them the opportunity to find the right pathway, whether they need more training or to go to the right segment of the industry, how they can best utilise their interests and skills to get a great job. Careers NSW was being welcomed yesterday. I noticed the radio was full of positive comments about Careers NSW. It is going to be a fantastic initiative that will continue to roll out. [*Extension of time*]

I thank the member for Riverstone for his encouragement and constant interest in the future of the workforce. The third point I wanted to talk about is a HECS-style loan system. Australia operates a HECS-style loan system that is renowned around the world as the best model to fund individuals so that they can attend university. But alas, those who choose VET careers, whether a certificate III or certificate IV, are ineligible for HECS-style funding.

Why should a doctor be able to go to university with no up-front fees, yet if someone wants to be a nurse and go to TAFE they have up-front fees? Why should a teacher have no up-front fees when they go to university, yet a childcare worker who goes to TAFE is asked to pay up-front? There is inequity and a HECS-style system will actually look at levelling that paradigm and remove people's financial barriers to gaining valuable skills and jobs. We are actively working with the Commonwealth Government to deliver this HECS-style loan system. It is important for social equity and for those who want to get their first job, a new job or change their careers. Again I put on record my appreciation to David Gonski and Peter Shergold—two luminaries and educators who have done well in business. I congratulate the Premier on her support for this and all members on this side of the House, who look after workers and their skills, and focus on jobs and skills of the future.

WATER LICENCES

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (15:05): My question is directed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing, Melinda Pavey. Mum-and-dad Australian farmers have to pay capital gains tax when they sell New South Wales water; however, foreign companies do not. When a foreign company makes a profit trading New South Wales water, the Minister's department, WaterNSW, does not report that information to the Australian Tax Office [ATO]. Why does the Minister approve New South Wales water licences for Cayman Islands companies that buy, sell and profit off New South Wales water and dodge our taxes?

The SPEAKER: All members will remain silent. The member for Murray, who I was listening to intently, was rudely interrupted.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: I could not hear the question.

The SPEAKER: I think the Minister could and so could I. The Minister will now answer the question.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: I actually would not mind hearing the question again.

The SPEAKER: The Minister would like to hear the question again. If the member for Murray is happy to redeliver the question, I will hear it. Members will hear the question in silence.

Mrs HELEN DALTON: My question is directed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing. Mum-and-dad Australian farmers have to pay capital gains tax when they sell New South Wales water; however, foreign companies do not. When a foreign company makes a profit trading New South Wales water, the Minister's department, WaterNSW, does not report that information to the Australian Tax Office. Why does the Minister

approve New South Wales water licences for Cayman Islands companies that buy, sell and profit off New South Wales water and dodge our taxes?

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Baulkham Hills to order for the first time. If he has a point of order, he knows how to make it the proper way.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (15:08): I thank the member for her question. I might also point out that I am not going to accept on face value anything that the member for Murray presents because only in the past two weeks she has caused concern, fear and genuine distress among farmers across New South Wales. She claimed that regulations—

Mrs Helen Dalton: Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129. The Minister should answer the question. Perhaps she would like to listen to it again.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is making preliminary comments. I am happy to hear her speak further.

Mr John Barilaro: Is this part of the member for Murray's campaign for the seat of Farrer?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: It is important in terms of context to actually look at the authenticity and accuracy of comments and allegations that the member for Murray makes. As I was reporting to the House just now, only in recent weeks she caused fear and great distress among regional—

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that the Minister is being relevant.

Mr Ryan Park: I have another point of order.

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

Mr Ryan Park: It is the obvious one. I take a point of order under Standing Order 73. There is a place in which to move these substantive motions. If the Minister wants to bring on an attack on a member, she should do it through that process.

The SPEAKER: I am not satisfied that there is a breach of Standing Order 73 at this stage, but I will listen intently.

Mr Ryan Park: This is like watching the Dragons match.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: That is insulting. I think that it is important to actually contextualise any statement the member for Murray makes because I will tell the House that she was suggesting that regulations that we put in a couple of weeks ago in relation to important—

Mrs Helen Dalton: Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129. As I have just said, does the Minister want to hear the question again? I am talking about capital gains tax.

The SPEAKER: I am prepared to give the Minister a little more leeway because she is being relevant to the question, but I ask the Minister to come to the question. I think she has made her preliminary point.

Mrs Helen Dalton: She is not being relevant. We are talking about capital gains tax, not her silly regulation that she did the other day.

The SPEAKER: The member for Murray will resume her seat.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I do highlight the fact that capital gains tax is one area that is addressed more accurately and appropriately through the Federal Parliament through the ATO. That is why, as I point out—and I acknowledge an earlier interjection from the Deputy Premier—this is about her campaign for running for the electorate of Farrer. What she does is she puts fear, loathing and hatred into the community. She lies.

Mrs Helen Dalton: Point of order: It is capital gains tax. The Minister approves those licences. She does.

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

Mrs Helen Dalton: I take my point of order under Standing Order 129. The Minister is not being relevant. She approves those licences.

The SPEAKER: The member for Murray will resume her seat. I will rule. I am happy to hear another point of order from the member for Swansea.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 74 (1). What the Minister just said to the member for Murray was offensive. She should withdraw it. You should ask her to withdraw those offensive remarks. After the week that we have had, the last thing we need is this to continue in the House.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am going to short-circuit this. I will ask the Minister to withdraw the allegation of lying and to watch her language.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I seriously cannot, because the truth is she put out a Facebook post that suggested that the exemption does not cover the use of the water removed for a secondary purpose. She was suggesting we were licensing floodplain harvesting. She scared the community. She fired her usual supporters up.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: Mr Speaker, you have made a ruling in this House about using that language. You said it was unparliamentary and that word is not to be used in here. The Minister must withdraw her comment. It is your ruling and she should withdraw it. She should be respectful to the Parliament.

The SPEAKER: I have asked the Minister to withdraw the use of the term "lying". I will again ask her to do that.

Mrs Helen Dalton: I request an extension of time.

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge that the member for Murray was on her feet in time, but I will ask the Minister to address my request first.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Time is up, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: No, time was not up. I have asked you to withdraw the allegation of lying.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I cannot withdraw the mistruths that the member for Murray was spreading across the community.

The SPEAKER: Are you replacing the word? There is precedent for saying you should not use that terminology.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: She spreads enormous mistruths around the community. Now she is running for the electorate of Farrer.

The SPEAKER: Are you correcting the record?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I am saying—

The SPEAKER: Are you correcting the record or not?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Yes.

The SPEAKER: I note that the record has been corrected. The member for Murray was on her feet and I will hear if she has a request under Standing Order 131.

Mrs Helen Dalton: I request an extension of time.

The SPEAKER: The member has a request for an extension of time. Does the Minister want an extension of time?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: No.

AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYEES

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (15:14): My question is addressed to the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is upskilling and training our agricultural employees?

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (15:15): I thank the member for Upper Hunter—a beautiful part of the world with the State's best wines, mines and bovines.

Mr Michael Johnsen: And equines.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: And equines, and everything else as well—maybe some good canines. I thank the member for Upper Hunter for his question and note his strong interest in the agricultural sector, not just as Parliamentary Secretary but also as someone who was in the first tranche of the dairy apprenticeships scheme at Tocal Agricultural College. For the information of those opposite, it is the premier agricultural training facility anywhere in New South Wales. Tomorrow the member for Upper Hunter is attending the graduation ceremony at Tocal, with 218 graduates of various ages.

Ms Kate Washington: So am I. I can't wait to be in his company.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: Yes, good. It is a wonderful facility.

The SPEAKER: I ask the Minister not to encourage her.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: We talked about it a few times in this place but the turnaround on the land in New South Wales has been dramatic, particularly in the past six months but gradually over the past 12 months. We have seen the very worst drought conditions that our State has experienced and that our primary producers have had to deal with, and now a miraculous turnaround in those conditions. We are seeing large dumpings of rain consistently across the State and another big dump of rain is forecast for widespread areas throughout rural and regional New South Wales over the next few days.

That has not only inspired greater confidence in the agricultural sector but also a turnaround in financial fortunes, which will take some time to recover, and some really strong yields in terms of our latest crop. Cattle and sheep prices continue to be at record levels. One thing it has also done is spur on an increased interest from people getting back into agriculture and training in agriculture. I am happy to report that we have seen at Tocal, which is managed by the Department of Primary Industries, a doubling in the number of trainees studying agricultural courses in the past 12 months. That is a reflection of the fact that conditions have really turned around and confidence has returned into the sector.

Ms Kate Washington: Why are you selling off Scone TAFE?

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: I am talking about Tocal, not that the member for Port Stephens would know anything about Tocal.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the second time. I ask the Minister not to encourage her.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: Those opposite arrogantly try to claim the mantle of being the party that stands up for tertiary education and training, and yet they do not even know the difference between Tocal and TAFE. They completely ignored Tocal and agricultural training when they were in government.

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

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: Since 2011 we have more than doubled the number of trainees at Tocal. Those opposite left it in absolute ruins.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: The Minister is being argumentative. There are two sides here.

The SPEAKER: The member for Keira is correct. I have asked the Minister to stop interplaying with the member for Port Stephens. I have called the member for Port Stephens to order for the third time.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: You keep order.

Ms Jodi McKay: Don't talk badly to the Speaker—and pointing!

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: That is coming from you.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: As I was saying, those opposite arrogantly lay claim to some mantle of virtue when it comes to tertiary education and training, and yet let us have a look at their record around agricultural skills and training when they were in government. They left Tocal Agricultural Centre an absolute ruin. They abandoned it. Since 2011 we have more than doubled the number of trainees, apprentices and people being educated and skilled at Tocal. We have invested time and time again in improving those facilities, not just at Tocal but at more than 180 locations across the State where Tocal delivers those courses, close to where everyone wants to do the training in rural and regional New South Wales. They left it an absolute ruin and yet they come to this place and cannot even tell the difference between TAFE and Tocal.

On this side of the House, we value agriculture and agricultural training. That is why we are making record investments in the member for Upper Hunter's electorate, as well as partnering with TAFE NSW to announce another \$15 million boost to the AgriSkills program to turbocharge more development and more skilling in the ag sector. I thank Minister Lee for his very strong partnership in supporting the continued growth of the agricultural sector as we chase \$19 billion in value for gross State product by 2023. I again thank the member for Upper Hunter. I hope tomorrow is an enjoyable day and I hope it is a very wet day at Tocal.

REGIONAL JOBS

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (15:19): I make a correction: In an answer earlier today in relation to Charles Tym—the grub who attacked the wife and daughter of the member for Dubbo—and that disgusting and vile propaganda

political campaign or group called Anyone But Nats, I said at a press conference today that the member for Cessnock was in attendance. I correct that and offer an apology to the member for Cessnock. He was not there. He is a good man and I know that he would not have been there, but I do acknowledge that the member for Wyong and the Hon. Mick Veitch were in attendance.

Personal Explanation

RIVER CLASS FERRIES

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (15:20): By leave: Yesterday in this Chamber, the transport Minister misrepresented comments that I made on the front page of yesterday's edition of *The Sydney Morning Herald* about his asbestos-riddled and defective ferries from Indonesia and the Berejiklian Government's failure to support local workers. Minister Constance also misled the House when he characterised those vessels as being substantially designed and built in Port Macquarie. That is incorrect and it is simply not true. I have a letter—

Mr Andrew Constance: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: If there is a point of order, I am happy to hear it. The member for Swansea will resume her seat.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: This is outrageous. Yesterday, Mr Speaker, you allowed—

The SPEAKER: I am not shutting the member down; I am just asking you to wait a moment.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: Now he has run out.

The SPEAKER: The member for Swansea has the call.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: This place is a joke. I have a letter here that is addressed personally to me from the Australian Border Force confirming that those ferries were imported from Indonesia, that they contain asbestos and that there is an investigation underway. I table it for the House. The Minister owes me and the people of New South Wales an apology for telling porkies in this place.

Mr Andrew Constance: Go to Port Macquarie and find out.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I have been to Port Macquarie, mate, and you are not telling the truth. I know people who work there—unlike you. I know workers from there and I bet you do not.

The SPEAKER: If the member for Swansea has completed her personal explanation, I ask her to take her seat.

ANYONE BUT NATS

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (15:22): By leave: I make it plainly and clearly known that I had no knowledge of what was being alleged, which was that I had been part of a community campaign that includes unions, truck drivers, the Dubbo Regional Council and all of those people for months and months. This is about a bridge. I would never take part in anything that would attack a person's family. It is not something that I would do. It is not the politics I play. I do not play the person; I play the issue. I am extremely angry about what was alleged there. I had no knowledge of it and I would really appreciate an apology, because this is about the Dubbo community. I have nothing to do with that other campaign. I knew nothing about it and I will not be linked to it.

Petitions

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

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

The Hon. Paul Toole—Western Sydney and Central West Highway Link—lodged 9 February 2021 (Mr Dugald Saunders)

The Hon. Paul Toole—Milton Ulladulla Bypass—lodged 9 February 2021 (Mrs Shelley Hancock)

The Hon. Mark Speakman—Community and Small Business CCTV Fund—lodged 11 February 2021 (Ms Jenny Aitchison)

The Hon. Adam Marshall—Lake Illawarra Cockle Collection—lodged 9 February 2021 (Ms Anna Watson)

The Hon. Matt Kean—Kosciuszko National Park Horse Management Plan—lodged 9 February 2021 (Dr Joe McGirr)

The Hon. Shelley Hancock—Wingecarribee Shire Council—lodged 11 February 2021 (Mr Nathaniel Smith)

Personal Explanation

ANYONE BUT NATS

Mrs Helen Dalton: I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: I will finish these items and then the member can come and talk to me.

Ms Kate Washington: Mr Speaker, David Harris did not have to come and speak in your ear. You are only doing it to women.

The SPEAKER: The member for Port Stephens will resume her seat.

Mrs Helen Dalton: Mr Speaker, I stood up but you did not see me.

The SPEAKER: For the record and for the House's benefit, I established with David Harris what he was wanting to make a personal explanation about. I have no idea what the member for Murray wants to make a personal explanation about. I invite her to come and speak with me and in the meantime I will continue with the *Business Paper*. If the member comes here then I will have the same conversation I had with the member for Wyong.

I have discussed with the member for Murray a matter that she wishes to raise. I remind her to keep it to a personal nature, to be brief and to not debate the issue.

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (15:24): By leave: I will clarify the comment that the Deputy Premier made implicating me with the party or group Anyone But Nats. I have nothing to do with any vote for Anyone But Nats. I was offended by the comment.

Private Members' Statements

COMPULSORY LAND ACQUISITIONS

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (15:25): Today I speak about the very vexed issue of compulsory acquisitions. I welcome the imminent inquiry that will be conducted into the issue and I look forward to speaking to that inquiry. I raise some of the issues that face people in my electorate. I know that further west around the new airport huge swathes of properties have been acquired. People have also been put into planning limbo that may continue for decades. The Sydney Metro West project has acquired properties from people who live in my electorate. While it is necessary for the project—unlike for those who live further west—it has caused enormous disruption locally. And it is not only that project; there is also the Parramatta Road strategy and the creation of parks under that project.

Sydney Helicopters in Granville is in limbo because of the compulsory acquisition plans for its site. Founded in 1985, Sydney Helicopters is the longest-running commercial helicopter operator in Sydney. The company owns its entire fleet of aircraft. In addition, it has its own dedicated helicopter maintenance facility with licensed helicopter engineers on staff. The assessment for Sydney Metro West indicates that there will be full acquisition of 154 properties and partial acquisition of one property. My electorate is affected by construction on the Westmead metro station and the Clyde stabling yard. The assessment report notes that as part of stage one it is required to acquire the heliport facility that is operated by Sydney Helicopters and that, "The private transport company provides a variety of commercial helicopter services, including tourist flights, assistance to emergency services such as the NSW RFS and aerial pest control from this location."

It has been suggested to Sydney Helicopters that it use Bankstown Airport as an alternative, but that is just not commercially viable. Its commercial advantage is that it does not have to wait for clearance while other aircraft take off and land, and it does not have to pass on those charges to its customers. It wants, and deserves, a standalone heliport like it has at the moment. The Australian Helicopter Industry Association said:

The loss of this unique heliport is a significant loss to the local helicopter industry and to the community it has been serving for twenty-five years. In addition, the Parramatta Heliport is well known nationally and has been able to assist helicopters travelling to Sydney, as well as those transiting to other destinations ... The AHIA strongly encourages the NSW Government to consider the full ramifications of the loss of the unique Parramatta Heliport, and reconsider the benefits of replication. The Association stresses again that aviation infrastructure, once lost, is almost never replaced. Given the strong community service roles that helicopters play, heliport replication is a far better option.

On 27 February 2020 the RFS endorsed the important role played by Sydney Helicopters during the bushfires. It said:

The NSW Rural Fire Service engages Sydney Helicopters to provide helicopter services through contractual arrangements for firefighting support across NSW. Since 1 July 2019—

and this statement was made in February last year—

the NSW RFS State Air Desk has tasked Sydney Helicopters 75 times to respond to fires across NSW ... Sydney Helicopters Parramatta Heliport is strategically positioned within the Greater Sydney area and they have been able to provide a rapid response to bush fires that are located in some of the most populated areas in NSW.

One can imagine how much slower it would be to wait for clearance at Bankstown Airport. The statement continues:

Access to a suitable landing area located within a close vicinity to Sydney Olympic Park is highly desirable so the NSW RFS can quickly access helicopters.

There is a similar situation in Westmead. Local resident Andrew told me that his parents were:

... soon facing Compulsory Acquisition of their home of 48 years ... due to the Sydney Metro West project. Transport NSW do not seem to be providing fair market valuation for my parent's home in prime location and choose to display a level of ignorance related to the uplift in the Westmead market and the appreciation of property prices as evidenced in recent sales ... Of great concern is the below market price Metro are offering ...

And they have done that through a very strange process. Transport for NSW sent people a letter saying that within the next six months of negotiations they would receive the plan, but it did not actually start negotiations until the fifth month and it sent out offers that were equivalent to unit prices in Mount Druitt. For those who live in single dwellings, that did not reflect the fact that there is development potential to build units on those properties and in no way did it reflect the superior position of being in Westmead, which is close to medical precincts, transport, shops and Parramatta. The process has been an absolute disgrace.

FOODBANK

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (15:30): In December last year my staff and I volunteered at Foodbank in Glendenning for the fifth year running. This time we were lucky enough to join the member for Lakemba, Jihad Dib, and his team. When Foodbank came into being in 1992, the overarching aim was to ensure that food did not go to waste. In the 28 years since the foundation started, Foodbank has evolved and matured into the largest hunger relief organisation in Australia. Last year Foodbank provided 75 million meals across its 2,400 charity partners. It also provided regular breakfasts to over 116,000 students in more than 2,500 schools around the country. Foodbank's purpose is to fight hunger by providing quality food to people in need. It was very interesting to gain an insight into Foodbank's operations and processes. We hear about the incredible work of charities, churches and not-for-profit organisations for the wider community but oftentimes we are not aware of what goes on behind the scenes to get food and resources to begin with.

Visiting the Foodbank warehouse showed us how food gets from A to B, from supermarkets to soup kitchens. Foodbank's model is simple and effective: Surplus food is donated by farmers, manufacturers and retailers; Foodbank collects, sorts and stores the food; agency partnerships and schools receive and distribute the food; and people and communities are fed in times of crisis. That process saves millions of kilograms of edible food from landfill. What people do not realise is that hunger is often not just a food problem; it is a logistics problem. Each year millions of kilograms of food go to waste in Australia. Since the start of the pandemic, demand for the charity has increased by 47 per cent. Food banking captures surplus food and delivers it to the people who need it most. Without Foodbank's food sourcing and distribution work, many hungry individuals and families across the State would miss out on food that would otherwise go to landfill.

In addition to food storage and distribution, Foodbank also has the school breakfast program that delivers healthy breakfasts to some of the most disadvantaged schools across the State. More than one in five Australian children have experienced food insecurity in the past 12 months. It is more likely for a child in Australia to experience food insecurity than an adult. That is why such a program is so important, and I am grateful that Foodbank is providing practical solutions to combat the issue of hunger in our local communities. The school breakfast program has provided breakfasts to over 2,500 schools in Australia and provided fresh produce and pantry staples to schools in low socio-economic areas for students to take home. The results of the program are outstanding. Parents reported the following improvements in their children as a result of receiving food assistance: 34 per cent felt less hungry, 33 per cent were happier, 20 per cent had more energy and 20 per cent improved their behaviour.

Programs such as the school breakfast program are only possible because of the volunteers who commit their time and energy to ensuring those kids are fed properly. I take this opportunity to thank the regular volunteers, staff and directors for their dedication and support. Without their combined efforts, Foodbank could not possibly operate. A special thank you must be extended to CEO and company secretary Gerry Andersen; chairman Peter Kelly; executive general manager, and no stranger to this House, John Robertson; and volunteer coordinator

Luke Chesworth. I also thank the Department of Family and Community Services and the NSW Environment Protection Authority for their support and sponsorship over several years. I conclude by congratulating Foodbank on 28 excellent years. Foodbank puts dignity back into the lives of many individuals who feel ashamed or embarrassed because of their inability to provide for their family. For that, we congratulate and honour it.

GUNNEDAH COMMUNITY

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (15:35): Along the Oxley Highway around an hour out of Tamworth, nestled in the Liverpool Plains with koalas and kangaroos all around, sits the great town of Gunnedah. It is a city known as the "koala capital", a city that paints a picture of real country Australia and inspired the great poet Dorothea Mackellar to write her famous poem *My Country*. If you have ever made the trip along those country roads to the town of Gunnedah—there are members in this place who are agreeing with me as I speak—you would know why Mackellar wrote of sweeping plains, of ragged mountain ranges, of droughts and flooding rains. You would know why she called it a "sunburnt country"—because the land is rough, it is tough, but that makes it what it is. That is why we love it.

There is a new silo art mural depicting those famous words and the beautiful Dorothea Mackellar at the Gunnedah Maize Mill. The great Namoi River snakes its way through the outskirts of town, providing swimming holes for locals, homes for the great Murray cod and critical water for the farmers who till the land. It is the river that flows into the Murray-Darling Basin and that was, until very recently, critically close to dry. It has been a tough few years, but the people around Gunnedah are tough and resilient. The fertile land that circles the town has been farmed through drought and flood and has always provided the community with food, wool and cotton. The town remains a hub for one of the country's greatest agricultural regions: the Liverpool Plains. The soil is some of the most fertile in the State and in the nation, providing bedding for much of the food that stacks our supermarket shelves.

The rich land around Gunnedah produces \$150 million in annual income. The saleyards shift 145,000 cattle a year and, thanks to the Liberal-Nationals Government, there has been significant investment in the Gunnedah Saleyards to make them safer. The region's coal production exceeds 10 million tonnes a year. Gunnedah plays a major role in the economic success of our State. Agriculture balances with 100 years of mining, the Gunnedah Basin producing hundreds of jobs and sustaining the region when times are tough. That is why I am so glad that since the 2019 election the New South Wales Government has invested over \$179 million in the Gunnedah shire. The NSW Nationals are committed to making Gunnedah safer and stronger. We are committed to supporting rural communities and to giving rural New South Wales the fair go it deserves.

There is a \$53 million commitment to upgrading Gunnedah Hospital, which is a commitment to give Gunnedah the health it needs and provide Gunnedah shire's residents with the health outcomes they deserve. There is \$10.4 million for Rangari Road, a 19.6-kilometre stretch of unsealed road that will now have blacktop on it, linking the communities of Boggabri and Manilla not only for locals but also for mining and agriculture. There is \$3.85 million for Grain Valley Way and \$14 million to upgrade existing yards around the saleyards, providing farmers on the Liverpool Plains with an important central hub to buy and sell their stock. There is \$1.89 million for Gunnedah Showground and \$62 million for the overpass, which you can see from space. The NSW Nationals' 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW is delivering for Gunnedah.

It is an economic vision that recognises that one-third of the State's population lives in regional and rural New South Wales. It is an economic vision that realises regional, rural and remote New South Wales produces one-fifth of the State's GDP. That is salt-of-the-earth, hard workers doing the kind of work that puts food on our tables and clothes on our backs. It is the kind of work that the people of Gunnedah and our regions are known for. Our farmers, miners and businesspeople are the men and women who have fought drought and flood and kept on going, to keep us fed and clothed. They are the men and women who keep regional, rural and remote communities alive and thriving. Gunnedah is in safe hands with the NSW Nationals. I will continue to work hard to see that our communities, particularly around the Gunnedah Basin, continue to thrive and revive.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (15:40): This week the women of Australia sent out a strong and powerful message across the country. They called on people in this place and in every Parliament to deal with the plague of misogyny, sexual harassment and violence against women. We know the statistics are truly terrible when it comes to sexual assault and abuse of women in our community, and we must do better. According to the Australian Human Rights Commission's 2020 report *Respect@Work* one in three people experienced sexual harassment at work over a five-year period. Most of us do not need those statistics to be convinced because we know so many women who have been impacted. Those who have been are survivors of sexual abuse and assault or have witnessed and been subject to harassment, intimidation or bullying. Women have a right to be safe from

those things at work, at home and in public. They have a right to be safe regardless of their job, their age, what they say or what they wear.

In fact, rape, sexual harassment and violence against women are not really women's problems at all; overwhelmingly, they are problems for men. Unsurprisingly, a system that is run in most part by men has not dealt with the issue adequately. Too often, women do not speak out about abuse and harassment because they are ashamed and afraid of being bullied or not being believed. They may also be aware of the dismally low chances of successfully prosecuting their abusers. Last week New South Wales police commissioner Mick Fuller told a parliamentary inquiry that police pursue just 10 per cent of sexual assault complaints received, and only 10 per cent of those are prosecuted successfully at trial. I recognise the important remarks made by Jess Hill at the Sydney March4Justice highlighting a tactic used by people to address allegations against them. They call it DARVO—deny, attack and reverse victim and offender.

It works like this: The alleged perpetrator and their supporters deny the allegation, attack the victim's credibility and reverse the role of victim and offender so that it looks like the alleged perpetrator is the real victim. The attack is intended to chill victims and their supporters and often includes legal threats. I acknowledge those who joined the march on Monday. I acknowledge the Deputy Premier, whom I saw there with the Hon. Bronnie Taylor; I understand other MPs were there also. I want to ensure we acknowledge that more often than not it is the abusers who lie, not the survivors. I acknowledge the role this Parliament has in helping to address the issue. It is important that all of us in this place—from the Premier, across the entire Parliament—take this very seriously. This is an important moment for us. We need change in the Parliament and as a nation. This is a moment that requires leadership, requires decision-makers to listen, requires us to believe survivors and requires men to take responsibility and be accountable. Enough is enough.

KOGARAH LUNAR NEW YEAR ART COMPETITIONS

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (15:43): This year I was able to once again hold the Kogarah Lunar New Year Card Competition for young artists in my electorate, as well as expand it into a calligraphy competition for all ages. The card competition was even more successful than last year, with 300 entries submitted. I had the pleasure of judging all 300 incredible artworks alongside the talented University of New South Wales Associate Professor of Art and Design Fang Xu; the president of St George Art Society, Jim West; and local St George artist and creator of Studio Onethirty, Sarah Kalidis.

Mr David Elliott: Do the students have PhDs?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I don't know what you're talking about, but could we respect them?

Mr David Elliott: Did Daley judge it?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kogarah has the call.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I think they deserve a bit more respect than this abuse from the police Minister, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I did not hear the comment.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Fair enough. It was a joy to see such bright and imaginative artworks submitted, reflecting a positive outlook for 2021 from the students after the uncertainty of the past year. The two winning artworks are bright and colourful, and capture the vibrancy, excitement and sense of hope that the Lunar New Year represents. The winner of the junior category was 12-year-old Zoe Lee from RedSugar Art Centre—no relation, I presume?

Dr Geoff Lee: No relation.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Winnie Liu is the owner of the centre, and Zoe's teacher. The winner of the senior category was 13-year-old Lynn Wang, from Creative Arts Education Academy, Hurstville. Ronda Xiao is the owner of that organisation and is Lynn's art teacher. I was also delighted to give four-year-old William Yao a special award for entering the competition. Both winners were featured on my Lunar New Year card, which has been sent out to more than 6,000 homes across the Kogarah electorate.

The Red Banner Calligraphy Competition was a new initiative for my office and was a great opportunity to reach out and witness the incredible artistic talent amongst the adults of the Kogarah electorate. We received more than 30 entries and put it to a people's vote in early January. We received nearly 3,000 online votes, with Tom Tang being declared the winner. Tom is a calligraphy teacher at the Chinese Australian Services Society [CASS] language school in Kogarah. I congratulate all three winners. I thank everyone who entered both the Lunar New Year Card Competition and Red Banner Calligraphy Competition and all the principals, teachers and parents involved with our local art and language schools who encouraged their students to participate.

PARRAMATTA ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, and Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (15:45): I was honoured to attend the Parramatta Australia Day Awards ceremony to recognise the outstanding achievements and contributions of members of our local community. The awards celebrate and acknowledge a diverse range of individuals, from the young to the seniors, with different skills and talents. There were many nominations this year, which I am sure made it very hard for the judges. This year the frontline staff at the Westmead Hospital COVID-19 clinic must be acknowledged for their hard work and for going out of their way to ensure that all visitors are treated with care and experience minimum distress and discomfort. The Westmead Hospital COVID-19 clinical team was awarded the Leadership Award. They have made sure that hundreds of thousands of patients have been, and continue to be, tested and assessed quickly and safely.

The Westmead Hospital COVID-19 clinic has been at the forefront of screening patients, and has demonstrated vision and leadership to quickly create a new service to manage COVID-19 testing. I congratulate Major Ian Carter, who received the 2021 Adult Citizen of the Year Award. Ian is a passionate advocate for suicide prevention and mental health support for our local community. Ian aims to reduce the stigma around mental health, improve its treatment and raise awareness. Ian, a major in the Australian Army, has been awarded the Commendation for Brave Conduct and has presented the Australian Defence Force Long Tan Youth and Leadership Award at more than 30 local schools. I applaud Antonio Rajaratnam from Redeemer Baptist School, who won the Junior Citizen of the Year Award and helped build a community shelter for local Aboriginal families and young people in Kempsey. Antonio was also awarded the 2020 Young Scientist of the Year Award by the Science Teachers Association of New South Wales. It recognised his research into the Sand Fairy, a rare, threatened species of cicada that Antonio rediscovered in Sydney for the first time in 100 years. He also became the first person to document a number of its behaviours, all whilst studying for his HSC.

I commend Elise Kellet, who has made valuable contributions to our local community through volunteering with Meals on Wheels and the Starlight Foundation, and through her work as a youth outreach and inclusion coordinator for The Y NSW. Elise received the Young Adult Citizen of the Year Award. She leads local youth programs, including outreach for young people dealing with homelessness or mental health issues, or who have come to the attention of the police. I commend Heather Gillam, who received the Senior Citizen of the Year Award. Heather is the coordinator of the Epping Branch of the War Widows Guild of Australia. Heather makes weekly visits to members of the veteran community in Epping and beyond to check on their wellbeing. Acknowledgement must go to Meals Plus for receiving the Community Group Award. Meals Plus has been a valuable and inclusive service for those in Parramatta who are vulnerable or disadvantaged. Meals Plus provided more than 46,000 meals last financial year, as well as essential items, welfare service referrals and laundry and shower facilities.

I congratulate Diane Lear, who received the Humanity Award. Diane has been a registered nurse for more than 40 years. In addition to her position as clinical nurse consultant in neurosciences at Westmead Hospital, she has voluntarily dedicated her spare time to assisting patients with counselling and welfare services. Diane is also the co-founder and facilitator of Neuro-oncology Information Network, which provides education and support for patients and their families to help reduce the physical and emotional impact associated with the diagnosis of brain cancer and to improve quality of life. Lastly I applaud and praise Paul Moussa, who received the Community Service Award. Paul is the coordinator of Parramatta Mission's Meals Plus program and regularly goes above and beyond to ensure everyone in the community is cared for with dignity and respect. Paul helps to connect our local community to a number of services, meals and facilities at all hours of the day and night. Well done to all the award winners and nominees who devote their time to provide support and services to others in the community.

ROCKDALE ELECTORATE ROAD SAFETY

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (15:50): I once again bring to the attention of the House the significant issue of car hooning and anti-social behaviour on the roads of my electorate. As I have said in this place before, unfortunately for many years Rockdale has served as Sydney's suburban drag strip, particularly the foreshore areas around Brighton-Le-Sands. People in my community are screaming in anger every day about the danger this poses to local residents and the impact hooners are having on our wellbeing. Loud, souped-up cars and motorcycles are congregating at Bay Street, Brighton-Le-Sands, where they put locals trying to enjoy our beachfront amenities at serious risk. This is impacting local businesses and the people who enjoy our seaside suburbs, making life hell for many residents. Botany Bay is the heart of Sydney, and suburbs like Brighton-Le-Sands are major attractions for tourists, young people and families. All my local community is asking for is some basic assistance from the Government so that the amazing natural environment of Botany Bay can be properly enjoyed.

Major roads that attract these hoons, like Bay Street and The Grand Parade, are State roads, so naturally you would think the State Government would step in and take some responsibility to fix this mess. Sadly, the only thing worse than this behaviour is the continual inaction of the Minister for Roads and Transport. On so many occasions my community and I have reached out to the roads Minister and his predecessors in the portfolio and, sadly, all we have received back is the standardised letter from the Parliamentary Secretary telling us to bugger off. That is what we get. It is disgusting. We get vague excuses about why we cannot possibly see improvements to local roads and suggestions made for greater policing of the area.

It is not good enough for the Minister for Roads and Transport to pass the buck to his colleague the police Minister. To the credit of the current police Minister, he has been quite receptive to the needs of my local community, as was his predecessor. Several years ago, former police Minister Troy Grant actually came to Brighton-Le-Sands to see the problem for himself and to receive a petition from local residents. The police Minister has been willing to listen in good faith to the needs of my community. This has resulted in St George police increasing their presence along the foreshore, particularly over the summer months. However, they simply cannot be everywhere at once and they obviously have competing priorities.

I will not fault the police, who provide as many resources as they are able to address this problem, but the reality is that they can only do so much to address car hooning. Minister Constance needs to take action now on what are fundamentally roads issues. We need structural change, not another bandaid solution. There are two major proposals from the community, Bayside Council and me at the moment. The first is the closure of Bay Street from Moate Avenue to the Grand Parade, which would require the redirection of traffic to Bestic Street. The second is the installation of two speed and safety cameras on The Grand Parade at the intersections of Bay Street, Brighton-Le-Sands, and Ramsgate Road, Ramsgate Beach. These measures are needed to break the culture of hooning in the area, and until they are implemented it does not matter how many police are thrown at the issue, the problem will not be fixed. Minister Constance needs to understand that my community is awake to the Government's games. Simply signing off on bureaucratic gobbledygook achieves nothing and is not winning anybody over.

Together with Bayside Council, I am encouraging residents to write directly to the NSW Centre for Road Safety asking for speed cameras to be installed. There are not many places in the State where local residents would support more road cameras, but this is certainly one of them. The residents' concerns must be taken seriously. I ask the Minister to ignore the bureaucracy for once and to show some leadership. Near misses have occurred on Bay Street, with out-of-control cars driving almost straight into restaurants. Do we need a tragedy to occur and multiple lives to be lost before the Minister takes action? I suggest he pretend that the problem is in Bega and that these people matter to him. Rockdale is a unique part of Sydney, and Brighton-Le-Sands is a special place—a waterfront suburb close to the airport and the CBD. Simple measures are needed to make the place the best it can be.

It is time for Minister Constance to stop passing the buck and to start taking responsibility and action. It is simple: Close off Bay Street. If he struggles with that, at least close it on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, and get those safety cameras installed at long last.

NSW SURF LIFE SAVING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (15:55): For the past five years the NSW Surf Life Saving Championships have been held at Blacksmiths Beach. Of course, this year was a year like no other. It took a herculean effort to ensure that the event's 450 volunteer officials, 6,000 competitors and thousands of spectators adhered to COVID restrictions. With the championships drawing to a close this weekend, Surf Life Saving NSW deserves huge congratulations. I also congratulate the Swansea-Belmont and Redhead clubs for managing this impressive feat. Due to COVID restrictions, the 2021 championships had to be organised differently from previous years. Events were held over four weekends, rather than in the usual 10-day block. That change expanded the event from eight to 13 days of competition. Instead of all events taking place on one beach, they had to be spread across Blacksmiths and Redhead beaches. Support from Redhead Surf Life Saving Club was critical. All beach events were held at Redhead to ensure a COVID-safe spread of competitors and spectators.

In the past, anyone could turn up at the beach to watch the events, but this year all events were ticketed. Every competitor and spectator had to check in with Service NSW and be issued with a wristband. That arrangement of the events required a huge effort from the Swansea-Belmont club's 100-strong volunteer workforce. Each day many were up before dawn to set up the beach and were there until after dark. They helped with everything from setting up crowd-control barriers to running the bar and barbecues. I sincerely thank Swansea-Belmont Surf Life Saving Club, particularly the president and championships organising committee chief Graham Burge. I also thank the Redhead Surf Life Saving Club, the volunteers and Surf Life Saving NSW for running the fantastic event. Big thanks are also owed to Lake Macquarie City Council for its support and, in particular, mayor Kay Fraser for helping fund the event.

The championships make a big contribution to our community and to surf lifesaving in New South Wales. The economic benefit the championships bring to the local area each year is estimated to be in excess of \$10 million. Of course, it is about much more than money. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, volunteer surf lifesavers have struggled to retain their proficiency, rescue skills and morale, so competitors were extremely grateful to be able to compete after training in difficult circumstances during the past year, especially during the lockdown. I congratulate all the winners in the championships so far, including the Junior Champions, North Curl Curl Surf Life Saving Club; the Open Champions, Newport Surf Life Saving Club; and the Masters Champions, Bondi Surf Bathers' Life Saving Club. I give a big shout-out to the many winners from my electorate of Swansea, including Swansea-Belmont for coming third overall in the Open Championships. There are too many to name, but I am proud to be the local member for an electorate with so much surf lifesaving talent.

Of course, it is not all about winning. I am happy to bring to the House a lovely story that reminds us of that. When a competitor had an asthma attack in big surf during a swim race, a couple of young South Maroubra competitors gave up their place in the race to swim over and support their teammate until the rescue boat arrived. That epitomises surf lifesaving. As those youngsters demonstrated, camaraderie and sportsmanship are more important than any medal. Clearly the forum of the NSW Surf Life Saving Championships showcases not only sporting prowess but also service, bravery and sacrifice. Once again, I congratulate each and every person involved in organising the 2021 championships. I thank them for their efforts in achieving a COVID-safe event that produced a host of positive impacts for the local community and the State. On Sunday I will be pleased to attend the boat championships, which is the big event of surf lifesaving and the final event of the 2021 Surf Life Saving State Championships.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:00): I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Swansea. As the co-deputy chair of the Friends of Surf Lifesaving, I extend my gratitude to the Swansea-Belmont Surf Life Saving Club for the great job it has done running an excellent championships this year in very difficult circumstances. I also give a shout-out to all surf lifesaving clubs and their members on the Central Coast. Thousands of volunteers give up almost 100,000 hours of their time every year to keep our beaches safe. Over the Christmas holiday period during the COVID pandemic the beaches of the Central Coast were flooded with people. Our surf lifesavers did an amazing job to keep the beaches and the many visitors safe. To see the best of the best performing at the championships is outstanding. Win or lose, they are all winners in our eyes. They do an outstanding job. Again, I congratulate the Swansea-Belmont Surf Life Saving Club on its outstanding work in hosting the 2021 championships. I know that the finals of the boat championships on Sunday will be excellent.

Business interrupted.

Petitions

DUBBO PROPOSED NEW BRIDGE CROSSING

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I acknowledge and welcome the guests of the member for Barwon who are watching the petition debate live and those in the public gallery. I welcome Dubbo Regional Council Mayor Ben Shields, Councillor Greg Moore, Councillor Vicki Etheridge and her husband, Mr Mick Etheridge, and Chief Executive Officer Michael McMahon. Due to current COVID restrictions, normally we would not have visitors in the public gallery. However, the member's visitors have special permission to be present in the gallery today, and I remind them of the social-distancing protocols that apply.

Before the debate commences, for the benefit of the visitors in the public gallery and for people watching online, I take this opportunity to explain the process and rationale behind this unique debate. It is unique because it enables the public to directly bring their concerns to the attention of this House. The intent of the procedure is that the petition debate will start with a speech from a member—in this case, the member for Wyong, who lodged the petition—followed by up to four other members and a Minister's response. To conclude the debate, the first speaker will speak again in reply. After all members have spoken the House will vote on the question—that the House take note of this petition. In most cases, the question will be determined on the voices and will be passed. However, if there is a challenge from a member it may proceed to a division where the bells are rung and the members vote on the motion to take note of the petition by sitting on the appropriate side of the House.

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

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (16:04): I am pleased to speak on behalf of the more than 11,000 people who signed the petition. I acknowledge our guests in the gallery who have travelled from Dubbo, and I acknowledge their contribution to the issue. I also acknowledge everyone interested in the issue who is watching the debate online. It is very difficult to get infrastructure projects in regional communities. So when you do get the opportunity for a project, you have to get it right. It has to be the right one that ticks all the boxes and meets the needs of not just the immediate community but also the wider community.

I was surprised when I first visited Dubbo and met with the wide group of stakeholders who wanted further investigation of options for a project there. Those groups included the NSW Farmers Association Dubbo Branch, the Master Builders Association Dubbo, Dubbo Regional Council, the Transport Workers' Union, transport owners, transport drivers—not just from Dubbo but from other parts of the State—individual farmers, residents whose land would be affected by the current River Street project, and the traditional owners. Very rarely do you see such a coalition of people come together to ask that before \$220 million is spent—in a regional community, that is a lot of money—the Government seriously look at a bypass. They were not saying that they just do not like that project, although many people did. They were saying that they do not think it ticks all the boxes they need.

They said that the new highway on Bourke Street floods before you get to the River Street Bridge. So does this really fix the flooding issue from a wider transport perspective? They said that Transport for NSW had promised that it would improve traffic flow through the city, but the project does not address the traffic jam at Thompson and Whylandra streets. They also said that it encroaches on traditional lands. They had a whole list of reasons why the River Street Bridge option did not tick all the boxes. They said that if you built a bypass you would effectively bypass the flooding, you would open up opportunities near the airport, you would be able to provide facilities for transport users such as rest areas and services and you would be able to make a connection between the Newell and Mitchell highways. For people who do not know, Dubbo is unique because the Golden, Mitchell and Newell highways all meet there, so there are significant traffic issues.

I had the privilege of riding with Rod Hannifey through Dubbo in a B-double and gaining a huge appreciation for how difficult it is for heavy vehicles to drive through the city, particularly at roundabouts. The trucks have to centre themselves on every roundabout, which causes traffic to bank up behind them. There is a strong belief that before the Government proceeds it should take the time to study if a bypass is a viable option. My learned colleague the member for Cessnock will talk more about benefit-cost ratios and the technical things, and I know that the member for Barwon will talk about personal experience and how it affects people in his electorate. But people are clearly saying that before the Government spends \$220 million, get it right. Let us listen to the community's concerns and make sure we fix the issues in Dubbo and the wider transport issues.

We need to find something that will fix the situation for everyone and not just settle on this controversial project that will cost a lot of money. Gladys Berejiklian first promised the project at a cost of \$140 million; it then blew out by \$80 million. Let us take the time out to get it right and get the best option for Dubbo.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (16:09): I am delighted to be representing the majority of people in Dubbo today in the discussion on this petition. I will start with the validity of the petition itself. I agree that a few people are not in favour of the bridge, and that is fine. Everyone has the right to have their say. But the way that this petition has been stacked is quite frankly ridiculous. The intimidation tactics used while people were trying to gain the signatures were also ridiculous. Plenty of people told me that they signed it literally to just get away from those who essentially were trying to force them to sign it at inappropriate locations. People turned up to events to have a good time only to be confronted by aggressive people with a petition.

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

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS: Today we have seen the main person involved with the petition launch a gutless social media campaign against me, my wife and my teenage daughter. At a time when we are highlighting the need to support women, that is what we see. It is pathetic and it is irresponsible. Plenty of the signatures on this petition are not from local people, and this is a local issue. I went through the petition and saw signatures from people from a huge range of locations. The interesting thing is that the locations are not at all relevant to a local traffic issue. There are signatures from people from Gympie, Gundagai, Guyra and Walcha. In fact, every single State in Australia has a signature—as does New Zealand. Yes, New Zealand is part of this petition. To be honest, I do not accept that this petition is any kind of representation of what people in Dubbo are actually thinking. I appreciate the member for Wyong came and visited, but I live there. I am pretty well aware of what people are thinking. Dubbo Regional Council has also been mentioned, and we have some representatives here today.

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

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS: I will talk a bit about what the council's transportation strategy says, but I note its former engineer and technical services director, Ian Bailey, is an avid supporter of the project. In fact, he wrote to me again recently clarifying that he thinks it is great. Let me outline a few things about the River Street Bridge project and why it will be of immense value. It is an investment of over \$200 million in the city from State and Federal governments to ensure that we do not have a repeat of the chaos we saw in 2010.

For those who do not live or work in Dubbo, including the members on the other side, I will provide a little history lesson. In the first week of December 2010 our city was engulfed by flooding, with immense flows of water down the Macquarie River that bisects the city. The low-level Serisier Bridge went under and the only way

to cross the city was the one L.H. Ford Bridge. Imagine every single car, bus, trike, bike and electric scooter all using one bridge. It was complete and utter chaos. In some cases, it took a couple of hours for people to cross. In many cases, they gave up. That was not ideal for anyone, but imagine if you were in an emergency services vehicle trying to get from one side to the other. It put lives at risk and it was not acceptable. The flooding also cost the business community in the CBD an estimated \$13 million. People were not willing or able to get there. It was as simple as that. Hence, this project was born.

Opponents of the bridge speak about the need to bust congestion in Dubbo. There has never been a greater example of congestion than what I have just outlined from 2010. We are trying to make sure that does not happen again. Apart from providing a much-needed second high-level bridge, the River Street Bridge is also firmly within the existing road network of Dubbo. It will get high usage from the minute it is opened. It will divert traffic that does not need to be there straightaway from over a dozen intersections along Erskine and Bourke Streets, which is great for safety and easing congestion. Opponents of the bridge also say that a bypass is needed. That is a completely separate discussion. The bridge allows people to get back into Dubbo; a bypass takes them away.

Their preferred option is at Troy Junction. There is already a bridge at Troy Junction that people already use if they want to, but it is also on the other side of the flooding that occurs. People would not be able to get back during times of flood, so it defeats the purpose. There is a distinct difference between the needs of highway traffic and the needs of local traffic. Opponents of the bridge are trying to say that it is the same—it is not. The overall solution may well include a south bridge to help bust local traffic congestion there. That is why we gave \$100,000 to Dubbo Regional Council to investigate the route for such a bridge. I will leave the final say on this to an independent report entitled *Dubbo's Road Transportation Strategy to 2045*, which was commissioned by the council and engaged Chris Stapleton as a consultant. On page 60 the question is asked, "Does Dubbo urgently need a ring road to take highway traffic around the city?" The answer, it says, is no. This bridge is a good project. It is a necessary project. It is not the only project, but it is the first project. It is important that we now get on with the job.

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (16:14): I support the thousands of people who have signed this petition. We in this place must take seriously the concerns of our communities, no matter how they are put to us. Questions should be raised rightly about the competency of government consultation processes when the community feels such dissatisfaction with a government project that they feel the only way their voices can be heard is by starting a petition. Dubbo and the services it provides to the residents of the Barwon electorate are many and varied—from medical services, entertainment, education and professional services, to taking stock to the saleyards. Of the 20 years I worked in government roles, I spent 15 years hubbed out of Dubbo. While I lived—and still live—at Mendooran, my office and staff were based in Dubbo.

Over the 15 years I have participated with sporting clubs and traded with businesses in Dubbo—one of my kids also goes to school in Dubbo—which has led to me to know many people in Dubbo and to have an extensive social and professional networks in the town and surrounds. The subject of this petition debate has undermined the relationship between the Dubbo Regional Council, the New South Wales State Government and the Dubbo community. Frankly, this debate should not be about whether the Government should be building a high level crossing at the Serisier Bridge or the Troy Bridge bypass; it should be about how badly government has failed to listen to a community. In regards to the building project, the people of Dubbo should not be asked to choose which option to build. A growing regional city like Dubbo—DubVegas—that my constituents need to access and travel through needs and deserves both.

In 2010, while working as the region manager of the Western Region of the NSW Police Force, I witnessed the flooding of the Macquarie River. I saw the water coming up Church Street towards the rotunda. The Woolies at Riverdale flooded, the cinemas closed and all other tenants along the riverside of the main street, Macquarie Street, were affected. The New South Wales Government cannot stop a flood, but it can provide the infrastructure that allows a town to function when there is a flood. As I drove into work, past the saleyards and turf farm—g'day, Alex!—I saw a town cut off from its people. I made the journey across the L.H. Ford Bridge to head west to Bourke for work and found getting across the bridge was a 40-minute exercise. It must have been a good day for me.

Commerce and emergency services in Dubbo were compromised for days. In 2016 we dodged a bullet with the peak lower than in 2010, but a different flow rate in the Macquarie and we could have been back to the same situation as 2010. Dubbo sits at the intersection of several major highways. It is a transport hub for freight and people. While I often take the chance to visit my mate Nippy at Amazing Thai or Marty and Nicky Bourke at Gunpro or even the guys at Stevenson's Hydraulics to get a hydraulic line made up, there are times when I do not need to stop at Dubbo. The situation is duplicated for many of my constituents and other transport operators. B-double-rated routes around the CBD would get large trucks out of the CBD that do not need to be there. This is

a safety and traffic issue. The west Dubbo and Erskine streets' roundabout grinds to a halt when large trucks need to come through. Many of those trucks simply do not need to be in the residential and commercial parts of Dubbo.

Dubbo is a major regional centre and a place that many of my constituents need to travel to for a range of reasons, and my constituents deserve infrastructure that makes their community easier to live in. A reduction in travel times and transport costs with a bypass is a no-brainer. Anyone who has been in Dubbo during a flood knows the community is split by the Macquarie when it bursts its bank. That has been happening for many years. The investment in a bypass and a bridge is sorely needed, but not at the cost of good public governance. There are far too many questions left unanswered by the New South Wales Government: questions about flooding, congestion and the safety of pedestrians—as I learned today, if pedestrians can actually use the proposed bridge. These questions have been asked during budget estimates and taken on notice.

The Minister should be left with no doubt that the campaign to examine the basis for the selection of the river street site is only just beginning. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party will challenge the Government to fund the bypass and get serious about answering questions and concerns over the selection process for River Street. We have conflicting statements about ambulance access to Dubbo Hospital from various members of Government. The New South Wales Government should listen to the community, listen to industry and build a second high level bridge in the right location and a Dubbo bypass.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (16:18): I support my colleague the member for Dubbo. As the Deputy Premier said today, I condemn the inappropriate, baseless and personal attacks on him, his wife and his teenage daughter. That is not the sort of behaviour we want in this country nor in country towns such as Dubbo. If that sort of character is behind a petition such as this, it certainly puts a cloud over the integrity of the whole petition.

I am advised that the New South Wales Government is committed to building a better Dubbo and delivering the infrastructure that that growing community needs. That is why we are investing close to \$300 million in five infrastructure projects across Dubbo, which are designed to improve connectivity during floods, bust congestion and make local streets safer. The projects, which the whole community can get behind, will make a huge difference to Dubbo. At the centre of the program of works is a new high-level flood crossing of the Macquarie River at River Street in Dubbo's north, which would improve congestion during normal operation and, critically, provide a second flood-proof crossing during major flood events. The petitioners support cancelling plans for a River Street bridge and raising the Troy Bridge above the flood plain to create a Newell Highway bypass.

However, it is critical to understand the lengthy process we have been through to select River Street as the preferred option. Transport for NSW selected the River Street option following consultation with Dubbo Regional Council to develop 11 preliminary options for consideration. From that process, six strategic options were recommended for public display during May 2016 and the community and stakeholders were invited to have their say. A value management workshop was held in September 2016 with key stakeholders for shortlisting the options for further assessment. Attendees included representatives from Transport for NSW, Dubbo Regional Council, Regional Development Australia Orana and the Dubbo Chamber of Commerce, as well as other representatives from business and community groups.

The workshop followed a structured process and was led by an external facilitator. During the workshop, attendees assessed and weighted each option against criteria agreed on by the group. As a result of the assessment, three of the six options were shortlisted to be progressed for further investigation and design. After extensive investigations, the River Street option was announced as the preferred option for the New Dubbo Bridge project in June 2017. That is the same process that we go through with every major project: We consider the options, we consult, we workshop, we refine and after careful and weighted consideration, we identify a preferred option. That is a professional approach. We want the most effective and best value for money option to provide a second high-level crossing in Dubbo that will ease congestion, with the least impact on property, businesses, environment and heritage.

An outer bypass option such as via Troy Bridge crossing would cater to less than 10 per cent of vehicles, while the issues of local crossings during flooding and east-west congestion would remain. The Troy Bridge option would be three to four times longer—around 14 kilometres—than the River Street option—3.5 kilometres—and would attract less traffic. The 1:100 flood plain is wider at Troy Bridge compared to River Street, meaning a longer bridge and significantly higher costs. The River Street Bridge will provide immunity for a one-in-100-year flood event, while the upgraded roads on either side will provide immunity for a one-in-50-year flood event. The New South Wales Government builds bridges to a minimum one-in-100-year flood immunity standard to ensure that they are fit for many decades to come and so that timber debris carried downstream during a significant flood event will not damage the bridge.

The Troy Bridge option would also have far greater impacts to existing local properties. It would have increased heritage and environmental impacts, which would require an environmental impact statement assessment under part 5 of the Environment Planning & Assessment Act 1979. That is important because it means a longer process to secure project approval and get that vital infrastructure started. The River Street option better facilitates emergency services—police, fire, ambulance—including the Flying Doctors' access on both sides of the river during a flood than the Troy Bridge option. Traffic projections reveal that a portion of interstate freight travelling through Dubbo would in future be taken by inland rail. Thus, heavy vehicle usage in Dubbo is expected to remain fairly static over the next 30 years, whereas we will see far larger increased local traffic usage due to multiple major housing developments in west Dubbo. That would see additional local traffic dominance in Whylandra Street, further highlighting a more urgent local solution to cross the Macquarie River close to the centre of town. [*Time expired.*]

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (16:24): I also want to call out the terrible conduct aimed at the and wife and daughter of the member for Dubbo. It is entirely unacceptable. People who think that that is okay need to step back and have a really good think about who they are and what they stand for. I used to be the shadow Minister for Finance, Services and Property and I spent a fair bit of time with my head stuck in books around infrastructure, infrastructure construction, benefit-cost ratios, getting things passed through the Treasury, building a business case and justifying a business case as to why different projects should be funded because taxpayer dollars are scarce and precious—and they are taxpayers' dollars. The dollars do not belong to the Government of the day, in this case the Liberals and The Nationals; they belong to the people of New South Wales. We have a core responsibility to make sure that those taxpayer dollars are spent extremely carefully, and in the most correct and beneficial way so that the best possible outcome is achieved.

In preparing for today's contribution I thought I would slide into the Infrastructure NSW website and have a look to see what they said about the expenditure of money. I want to get some of those things into the *Hansard* because the Government of today has policies in place and it has been the Government of the day for 10 years. If the Government did not like the rules and policies in place, it could have changed them at any time over the past 10 years. The same applies to the Federal Government because it has been in place for some eight years. If they do not like the rules, change the rules. The rules at the moment are that projects need to have the benefit-cost ratio assessed and to have funding released from Treasury that needs to exceed 1.0. They are the rules. They are the Government's rules; the Government owns them. I read what appears under the heading "Expert Advice" on the Infrastructure NSW website:

Infrastructure NSW is an expert advisor to the NSW Government on the State's infrastructure needs and priorities.

We provide rigorous and independent advice to prioritise infrastructure investment and ensure infrastructure investment decisions are informed by robust assessment, independent assurance, and long-term planning.

That is a very reasonable position from which to start, and I hope that the Government is applying that methodology. In the State Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2038 they took the decision to make decisions that are both in the shorter term, in the five-year window or envelope, out to 10 years and out to 20 years. I applaud them for that because part of the contention around whether or not a bypass is required is probably a longer-term project. I appreciate that that is reasonable. The fear here is that if you spend \$220 million on the project right now—that is the current cost, and blowing out—the chances of getting a second bite of that cherry in the next five or 10 years seems pretty limited given the financial constraints on the State.

At page 6 they talk about the strategic directions for infrastructure and point 2 is that the strategic directions are to plan, prioritise and deliver an infrastructure program that represents the best possible investment and use of public funds. So we have to be careful about the money—great plan; great idea. One of the requirements is that infrastructure projects go through a gateway process—good plan. The *NSW Gateway Policy - Policy and Guidelines 2017* sets out the minimum guidelines and all government agencies and government businesses must comply with the relevant approved risk-based gateway frameworks. All projects and programs that meet the definitions prescribed are subject to the gateway process. These are good plans and strategies, but what we have here fundamentally is a captain's call.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr CLAYTON BARR: What we have here is a government that is making decisions contrary to all of these policies, procedures and practices.

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the member for Cessnock.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: We know that this project is now rated at a benefit-cost ratio of 0.3. It does not meet any of the targets. It does not meet any of the policies. It does not meet any of the thresholds that are required at both the New South Wales Government standard and the Australian infrastructure standard. That is why this project needs to be questioned and rethought. A project at \$140 million is different from a project at \$220 million

and is different from a project at whatever the cost ends up being. The benefit-cost ratio needs to underpin the decisions being made— *[Time expired.]*

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (16:29): I thank the member for Wyong for receiving this petition and I acknowledge the petitioners for their engagement and their advocacy on behalf of their community, but I will respectfully disagree with their position. I think we can all recognise that there is often a diversity of views on large infrastructure projects and there are many people who hold a different view from the petitioners. In any such debate it is critical that we remain focused on the problem that we are trying to fix. This is about building a second high-level crossing of the Macquarie River to ensure better access, safety and to keep Dubbo moving, especially when there is a serious flood.

The last time that there was a major flood in Dubbo, the city was brought to a standstill for more than a week with only one heavily-congested crossing available—the L.H. Ford bridge—and it cost millions of dollars in lost revenue for businesses. We know that it will flood again and it is simply unacceptable that a major regional centre like Dubbo has only one crossing during such an event. We also know that a bypass option will not solve that problem. Ninety per cent of the traffic moving through Dubbo is either stopping there or is local traffic trying to move around. We are not against a bypass, but the data shows that we would only be building it for 10 per cent of the traffic, and it just is not needed now.

The House has heard from the member for Dubbo and the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Roads and Infrastructure. They have detailed the reasons why River Street is the right solution to address the problem that we are trying to fix here, but I am also hearing it from members of the community in Dubbo directly. I heard it from the former council engineer Ian Bailey, who I met on one of my visits to look at the project. He understands better than anyone the challenges of keeping Dubbo moving during a flood. He says River Street is the right solution and he says it is definitely the best option of the many considered. I hear it from the Dubbo Chamber of Commerce President Matt Wright, who represents the dozens of businesses that are devastated when flooding cuts the city in half. He says that having a second crossing close to town at River Street is something the chamber supports. I hear it from David Hayes, the owner of Dubbo City Toyota. He said:

If I didn't believe the project was a good one I would fear for the future, but I'm of the opposite belief. I firmly support this bridge project now.

I hear it from freight operators, people like Roger Fletcher who says he gives his full support to the River Street project and cautions that not developing it is bad for Dubbo, its people and its businesses. I am disappointed that the Labor Party and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers are ignoring their views and playing politics on a matter of critical infrastructure for Dubbo, and I am puzzled as to why they would want to cancel a project that would create 400 jobs. We need a solution in Dubbo for Dubbo. What is being debated is whether River Street is the right option. It is not the second-best option, as those opposite have suggested; it is the best option and it is the one that is going to fix the problem in that community.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (16:33): In reply: I thank the members for the electorates of Dubbo, Barwon, Clarence and Cessnock and Minister Toole for contributing to this petition debate this evening. What I say in reply to the Minister straight off is: Will you commit to sit down with the NSW Farmers, Dubbo Branch, and NSW Farmers, New South Wales, and have a conversation with them? Will you sit down with the Master Builders Association? Have you met with the traditional owners of that area? Have you met—

The SPEAKER: Order! This is not a debate. The Minister will come to order.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Has anyone met with Jenny O'Brien, Lin Hayden, Bruce Willis, Cameron Porter, Colin Middleton and Nicci Willis who are going to have their property attacked?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wyong will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order—

Mr Paul Toole: It is misleading.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: How am I misleading? You have not met with them.

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

Mr Gareth Ward: My point of order relates to directing comments through the Chair.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for Kiama for his assistance. I uphold the point of order. I have already asked the member for Wyong to direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: If the Government was really about listening, then maybe the Minister, when the mayor wrote to him on 12 November 2020 detailing council's concerns about the current project, which include

reduction of the level of the road, provision of pedestrian access and intersection access to the highway from the Urban Release Area in the north-west, should be listening to the community. But the truth is that the Government came up with an option, is sticking by that option no matter what, and has not and will not look at a bypass option. It does not know if it is better or worse because it will not look at it. As the member for Cessnock said, the original benefit-cost ratio was 0.5—at that stage it was costing \$140 million. When it was looked at in detail that BCR dropped to 0.3. There were other options higher than that and there was one option that could have been lower than that but the Government never looked at it. The Government should be serious, talk to the community and hear what they are saying.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the visitors in the gallery for their respect and for joining us today.

Petition noted.

Private Members' Statements

MX DOME SITE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:36): I inform the House of alleged unscrupulous dealings by the sublessors of the site at 50 Peter Brock Drive, Eastern Creek, commonly known as MX Dome, which is having a direct, adverse impact on local businesses, families and our environment. It is my understanding that this parcel of land, owned by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, is leased to Gary and Alexandra Holt, and in turn subleased to Matt and Barbara Bartolo, as a part of a New South Wales Government public-private arrangement. The alleged offences include illegal dumping of contaminated soil, unapproved construction works, fraudulent activities in the development of MX Dome, default of a New South Wales Government lease, accepting funds whilst being insolvent and defrauding members of the community by not paying contractors for works completed. This issue impacts our community economically and potentially damages our community's health.

In October 2020 my office was contacted about this issue by one business, Workhorse Collision Repairs. Since that time the group has grown to 30 tradespersons, suppliers and contractors reaching out with a number of serious allegations, including non-payment of contracts and environmental damage on the site. In some individual cases the amount owed is a few thousand dollars and, in others, it rises to over one-quarter of a million dollars in outstanding invoices. Collectively, the amount owed to these contractors and suppliers is over \$640,000. Despite several attempts to mediate this dispute, these businesses have had no other avenue than to pursue matters before the Land and Environment Court and to seek orders for payment before other relevant courts. The deep financial and personal impact on all of those families is significant, and they deserve to be paid. At a time when our economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis is crucial to New South Wales' economic standing, it astounds me that the Government has let these western Sydney tradespersons, suppliers and small businesses suffer the financial consequences of the actions of an unscrupulous few.

Further, in order to build on the site, landfill was trucked in and deposited in the south-west corner. The landfill's origin is questionable, and serious issues have been raised about asbestos and other contaminants that have been placed in the soil. This has taken the height of the area to 5.8 metres, which is above the agreed height of the initial planning process. The amount of soil is estimated to be the equivalent of 13,000 loads of 10-tonne trucks. It is further alleged that the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment amended the planning commitments during the construction of this project to suit the current requirements of MX Dome. This was done without consultation of neighbouring properties or businesses. The 1997 development consent S29/3/97 clearly states, "no fill shall be imported into the site. Any fill removed during excavation works shall be reused within the site."

Clearly that has not been the case at MX Dome. There are also alleged drainage issues on the site. The composition of landfill is causing contaminated soil to be discharged into adjoining waterways, potentially impacting Prospect Reservoir, which is our community's reserve water supply. The alleged contaminated site is only a few kilometres from the Prospect Reservoir and is adjacent to the incredibly popular Raging Waters Sydney water park. The Government has failed to investigate these claims with any form of urgency or concern for the local community. It must undertake an urgent investigation regarding the environmental impact of the landfill on this site so that we can determine the impact on our community, western Sydney's water supply and the local environment. If, as I fear, there has been environmental damage to the western Sydney water catchment, containment measures must be taken immediately.

I have made representations to the Minister for Planning and Public Space and the Minister for Water, Property and Housing to highlight these environmental concerns. I have corresponded with the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation and the Minister for Customer Service to highlight these financial irregularities and fraudulent acts. The New South Wales Government's response has been to hide behind the excuse that the matter is before the courts, rather than accepting and acknowledging that there has been a grave failure of process by the

Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. When asked what was being done to rectify the issue, we heard that the NSW Environment Protection Authority [EPA] was investigating. However, we still have no detailed response or actions from the EPA. The issues surrounding the MX Dome site must be addressed immediately by this Government. I also call on the sublessors of MX Dome, the Bartolo family, to immediately pay their contractors and suppliers and end this unfair dispute.

YOU CHOOSE YOUTH ROAD SAFETY PROGRAM

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (16:41): I inform the House of a serious issue by highlighting the YOU CHOOSE youth road safety program. The YOU CHOOSE mission is to inspire a genuine social movement to change driving behaviours. In 2012 YOU CHOOSE was founded by Melissa and Peter McGuinness following the tragic choice of their 18-year-old son, Jordan, who had been celebrating his first work Christmas party with colleagues in Brisbane. His mother, Melissa, had been messaging him throughout the course of the night, and he told her he was having fun having a few beers. He was due to return home to the Gold Coast the next morning, but it would be a trip that he would never complete. Just before midnight Jordan was speeding under the influence of alcohol and drugs when he drove his car into stationary vehicle on the M1 at Coomera. His choices killed four young victims in the other car and also himself.

Last week Melissa attended one of my local high schools to address year 11 and year 12 students and deliver the powerful message, "You own the choice, you own the outcome", which is the organisation's motto. The YOU CHOOSE messages are confronting, although extremely important for young people and the decisions they make. Many students are often moved to tears of introspection about their own families, which is the intent behind the organisation's motto. Telling students of her tremendous loss and heartache due to her son's actions, and how her family must now live with the fact that their son decided to drive his car when he should not have, Melissa and Peter travel throughout Australia to schools to present their programs to uplift young people to protect their families and friends, and to make better choices when it comes to road safety.

We have all heard the stories and have probably done some reckless driving in our younger years. We probably even find ourselves saying, "That's just what we did when we were young." But that must change. We must encourage younger drivers today to realise that that is not acceptable. A few years ago the Government launched the Towards Zero campaign, which is designed to bring the New South Wales road toll to zero. Our loved ones are dying on our local roads, which are roads that are familiar to them and that they travel every day. Having a licence is not a right; it is a privilege—a privilege we should not take for granted. Too often police come knocking on front doors to tell parents that their loved one is not coming home. Left behind are mums or dads who have to attend their child's funeral, pick up the pieces and try to continue life without them. That car can become your own coffin.

Peter and Melissa are to be congratulated on their amazing work in delivering this message to communities across Australia. I have done shifts with our local police and with our local ambulance. I remember one particularly rainy night similar to tonight, when an 18-year-old lost control of his car at about 3.00 a.m. on Sexton's Hill, which is a major hill in my area. I stood there in the rain, holding up the bottle of plasma as the ambulance and the rescue people cut the young fellow out of his car. He survived, but I can never forget the anguish on his parents' faces when they came to the site. He was lucky to survive, but so many other young people do not survive. So once again I applaud Melissa and Peter for their YOU CHOOSE road program. I encourage all members to ask them to come to their local schools because I think it is a very important message we give to our youth to save them on the roads.

SEXUAL CONSENT

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (16:45): We are currently witnessing a powerful national movement seeking justice for victims and survivors of sexual assault and sexual harassment. As part of this movement there has been a lot of conversation regarding the role of the education system in the teaching of sexual consent. A significant driver of the conversation is a petition started by Chanel Contos, which has received thousands of testimonies from women who have been sexually assaulted, many of whom had been unable to identify that they had been assaulted at all. A number of the schools identified in this petition are in the eastern suburbs and have been attended by my family for generations. There is now a petition to Parliament for the teaching of sexual consent to be more embedded into the education system. I welcome its review.

However, we know that sexual assault, sexual harassment and discrimination toward women starts with the inequality that we see every day, which thrives in our workplaces, on our sporting fields and on our streets and allows for the conditions in which sexual harassment and abuse occur. The subordination of women in our society is evident in pay inequality, glass ceilings on promotions, professional sportswomen's games being relegated to the back fields or being dumped from prime time to make way for the community men's games, and sportswomen not being provided with adequate or often any changing facilities.

The implications of sexual inequality permeate every aspect of our society. Sexual assault and sexual harassment of any person should be of great concern in our community. We know that such abuse is always correlated with the power distribution between people and that young powerless people are more likely to be subjected to abuse by those with power. We also know from contemporary examples that school-aged boys and girls are struggling with understanding and establishing appropriate and respectful norms of sexual behaviour. Everyone has a right to feel safe in the workplace, the home or in public.

Who is responsible for instilling in our youths the fundamentals of sexual equality and egalitarianism, as well as understanding the nature of sexual consent? That is an incredibly important question. In considering it, we need to consider the role of the family as well as that of the education department—whether we have got right the distribution of responsibilities between the family and the teacher, and whether it is appropriate and responsible to expect teachers to be responsible for this education or whether the responsibility should rest with the family. We also know that these issues cannot be resolved behind closed doors; they need to be addressed in the open, within the public sphere, so that no groups or individuals are left out of the process or have their voices unheard.

This week it has been revealed that a secret review is being conducted within this Parliament, unknown to almost every parliamentarian in this place. Senior members of the Opposition, the crossbench and senior administrators were completely unaware of any process being under way. It seems that this is just another box-ticking exercise for this Government, a bandaid solution rushed through to avoid any scrutiny, so that they can give themselves a pat on the back they so badly need. Who is heading this review of women's safety in this place: an expert in the field, an academic with published work on the topic, a non-partisan figure? No, it is a former Liberal Party Minister, who, during her time as a Minister, introduced legislation that destroyed as many as 90 refuges for women and domestic-violence-related services in New South Wales.

We need to act; we need to seize this moment with both hands. But what we need is a non-partisan approach to change. We need to approach these issues without bias, without the impulse to defend any unacceptable behaviours and with the mindset that to be successful. We need to do this together. I will be reaching out to my community in the eastern suburbs because I want to know their thoughts and hear their opinions about where the responsibility of sexual consent and education lies. I want to hear their thoughts on how we can better equip and protect our young women and men and make tangible, decisive and impactful changes to promote and facilitate a safer and fairer community in which every Australian can take part equally.

PORT MACQUARIE ELECTORATE ROTARY CLUBS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (16:50): All things Rotary were on display in my electorate during the weekend of 12 March to 14 March as hundreds of Rotarians flocked to the Hastings region to celebrate the annual District 9650 conference at Panthers Port Macquarie. This year district governor Debbie Loveday and her dedicated committee of 12—comprising chairman Neil Black, treasurer Pam Foye, assistant treasurer Lyndon Bartholomew; Lauren Howard, accommodation; Kerry Medway, ecumenical service; Trevor and Joan Gilson, house of friendship; Tony Lanzafame, promotion and PR; Valda Sturrock, registrations; Rob Anderson, social media PDG; and Glenda Barber, trophies—coordinated an inspiring line-up of special guests and events to mark a year of local and international accomplishments by Rotarians. Keynote speakers at the district conference this year were the Commissioner of Resilience NSW and Australian of the Year nominee, Shane Fitzsimmons, and Mr Peter Baines, OAM, NSW Police Force investigator.

I recognise the past district governor and member of the Rotary club of Laurieton, Phil Hafey, who regretfully had to cancel his district conference last year because of COVID-19 restrictions. I thank him for his instrumental contribution as a leader, mentor and highly respected Rotarian who held the Rotary district together and targeted funds to help those farm communities impacted by bushfires in 2019 and 2020. If you look around a town, beach, park or countryside more often than not a Rotary club has played some crucial role in funding or managing an asset that benefits the wider community. I give an example of Rotary projects in my electorate of Port Macquarie, including the Rotary Club of Laurieton's Bruce Porter Reserve project, the Rotary Club of Port Macquarie West's Sailability, the Rotary Club of Port Macquarie Sunrise's Liberty Swing, the Rotary Club of Port Macquarie's Rotary Park and Hastings Rotaract's Mental Health Ball.

As a cluster, the five Rotary clubs of my electorate have been a driving force in delivering Rotary Lodge, a wonderful healthcare resource in my community that offers affordable accommodation on the doorstep of the Port Macquarie Base Hospital for family members of patients. Towers of Strength are yet another example. Towers of Strength are lifeguard towers providing pivotal vantage points for volunteers who monitor the beaches in the Hastings area and Camden Haven and are saving lives. Today I single out one major project for Rotary District 9650 this year, which has everyone in my community searching their closets and rummaging through their drawers to participate in a world-first event for Port Macquarie.

On 3 March 2021 the Rotary Club of Port Macquarie West, in conjunction with the Rotary Club of District 9650, announced its intention to attempt to break the existing Guinness World Record for the longest washing line of socks, with all funds raised going towards four outstanding community service organisations in the Hastings: Endeavour Clubhouse, YP Space MNC, Soldier On and Hastings Education Fund. Project director Trevor Gilson has carefully planned and formulated this marvellous project over many months for the district to sink their teeth into. The event is likely to reunite the community over a common goal to help recoup lost revenue for those charities which were severely affected by COVID-19 restrictions over the past year. Collection points and cages are popping up all over town, with local Coles and Woolworths outlets, Bunnings, JR Richards and our local health district jumping on board to support this outstanding project.

The existing Guinness World Record was awarded to a small village of a few thousand people in Halverde, Germany, on 17 May 2014. The record is an astounding 6,066-metre-long washing line with 69,152 socks pegged to it. In Rotary's centenary year the Rotary Club of Port Macquarie West hopes to build a washing line on the large field adjacent to the Sovereign Place Town Centre, which will span over 10,000 metres, with over 100,000 socks pegged to the line, to claim the Guinness World Record title. The principal sponsor, Sovereign Place Town Centre, presented Rotary with a cheque for \$15,000 to commence its fundraising campaign, with another \$15,000 pledged if a new Guinness World Record is claimed. Other sponsors include JR Richards, Hastings Co-op, Plunkett's pharmacy and the five Rotary clubs and Rotaract in the Port Macquarie-Hastings area. I wish Rotary all the best for its world-record attempt planned for Friday 4 June and Saturday 5 June.

Before I entered into politics, and still to this very day, I am a very proud member of the Rotary Club of Laurieton and a proud Paul Harris Fellow, because I can see the extraordinary things ordinary people within this organisation accomplish through an international mission of "Service Above Self". I give credit in this House to Hugh McDermott, MP, and Lee Evans, MP, who now jointly chair the New South Wales Parliamentary Friends of Rotary, which was officially launched last night, Wednesday 17 March 2021, with special guests the Premier of New South Wales, Gladys Berejiklian, MP, and the Leader of the Opposition, Jodi McKay, MP, attending to celebrate Rotary's involvement in our communities right across New South Wales. Rotary International is in more than 200 countries across the globe, with over 1.2 million members and 35,000-plus clubs, which all live and breathe the same principles through the four-way test: Is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build goodwill and better friendships? Will it be beneficial to all concerned? If we all lived by these values, what a world we would live in!

RURAL HEALTH SERVICES

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (16:55): Parts of the rural health system in New South Wales are limping along, bruised and cut, with only the bandaids of fly-in fly-out services and telehealth for treatment. The upper House rural health inquiry is about to embark on a series of public hearings. The people in rural New South Wales want to tell their stories. They should be listened to and respected. I know politics can be a circus, but in this particular case I hope we see more than just big top entertainment. We do not need more patch-ups. We need real diagnosis and treatment. Health outcomes and life expectancy are worse for the 30 per cent of Australians who live outside our major cities—two million of them in New South Wales. Rates of premature death in remote and very remote areas are almost double that of major cities.

On top of this our rural communities face extra challenges, such as the scourge of ice and high rates of suicide, farm accidents and road trauma, the health gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and significant social disadvantage. Our rural health services and the healthcare workers in them are the front line in the fight for health equality and the battle against these scourges. I will speak about that workforce tonight. Constituents tell me that we do not have enough nurses and those that we do have are worked too hard. Nurses themselves worry about the high use of agency staff and high vacancy levels. This adds to the workload of the permanent staff. It means that the people who care for patients are constantly changing and that affects the quality of care.

Staff in smaller centres are also worried about security if there is not a doctor to deal with after-hours emergencies. In fact, nurses frequently staff our smaller hospitals after hours with the support of video-linked medical practitioners. That puts a burden on nursing staff and deprives our communities of the care that is available in larger centres. In smaller communities residents rely on the local health district for the provision of allied health services, which limits their choices. Those services are taken for granted in metropolitan areas. The lack of medical workforce is getting worse, especially in terms of general practice in smaller towns. This leads to a large burden on all local hospitals, particularly regional and base hospitals because conditions that could be treated in smaller hospitals have to be transferred into regional centres. Even the Federal regional health Minister, Mark Coulton, commented on this issue when he spoke to the Wagga Wagga *Daily Advertiser*. I quote:

We've been paying locums exorbitant fees to fill in gaps ... And so what we've actually done is developed the whole industry of locum doctors, and we are rewarding people for coming part time.

I agree with him. It has been a problem for years and it is getting worse. There has been action. We have had overseas doctors, incentives for work in rural areas and, above all, training in rural areas, but sadly the problem seems to be getting worse. Our rural health services are plastered and covered in fly-in fly-out services and telehealth bandages. I believe that the key to sorting this out once and for all is the State Government accepting that in rural locations it has a responsibility for primary care. The State and Commonwealth have to work together, but the New South Wales Government has to accept it has a fundamental role in primary care. The traditional thinking is that New South Wales does not look after aged or primary care and it is the Commonwealth's job. But hospital and community care are one and the same when it comes to rural areas.

We realised this with aged care decades ago. The Commonwealth and State did work together and they came up with the multipurpose service model. Now some of the best aged care in the State is found in these centres. There is nursing care around the clock. Let us look for a solution to the medical workforce for primary care by working with the Commonwealth just as we worked on aged care. I know that there have been recent advances in medical training. We have medical school starting from year one in Wagga Wagga. I acknowledge that Minister Hazzard has convened bilateral roundtables where he has met with his Commonwealth counterpart. I congratulate him on this and the help it has given to the models of training. But we need to go further.

The old work models for rural GPs need a complete overhaul. We need to recognise that rural generalists are specialists. They deserve respect and need support to work across the hospital and community. Let us work out how best to attract and develop our doctors. Let us make sure that we value general practice and rural practice. Let us get rid of the metro-centric bias that regards rural work as a second rate option. Let us reward the doctors, nurses and allied health staff who work in our rural communities. Let us fix the problem of the rural health workforce once and for all.

NORTHERN BEACHES COUNCIL

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:00): This evening I will clarify and correct misinformation surrounding the issue of rates harmonisation that northern beaches ratepayers face under the Northern Beaches Council. Rates are likely to increase. However, the New South Wales Government is not forcing the council to increase rates in Manly. I will read into the *Hansard* a comment from the Facebook page of the deputy mayor of the Northern Beaches Council from 4 February, which states:

Rate rises are inevitable in Manly over the coming years as the Council is required by the NSW Government to harmonise the rates over the entire Northern Beaches. Increases will be phased in over the next four years. Manly has been paying much less than the other areas for years ... Please don't shoot the messenger!

The New South Wales Government requires the Northern Beaches Council to harmonise rates by July 2021. Harmonisation provides a fair and equitable approach to rates collection. The Government is proposing legislation in response to a review by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal to permit councils to create more flexible residential and business rating subcategories to enable them to set fairer rates that better reflect access to services and infrastructure. The Government believes that councils should be able to explore different options to distribute the rate burden more equitably in consultation with their communities and supports enabling greater use of differential rating in contiguous urban areas. How the Northern Beaches Council proceeds to harmonise its rates is entirely up to the council, not the State Government.

The current situation is such that ratepayers in the former Manly area are currently paying lower rates than their northern beaches counterparts or the council average. The council has created a very informative website setting out their reasoning and next steps. I encourage ratepayers of the Manly electorate to visit that website. The Local Government Amendment (Rating) Bill 2020 proposes to permit councils to create more flexible residential, business and farmland rating subcategories to enable them to set fairer rates that better reflect access to services and infrastructure. Under the proposal the council may only set different residential rates in a contiguous urban area if there is, on average, different access to, demand for, or cost of providing services and infrastructure. I would argue that the Manly CBD and its businesses and nearby residential areas absolutely satisfy that element of the proposal.

The State Government is proud to work in partnership with the Northern Beaches Council and has provided significant amounts of funding to the council over the past number of years. Recent examples of funding include over \$200,000 towards the construction of four new memorial walls and an upgrade to seating at the Manly Cemetery, \$164,000 towards the upgrade of Queenscliff Surf Life Saving Club, \$124,000 towards the upgrade of walking trails in the Manly Warringah War Memorial State Park, more recently nearly \$800,000 to build a 400-metre-long boardwalk, and nearly \$25,000 to the council towards the control and removal of widespread invasive weeds on the Harbord lagoon and reserve. Last year alone the New South Wales Government provided over \$12 million to the Northern Beaches Council via grants and funding support.

It is clear that the State Government works collaboratively and delivers great projects in conjunction with Northern Beaches Council for the betterment of its ratepayers. In that sense it is only fair that when talking about rate harmonisation they are careful and truthful with their words. I encourage the deputy mayor of the Northern Beaches Council to accurately reflect the proposal before them with the Local Government Amendment (Rating) Bill 2020, which outlines rate harmonisation. I encourage her in her communications to ensure that the full facts are put forward, that the impact is well understood by Northern Beaches Council ratepayers and that they also appreciate the significant amount of funding that the State Government provides to the council—in particular the projects in the electorate of Manly that are covered by the Northern Beaches Council.

WYONG HOSPITAL

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (17:05): Tonight I will relate a conversation I had last Friday when I had coffee with a number of nurses who work at Wyong Hospital. I must admit I came away from that meeting quite distressed at what is currently happening to them as far as their work goes. I note that the member for Terrigal is in the Chamber and that his wife works in the medical system. I am sure he probably hears similar stories. This is one of the frustrations of our very professional staff who are just being overwhelmed. Wyong Hospital looks after a lot of particularly elderly geriatric patients, many with dementia. The story that I will tell you a little bit about—and I will summarise it as it is quite long—comes from Medical One, which is an acute medical geriatric ward specialising in dementia and difficult behaviours. The nurses there let me know that they are used to challenges and are experts in dealing with and diffusing difficult situations without heavy-handed tactics or medications. They went on to say:

But of late we are becoming overwhelmed, frustrated, deflated, and stressed. NOT only because of the level of acuity of the difficult dementia and behaviours, but because we feel we are not being supported or heard, mainly due to staffing shortages.

Yes, we have had very learned 'experts' coming on to the ward to observe and hopefully come up with 'suggestions' that we may be able to work more efficiently.

To be honest, we feel this was although well meaning, it was an insult at our skills and credibility and professional standards.

A nurse then told me about one particular Sunday afternoon shift. When she came onto the floor, she was told that three of the morning staff were staying on to do double shifts to cover the afternoon shift. They had two extra allocated staff members to help because the patients need to be pushed in wheelchairs and a whole range of things. They had about 30 patients and they were all severely demented, immobile, impulsive and difficult to redirect or reason with. They were all huge fall risks and all of them had fallen several times. They had two patients in wheelchairs being walked around the ward, utilising the two extra staff they had as extra eyes as they walked. They were able to alert staff when they saw potential danger. She went on to talk about all the different issues that were happening with all of the different patients. She said:

As a team, we were all looking out for everyone's patients as we tried to carry on with medications, IV antibiotics, toileting, observations, cleaning bedside trays, repositioning or sitting up for dinner, feeding, documenting, reading doctors notes and talking with families, making phone calls for pts, opening the front door because we have to share our receptionist with next door and letting families out, or escorting them through one of the other wards because one of the patients had blocked the front door.

So they could not get through and could not move the patient. She said that they managed to keep everyone safe, toileted, fed, clean and medicated until one of the patients crashed face first, hitting her head on the doorstep and losing consciousness. Then they had to go into an emergency situation. She said that particular patient was to be discharged the following day. When the patient was brought back to the ward she was on spinal precautions, in a neck brace and on a flat board. One colleague got punched in the face, scratched and pinched as she tried to keep her hands down to protect her. The nurse said:

I watched my colleague in tears as the pt struggled and yelled but we did not move from our post.

The patient's son was called in to try to settle her but could not do so, and started to accuse the staff of not doing the right thing. She watched their senior nurse in tears as she filled in the multitude of paperwork about the fall, with three nurses trying to help her. The story goes on and on. The issue they were trying to tell me about was that while this was a pretty bad day, it is now becoming the norm. They are just not getting the number of staff they need to deal with the types of patients they are seeing. Health is in a really difficult situation. The hospital is getting a major upgrade and thank God for that, but all the nurses said it is the acuity of the patients that is becoming difficult.

I must admit I was very close to tears watching those fantastic professionals on the edge of tears and having a breakdown. When we build new facilities, we have to staff them. We have to make sure that they are staffed and are not left short-handed. One of the stories they told me was about a shift with one registered nurse and a whole lot of first year nurses. The registered nurse was trying to teach the first year nurses to look after all the patients and do all the other stuff. They said that for each patient, each shift, they have five pieces of paper they have to

fill out every single time. If they do not do it then they get a cross against their name and are criticised. Let us give a big shout-out to our frontline health workers and make sure they are looked after.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:10): I acknowledge the speech by the member for Wyong. As he noted in his opening, my wife also works in the Central Coast Local Health District. I commend our frontline workers, especially those working in areas such as Medical One where you have patients who are inherently difficult by the nature of their conditions. A lot of those patients need specialising. For those who do not know, that means that a nurse is allocated to that one person for the entire shift. That in itself is incredibly draining on those staff members. I know the member for Wyong and I both have a very good relationship with Dr Andrew Montague, who is the CEO of Central Coast Local Health District. Yes, we are seeing fantastic upgrades at both Gosford and Wyong hospitals, but it is also essential that we have those fantastic staff. All of the hospitals in the world are not worth a dollar unless we have fantastic doctors, nurses and specialists in those facilities to provide the care we need for our growing population. I encourage the member for Wyong to reach out to Andrew Montague and I am more than happy to assist.

Mr David Harris: Meeting him Monday.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: Absolutely, meeting him Monday. That is the great thing. We have a local health district that is very happy to work with all of us and I know the member for Wyong will do the right thing as well.

GRANTHAM POULTRY RESEARCH STATION

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:12): I will talk about the Grantham Poultry Research Station at Seven Hills. I acknowledge the former Grantham Poultry Research Station, which is in the southern area of the Seven Hills district. It is well known for its historic and social significance within the poultry industry of New South Wales. The site at Seven Hills Road South today was part of the Cumberland Plain set aside for use as the prospect common by the then Governor of New South Wales, Captain Philip Gidley King, in 1804. The property was purchased by Francis Martin in July 1906 and it was called the Grantham Poultry Stud. The property was managed by James Hadlington. He was later appointed the State poultry expert in the then Department of Agriculture, where he went on to publish articles relating to poultry farming habits regarding feed, breeding and buildings.

In 1917 the Closer Settlement and Returned Soldiers scheme was established by the then Department of Lands; it involved the provision of farmlets for returned soldiers. Hadlington nominated the Seven Hills Grantham site as a place where a State poultry farm could operate, with the surplus areas being subdivided into poultry farmlets for the returned soldiers. This idea was accepted by the department and the property was then subdivided into 11 five-acre lots, 16 house lots and the balance to be known as the Grantham State Poultry Farm. In 1923 the farm's use as a place for returned soldiers was ended and it became a demonstration farm funded by the then Department of Agriculture. In a 50-mile proximity to the farm, more than 2,000 poultry farms existed. But many were of a substandard level, which is why the department established Grantham as a model farm for locals to see and ask its researchers questions about best practice.

In 1946 the Australian poultry industry faced a crisis with low hatchability. The research undertaken by experts at Grantham's experimental farm brought international acclaim when it observed that vitamin B2 and manganese deficiencies in feed contributed to low hatchability. That led to the farm being named one of six of the world's best research centres. Further key research in poultry was undertaken at Grantham in the years that followed, including in nutrition, broiler diets, genetics and poultry management, which have all contributed to furthering efficiencies and productivity in the poultry industry across New South Wales.

The Grantham Poultry Research Station has State significance as the only poultry research station in our State. Since stopping its formal research, the heritage-listed site has been used for educational programs with a focus on sustainability. The Sustainability Hub has been formed within Grantham Heritage Park for environmental programs that aim to inspire the community to be more environmentally aware and to learn how to embrace more sustainable living practices. The Sustainability Hub is largely focused on youth involvement and educational activities, particularly during the school holidays.

The Sustainability Hub holds working bees twice a month, which allows the community to gain practical experiences in gardening maintenance through tasks such as weeding, compost turning, chicken coop cleaning and seed raising. The program is focused on teaching residents of all ages how to live more healthily, save money and new skills that reduce their impact on the environment. Additionally, they provide industry training through a partnership with TAFE NSW that is focused on the development of eco-skills, and relevant land management and conservation units. The Grantham name is very familiar to long-term residents of Seven Hills; some returned-soldier descendants still reside in the area and occasionally visit my office. The history of Grantham continues today through the Hills Sports High School on Best Road near my office, which was formerly known

as Grantham High School; through Grantham Road, which links residents from Seven Hills Road South to the Toongabbie area; and through the Grantham Reserve, which is a fantastic place for local community events. I am proud to represent not only an historic area but also one that has formed the basis of one of the great industries in our national history—poultry farming.

TRIBUTE TO MARIA CHENG

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:16): I was deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Maria Cheng. I offer my deepest and sincerest condolences to Maria's family, friends and colleagues. Maria was an outstanding and selfless individual who devoted her life to serving her community. Maria joined the Chinese Australian Services Society [CASS] in 2011, which provides comprehensive social and welfare services to multicultural communities across Sydney. Each week more than 3,300 families access its important services and activities. Maria spent the past 10 years of her life dedicated to her community work at CASS, where she was an outstanding leader and wonderful colleague. Maria began at CASS as the senior executive officer of the settlement services unit. She assisted with networking, promotion and fundraising initiatives, and also took charge of volunteer development and coordination. She played a pivotal role in building strong relationships between CASS and other organisations, as well as with her local Government, Opposition and crossbench members.

In April 2015 Maria was promoted to chief operations manager, overseeing the operations of all the services of CASS. She worked tirelessly to raise funds for the CASS Residential Aged Care Facility project. She sought donations from businesses and encouraged CASS members to contribute generously to the project. Maria was also heavily involved in the planning and organisation of fundraising events such as charity walks, charity concerts and charity dinners. Her efforts enabled the construction of the CASS Residential Aged Care Facility, which commenced in 2015 and now stands strongly in Campsie. The facility assists hundreds of local, vulnerable aged residents. Maria was a selfless individual who would constantly put other people's interests above her own. She worked exceptionally hard to ensure that CASS volunteers were duly recognised by Australia Day awards, NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards and other local council awards. She would accompany volunteers to attend those ceremonies, providing support and acknowledgement and helping to recognise their efforts.

While Maria had become aware of the relapse of her cancer she continued to work, despite her deteriorating health. She moved often between the different offices of CASS, notwithstanding the physical pain of her illness. Maria displayed great courage and determination by continuing to work, and outstanding selflessness by continuing to serve her community. Maria had a passionate zest for life. During one of her charity events she performed on stage, singing the English version of *Never Say Goodbye* in the famous Chinese opera *Dai Nu Fa*, dressed in a traditional Chinese opera costume. She was also an enthusiastic and competitive athlete at CASS table tennis games. Maria's love for life was an inspiration to those around her and she was dearly loved by colleagues, friends, volunteers and all of us who knew her. Through managing a wide range of services for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds throughout Sydney, Maria built rich connections and experiences.

Last week at the annual Premier's Harmony Dinner, Maria Cheng was posthumously inducted into the Premier's Multicultural Honour Roll in recognition of her many years of service to multiculturalism in New South Wales and to her community. I was very happy to be there with our leader, Jodi McKay, and also with Jenny Leong to acknowledge Maria's service. Maria was a very good friend to me and I built a wonderful relationship with her. When I was sick she reached out to me and gave me some very good words of advice. She helped me as much as she could. I tried to do the same, though I do not think I was as good as she was to me. She was a great source of strength and support to so many people in our community.

Once again I thank all of those people who supported her nomination for that award; I wish she had been alive to receive it. I thank the leadership team at CASS, which includes chairperson Dr Bo Zhou, deputy chairperson and secretary Anthony Pang, honorary executive director Henry Pan, emeritus chairperson Dr Leng Tan, Ivan Wong, Hun Low and all the staff and volunteers who organised the memorial service a few months ago. I thank them deeply for honouring Maria and for allowing me, Tony Burke and Chris Minns to say a few words about her. I wish she was here to see what her great work has done to help many residents in our community. Rest in peace, Maria.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (17:21): I thank the member for Canterbury. I have known Maria Cheng for a very long time as well. I have to say that it was a huge shock, not just to me personally but to my office and to the community as a whole. She was an outstanding individual in the St George community. Her leadership through CASS and many other community groups over many years has been amazing. Maria was a pillar to many in the community over such a long time. Certainly CASS would not be the community group that it is today without the leadership of people like Maria Cheng. She was an outstanding individual. I congratulate her on her award last week at the Premier's Harmony Dinner.

NEWTOWN ELECTORATE COMMUNITY GROUPS

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:22): I also add my condolences to Maria Cheng's family and I add my support to the words from the Assistant Speaker and the member for Canterbury in relation to the passing of Maria Cheng. It is so sad that people's lives are celebrated when they do not get to see that incredible celebration and the level of respect and honour that they are given once they have passed. That leads on to what I will talk about briefly today: I thank and acknowledge the amazing communities throughout the electorate of Newtown. I recognise the fact that often we do not take the time to acknowledge the very small and active roles that leaders within our community play to achieve the change that we are striving for. They are not the big things that we talk about in large part; they are the small but significant things in people's lives.

I acknowledge the likes of the Friends of Erskineville, which has just had an amazing win. It started a petition for a second entrance at its train station as part of the lift upgrade. The people have been pushing for a lift upgrade at Erskineville station for a very long time and the Friends of Erskineville has been leading that charge. It said, "If we are going to do a lift upgrade, why don't we also build a second entrance at the station?" Last year I met with them, we took a petition to the transport Minister and last week Transport for NSW updated its plans. A second entrance and a lift will happen with the upgrade of that station. The Petersham station lift upgrade is well underway and there are plans in place for St Peters station to finally get a lift.

There continues to be an ongoing battle about ensuring that Redfern station is fully accessible. Looking at the connection around Little Eveleigh Street, the community coming together to say that we need to protect the community in the upgrade is another example of local resident action groups speaking out. There is a relatively new group and an active connection in the community around the Eveleigh public housing estate, where community leaders from the housing space, public housing tenants and the local community are coming together to say that they do not want to see the demolition of public housing, the replacement of public housing with private housing and high density housing, and the loss of public housing in our city. Those communities are active.

Meanwhile, if we fly over to Surry Hills at the other edge of the Newtown electorate, I was so pleased to get my hands dirty and provide a solution to what has been a real challenge around the reopening and reactivation of the community centre for public housing tenants. A few weeks ago I joined with members of Housing NSW, members of the local neighbourhood advisory board, people from Mission Australia, various groups from Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre, tenant representatives and tenants who live in the Surry Hills building. We collectively shifted chairs, moved boxes, scrubbed walls, tidied the kitchen and fixed the cups and saucers, because I could not get an answer as to why we could not reopen the community room. I figured the best way to do that was to say that I, as the local member, would head on down there and see if it was open. I brought along my jeans and some rubber gloves—ready to go—and we literally started moving out the boxes and shopping trolleys we did not need and putting things in place. Now that community room is in a much better state and is ready to be activated by the community.

On the other end of the scale, another amazing thing is that last week I was able to attend the Inner West Ale Trail launch on the other side of the Newtown electorate—it is a long, skinny place. If members want to check it out, there is now a very large map pasted on the wall on the corner of Edgeware and Enmore roads. It identifies all of the inner west breweries, craft brewers and drinking establishments that support the craft brewing industry of the inner west. The map is incredible. There is an online version, a real-world version on the wall and a pocket guide. It was part of one of the Treasurer's initiatives to fund local, community-supported initiatives. People voted for the Inner West Ale Trail as one of the maps they wanted to see. That has been put up and done, which is amazing.

Finally, I acknowledge that while I do not like to always see things in gender divides, there is an incredible movement of women who are local and ethical fashion designers heading up activities at the south end and middle of King Street, driving Newtown and the inner west as a hub of ethical fashion. It is a revolution to move away from fast fashion. I acknowledge and support them as well.

BLOOD CANCER

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (17:28): We have all been touched by cancer in one way or another. We all know somebody who has had cancer and someone who has unfortunately lost their life to cancer. When it comes to blood cancers in Australia, 47 people a day are diagnosed. It is horrific. It is an awful experience and it encompasses not only the person who awfully suffers it but also the entire family. It affects everything about the way they live. My family has a personal link to this: Many years ago my uncle passed away from leukaemia. I spent many of my university years being with him every day. He was only a young person. Leukaemia touches a lot of young people. Tragically in my first year as a member of Parliament my sister-in-law lost her life to leukaemia at the age of 26. It still breaks our hearts every single day.

At the time, my dad, who gave bone marrow to my uncle, said that he always hoped one day his children and our family would do something to support people in the same way people supported us—by providing food and giving us assistance and a friendly smile. We all know about the World's Greatest Shave and we have heard about the Leukaemia Foundation. My family connection to this started with what we could do as a little family. A few years ago my eldest daughter dyed her hair blue in honour of my sister-in-law's favourite colour. I was really proud of her for doing that. It really went against the grain, and she did it. A couple of years later our next daughter, who had been growing her hair since she was five, cut off 50 centimetres of it to donate so that people could make wigs, which are really special and important things.

They inspired my nephews. Last year one of them, Jordan, raised \$14,000 for World's Greatest Shave. It was really fantastic; it was brilliant. This year he wanted to go one better, because he knew that he could do it. He set up a team with his best mate Maksim, who just lost his 12-year-old cousin to leukaemia. My other nephew, Rami Dib, wanted to come on board because he knew that he could help as well. I checked before I came into the Chamber, and so far they have raised \$71,000. Three kids have raised \$71,000 and there is still more that they can do. That goes into the pot of nearly \$12.5 million for the World's Greatest Shave.

The Leukaemia Foundation does really incredible things. It supports people and their families—whether it is through transport, accommodation or providing the emotional support that they need to get through those really difficult times, keeping in mind that so many young people are affected by leukaemia. All of the things that the Leukaemia Foundation does make a difference. We in this House, as people anywhere would, hope that we can find something to cure blood cancer. We hope that we can put people in a place where they feel better and can recover from those awful cancers that affect every single one of us in some way. But the thing that makes me really proud—it is a bit of an indulgence, and I ask the House for its indulgence—is my nephews and my kids.

All we ever want is for our children and the people that we love to understand the meaning and importance of charity, and that there is always somebody who needs help more than we do. As bad as we might think we have it, there is somebody else who is in a life-or-death situation. Somebody else's mother or father is having to drive them to hear bad news. Somebody is having to bury a loved one. That is a hard thing for kids to comprehend and it is hard for us to comprehend, but you want that understanding for your children. When I talked to my dad the other day he said, "I couldn't do much except give bone marrow, but how proud it makes me feel that my grandchildren dye their hair, cut their hair and raise a phenomenal amount of money."

They are going to be embarrassed because they do not know I am going to be talking about this, but when you are inspired by children, how can you not get up and talk about it? How can you not say that this is where our future is? Our future is about building empathy, creating opportunity and getting people to understand that every single one of us has a role to play in society. To my children and my nephews I say: I cannot tell you how proud I am of what you do. In this House we make some really important speeches, but the things you are doing are important. You have inspired people to do things—to dig into their pockets—and that is what making a difference is about. Somebody is going to be the beneficiary of that kindness, compassion and goodness. If we have more charity, goodness and empathy in the world, as we have seen with these two 12-year-olds, then we will have a better world.

Community Recognition Statements

PAIGE ROCKLIFF

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:33): I recognise a constituent of mine, Paige Rockliff of Northmead, for being awarded a Bert Evans Apprentice Scholarship last year. The Bert Evans Apprentice Scholarships provide \$5,000 of financial support to apprentices who are experiencing financial hardship, demonstrate a high aptitude for vocational education and training, and are committed to both on- and off-the-job training. Paige is a plumbing apprentice with Axis Plumbing Group in Padstow and was one of 95 recipients of the Bert Evans Apprentice Scholarships for 2020. The scholarships are named after the late Bert Evans, AO, a passionate advocate of vocational education for more than 30 years. I congratulate Paige on being awarded the tremendous scholarship by the New South Wales Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, the Hon. Dr Geoff Lee.

HOLSWORTHY COMMUNITY GROUP

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:34): I acknowledge members of the Holsworthy Community Group for all of their efforts in supporting defence families in our local community. The Holsworthy Community Group offers support and assistance to newly posted families to Holsworthy by giving them welcome packs that consist of some essential items that are necessary for those spending their first night in their new homes. The packs include milk, Weet-Bix, fresh bread, two-minute noodles, hand sanitiser, toilet paper, spaghetti bolognese sauce and Oreos—all for free. It is a lovely initiative that will definitely make these defence families'

first night in Holsworthy much smoother. The Holsworthy Community Group was established to support our local defence community. Its members do this through providing information and resources, as well as activities and events, to ensure that these families feel at home. I thank Holsworthy Community Group members for all that they do in supporting the defence families of our area and I hope to see more of their events and activities this year.

GLADYS PACKER

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (17:35): In February local Hamlyn Terrace resident and great-great-grandmother Gladys Packer became a centenarian. Gladys celebrated with four successive generations of her family—her two daughters, Dianne, 77, and, Elizabeth, 63; granddaughter Maree, 58; great-granddaughter Stephanie, 31; and six-year-old great-great-granddaughter Kadence. Gladys is the matriarch of five generations of women still living, which is a rare occurrence. She is a first-generation Australian whose parents emigrated from England. She grew up in the Sydney suburb of Earlwood and stayed in Sydney until 1980, when she and her three children moved to the Blue Mountains where they renovated and sold houses. In 1985 the family relocated to Warnervale, where they still reside. Gladys comes from a long line of women who have lived long lives, with her own mother living into her 90s. It is great to hear Gladys still loves going out to lunch and going for drives.

JEAN VICKERY

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:36): Woolgoolga Lions Club president Jean Vickery shone brightly on stage at the NSW Women of the Year Awards in Sydney last week. Jean was named NSW Community Hero of the Year, a wonderful recognition for an inspirational woman. She is an outstanding example of the important volunteer work done by women on the Coffs Coast. Jean has been a driving force behind many fundraising initiatives for local causes over the years and she can always be counted on to pitch in when it matters most. Her efforts in bushfire and drought relief have been extraordinary. Jean, a former Coffs Harbour City Citizen of the Year, is an unstoppable force for good. She certainly leads by example and loves what she does. Jean's positive nature and warm character make her a true community hero. At last week's awards ceremony her heartwarming stories made everyone laugh and cry. Jean was the star of the show. Schoolchildren and adults alike lined up to have their photo taken with her. I congratulate Jean.

CABRAMATTA RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (17:37): Earlier this year I had the great pleasure of attending the grand opening of the newly constructed bakery and cold storeroom at the Russian Orthodox Church in Cabramatta. The church was fortunate to have received \$200,000 in funding as part of the My Community Project grants program, which now provides the church's sisterhood with a wonderful opportunity to better serve the community utilising the new state-of-the-art bakery and storeroom. Our local Russian Orthodox church does a tremendous job supporting not only its patrons but also those in need throughout the broader community. I am incredibly proud of the support and care they continue to provide to those in need, and I look forward to doing all that I can to support their charitable works now and into the future. I extend my sincerest appreciation to parish secretary Mark Ganin for organising this wonderful event, and I commend Father Boris and Sister Vera for all their hard work in making the project a reality.

ST CHARLES CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (17:38): On Friday 12 February I had the pleasure of attending the St Charles Catholic Primary School Year 6 Leadership Day where I spoke to all the new year 6 students about my time at St Charles and what it means to be a leader. Being a leader with Francian values means that you make a commitment to peace, simplicity and courtesy, with an emphasis on sustainability, environmental awareness and action. It was clear that all of the wonderful year 6 students at St Charles are ready for the big year they have ahead of them. The students were kind, inquisitive, conscientious and ready to display their leadership qualities both at school and in their community. I know that they will act with integrity and thoughtfulness in their new roles as the leaders of their school and their community. I thank year 6 teacher Melinda Antico and principal Paul Croker for having me and giving me the honour of speaking to such an impressive and fantastic group of young leaders. I cannot wait to see what the St Charles year 6 class can accomplish this year.

DENNISE WILLIAMS

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (17:39): I congratulate Dennise Williams on being chosen as Hawkesbury's 2021 Woman of the Year. Dennise is from Glenorie. She has devoted years to her community through her involvement with her children's school, Glenorie Public School, whilst balancing a career in accountancy. In 2015 Dennise accepted the role of P&C president. She was able to inspire others to get involved and managed to raise \$148,000. She secured government funding to renovate a building on the school grounds,

which became known as the OOSH building. It now supports over 100 families in the community, with before and after school care for 40 students.

Dennise developed and fostered local business relationships, and that support has provided the school with additional resources. The P&C purchased 100 laptops for students and all teachers, playground equipment, artificial grass to upgrade the soccer field, a gymnastic program and new furniture for the library. I know Glenorie Public School appreciates the stellar effort Dennise delivered during her time at the school. I am sure I echo many Hawkesbury local voices in saying how proud we are of her.

WURRIDJAL FESTIVAL

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:40): Recently I had the honour of attending the opening of the Wurridjal Festival 2021, organised by the Cooks River Alliance. The Wurridjal Festival marks the start of a season when thousands of Wurridjal—as the mullet bird is known to Aboriginal peoples in the Sydney region—enter the Cooks River during their migration along the east coast of Australia. The Cooks River has a long history in Aboriginal culture. Communities of the Wangal, Gadigal and Gameygal peoples developed an inextricable link to the land that helped shaped their cultural heritage. To this day the river remains a valuable part of Indigenous culture, and its role in shaping heritage has not been forgotten. The river is a key landmark but sewage, rubbish and stormwater run-off continue to pollute it. As such, the vital importance of catchments and stormwater management plans are needed to improve both the environmental and aesthetic qualities of the river. Recently, footpaths and a cycle track were built to facilitate recreational use of the river, but we still have a long way to go.

THE WESTERN WEEKENDER

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (17:41): I congratulate and recognise *The Western Weekender* as it celebrates its thirtieth birthday this year. It is Penrith's only weekly newspaper publication, and what an absolutely fantastic job it does. There have been plenty of times where Liberal supporters have told me that *The Western Weekender* is a dead red Labor newspaper, and plenty of Labor supporters have told me it is a true blue Liberal newspaper. I think that probably sums up just how independent this newspaper has been. A big congratulations goes to owner Kathryn Garton and to editor Troy Dodds, who has maintained with such ferocity the independence of this paper. I recognise a number of the workers at the paper—Nathan Taylor, Alena Higgins, Emily Feszczuk, Erin Christie, Melinda Saunders, Chris Pennisi, Linda Miller, Andrew Harris, Kate Shaw, Jay Lowe, Angela Jevdich, Megan Dunn and Jennifer Zuleni. I congratulate *The Western Weekender* on a wonderful 30 years.

DR FAYE MCMILLAN

Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (17:42): I congratulate Dr Faye McMillan, a Wiradjuri woman and Australia's first Indigenous pharmacist, who has just been appointed as one of two new deputy national rural health commissioners. Dr McMillan is an Associate Professor in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, School of Population Health at the University of NSW, a founding member and former chair of Indigenous Allied Health Australia and the 2019 NSW Aboriginal Woman of the Year. Her role will see her work alongside commissioner Professor Ruth Stewart and consult with rural residents and allied health professionals to advise the Federal Government on ways to improve access to services and address workforce shortages. Living in the Wagga Wagga region means Dr McMillan already recognises that the needs of communities are difficult to generalise. She will also consider the challenges faced by Indigenous people when accessing allied and primary health care in her work with the commission. I congratulate Dr McMillan on her appointment to this important role and wish her much strength in her work to improve the health of our rural communities.

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (17:43): Over the past year our local environment has been heavily impacted by the increase of single-use disposable items. On Sunday 7 March members of our local community met at Wahroonga Park to assist the Rotary Club of Wahroonga with Clean Up Australia Day. This year saw the strongest turnout yet, with over 30 volunteers offering their assistance to clean up Wahroonga Park, Wahroonga village and surrounding streets. Following our COVID-safe check-in, we put on our gloves, grabbed our rubbish bags and headed to our allocated cleaning areas. Thanks to the enthusiastic efforts of all who helped, including members of Rotary and many local families, approximately 500 kilograms of rubbish was collected. Mostly takeaway containers and food packaging, pieces of plastic, single-use coffee cups, face masks and empty bottles were picked up, but a few volunteers found the odd car part too. I congratulate Wahroonga Rotary and I look forward to participating again in this great community event.

INNER WEST ALE TRAIL

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (17:44): Sydney's inner west is the undisputed craft beer capital of Australia. Now everyone can take a self-guided tour thanks to a fabulous new interactive map. Recently I had the pleasure to join inner west map illustrator and designer Peita Blythe, along with many inner west brewers, mayor Darcy Byrne and the member for Newtown to launch the Inner West Ale Trail at the Grifter Brewing Co. Peita's mural map on the corner of Edgeware and Enmore roads, along with the interactive online version. This cute, accompanying printed map will guide us to discover local watering holes where we can sample the best craft beers on offer.

Peita's map will take you along the trail to iconic brewers like Yulli's, Sauce Brewing Co, White Bay Beer Co, Wildflower Brewing & Blending, Batch Brewing Co, The Grifter Brewing Co., Philter Brewing, Stockade Brew Co, Willie the Boatman, Young Henrys and Wayward Brewing Co. Congratulations to Peita on developing not only a great business resource to help inner westies shop and drink local but also a beautifully detailed illustrated map that will help get our local night-time economy thriving again. The mural map continues the great tradition of street art across the inner west, which celebrates all the things that make our community such a great place to live.

MRS DOROTHY SHEPHERD

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:45): I take this opportunity to congratulate Young local Mrs Dorothy Shepherd who recently received life membership from the United Hospital Auxiliaries of NSW, the highest honour granted to members. Mrs Shepherd received the award at the recent New South Wales regional conference in Tumut. Mrs Shepherd celebrates 30 years as a member of the Young Hospital Auxiliary. At 94 years young, she still serves as the treasurer—a role she obtained in 2011. Mrs Shepherd holds an irrefutable reputation in record keeping and knowledge of policies and procedures. Mrs Shepherd's commitment and loyalty to the Young Hospital Auxiliary is to be commended. I thank Mrs Shepherd for her continued service to the auxiliary and congratulate her on her well-deserved life membership. She has set a wonderful example to many in the community.

TRIBUTE TO LORRAINE BOWNE

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (17:46): I pay tribute to Lorraine Bowne, a much-loved and respected member of the Swansea electorate who sadly passed away recently. Lorraine was involved in a range of sporting clubs and social initiatives over the years, but her greatest contribution was to the netball community. Lorraine started playing netball with the Waratah-Mayfield RSL team as a child back in the 1950s. In the 1960s she went on to help develop the Caves Beach Netball Club. Through the sixties and seventies she coached and developed junior teams on the old grass courts on Caves Beach Road. Lorraine and her husband, Robert, moved away from the area but came back in the eighties when Lorraine became a founding executive member of the Belmont Sporties Netball Club. In the following decades Lorraine held a range of executive positions, including several stints as president of Lakeside Netball Association, while continuing to foster and develop players, clubs and management. Off the field, Lorraine was a devoted wife, mother and nan, and a diligent worker in aged care and in her hotel business. I sincerely thank Lorraine for her many decades of service to the sport of netball and to the broader community.

GRACE AND ELIZA WILSON

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (17:47): I commend sisters Grace Wilson of Bonnet Bay and Eliza Wilson of Sylvania who are the creators of Lily Rose face masks. Compelled by a passion for helping others, during the height of COVID-19 the sisters banded together to raise funds for charity whilst supporting our local community. In August last year Grace and Eliza set out to sew and sell 300 cloth face masks, which they achieved. From the proceeds, the sisters raised \$1,000 for the St Vincent de Paul Society COVID-19 winter charity appeal. Grace and Eliza are local students at Sylvania High School and Inaburra School. During their free time the girls worked tirelessly on their project. They designed the logo and the products, and sourced supplies and packaging. They organised dispatch, logistics, website creation and a social media presence, and they photographed their hand-sewn designs. I congratulate Grace and Eliza Wilson on their fantastic project and wish them well for their bright futures.

VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (17:48): On Saturday 13 February this year I joined with the Vietnamese Community in Australia [VCA] New South Wales Chapter to celebrate the Lunar New Year at the Vietnamese Cultural Centre hall in Bonnyrigg. Lunar New Year celebrations are an important time for us all to get together, celebrate and reflect on the year that has passed and to prepare ourselves for the year ahead. The VCA usually hosts its annual Tet Festival over several days to celebrate and welcome in the new year. Unfortunately,

due to COVID, extra precautions had to be taken. However, that did not diminish the outstanding performances and joyous atmosphere, which cultivated a very special Lunar New Year celebration with friends, family and community, who all had a great time. It always brings me great joy to join the local community to celebrate the past and the present, and to welcome in the new year. I am incredibly thankful for the outstanding effort made by everyone at the VCA for making this Lunar New Year extra special and one that we will all remember. Happy New Year, everybody. Chuc Mung Nam Moi!

VETERANS CRICKET NSW

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:49): I applaud the superior batting and bowling skills on display at the NSW State Over 70s cricket carnival held from 28 February to 4 March. I was pleased to attend the meet and greet event on the Sunday evening to welcome the more than 180 visitors and to officially open the carnival. Over the past three years this event has continued to grow. This year a total of 10 teams smashed it out for the prestigious Fryer/Pike Cup Plate. Our Mid North Coast Sharks claimed the Division 2 State Championship Fryer/Pike Cup Plate, winning in a dominant performance with leading run scorer Russell Harris hitting out 56 runs on the pitch, closely followed by Alex Rullis on 51.

Causing significant damage were bowlers Graham Doust, Ken O'Gilvie and Russell Harris with three wickets apiece. The Sharks performed strongly, defeating the Western Wildfires 6 for 188 against 6 for 61. Described as a real team effort by president Michael Bulmer, the side consisted of Ken O'Gilvie, Trevor Coles, Terry Crossland, Graham Doust, Russell Harris, Mike Kolbe, Warren McWilliams, Kevin Pike, Alex Rullis, Bill Sadler, Chas Viner and David Wilson. I congratulate the organising committee—Michael Bulmer, Kevin Pike, Russell Harris and Merv Bourke—for hosting another successful carnival in our region.

PLASTIC FREE COOGEE

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (17:50): By 2050 there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish—some 899 million tonnes of it. To me and to many of my constituents in the Coogee electorate, that reality is unthinkable. That is why I wish to recognise the great work being done in my community by groups like Plastic Free Coogee. Plastic Free Coogee is a brand new community formed and run organisation, which is endeavouring to move toward a plastic-free Coogee Beach and Coogee Basin. They are looking to do that both by organising regular beach cleans, providing education to locals about sustainable product use and encouraging local business to minimise their waste material and use recycled and recyclable packaging. I thank everyone who stepped up to lend a hand to get Plastic Free Coogee up and running. I congratulate the group on its very successful launch event on 8 March. I also thank the group for its commitment to the cause of reducing waste in our area and protecting our oceans and beaches.

BRAYDEN SUTHERLAND

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (17:51): I acknowledge the outstanding achievement of Brayden Sutherland of Elderslie High School on his selection in the 2021 NSW Under 15 Boys Field State Team. At only 13 years of age, Brayden will be competing at the hockey nationals in April. That is an amazing accomplishment. I also recognise his previous sporting achievements at the Metropolitan South West Hockey Association. Brayden was selected in the under 13 boys indoor team in 2017, 2018 and 2019. It was there that he successfully played at the New South Wales State Championships. I congratulate Brayden on his accomplishment and wish him the best of success at the nationals, and in his future sporting and school endeavours.

LINDFIELD ROTARY FUN RUN

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (17:52): I am pleased that the Lindfield Rotary Fun Run in my electorate of Davidson is back again after a break last year due to the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. The annual fun run will be held on 18 April, with most proceeds donated to KYDS Youth Development Service. KYDS provides barrier-free access and mental health support to children, young people and families. The funds raised will also go to other Rotary charities. The event is inclusive, with a 10-kilometre route for experienced runners as well as five- and two-kilometre routes. A leg problem precludes me from running this year. However, I will attend and look forward to more physically active involvement in the future. I commend Rotary for organising the fun run. I also commend KYDS and all other charities concerned for their important services, as well as those in my local community who participate and help to raise valuable funds.

KOGARAH COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:53): I acknowledge Shelley Ross and the entire team at Kogarah Community Services for hosting a fantastic event for International Women's Day 2021. As part of the event, Kogarah Community Services initiated an open-panel discussion with successful and inspiring women from across the St George area, including the Hon. Linda Burney, MP; Natalia Esdaile-Watts; Anne Field; and

Shelley Ross. I thank Linda Burney, who has been an outstanding advocate for women both in this Parliament as the member for Canterbury and in the Federal Parliament as the member for Barton. Natalia Esdaile-Watts is also a strong advocate for local women. I have always enjoyed working with her on events, including White Ribbon Day. Anne Field is another inspiring female and mentor to many in my local community. Over many years as a councillor on Kogarah City Council I had the absolute pleasure of working alongside her. I also commend the work of Shelley Ross as the Executive Officer of Kogarah Community Services. I commend the panel and Kogarah Community Services.

AUSTRALIAN JIEH COMMUNITY CLUB

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:54): I thank the Australian Jieh Community Club and its president, Halim Azzi, for its excellent HSC Achievers Award initiative. The awards ceremony this year commemorated the high-achieving students who not only endured the stress of the HSC but also the additional stresses of studying remotely and online learning during the pandemic. The Australian Jieh Community Club's continued work with the young people in our community is commendable. Its contribution in New South Wales is enormous and valuable. I thank the club very much for all the work it does. I congratulate all the families for their contribution—the parents, grandparents, everyone who supported the HSC achievers. Thank you to the Jieh community. Congratulations to the high achievers of 2020.

PAULA HARDWICK

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:55): I congratulate the Central Coast's Citizen of the Year, Paula Hardwick, who was one of 12 outstanding Central Coast residents who received recognition on Australia Day for her positive contribution to community life as part of the annual Australia Day Awards. Paula has been volunteering with Meals on Wheels on the Central Coast for the past 21 years. Paula regularly volunteers each Friday but in 2020, when restrictions came into place and her role as a flight attendant ceased, Paula began volunteering multiple times a week. Not only did she help to ensure the provision of nutritious meals to vulnerable members of the Central Coast community but she was also able to provide much-needed social interaction to her clients. Paula's passion for bringing happy and joyfulness is unmatched, with a mission to wear a different costume for each delivery. Clients have been met by a pirate, teddy bear, clown, nurse and my favourite, Her Majesty The Queen. Paula is a very worthy recipient of the 2021 Citizen of the Year award. I congratulate her on this achievement and wish her all the best for 2021.

FLIGHT PATH THEATRE

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (17:56): Co-founded in 2019 by Kate Bookallil and Siobhan Lawless, the Flight Path Theatre, Marrickville, is now centre stage of the inner west theatre scene. At Addison Road Community Centre, the theatre offers a space for independent productions with a vision to forge meaningful connections across the community. Just a year into their new venture, COVID meant that they had to shut their doors; they now they are back up and running thanks, in part, to the tenacity and innovation of its leaders and generous support of the local community. Flight Path ensures all inner westies can enjoy a night out at the theatre, with patrons able to watch local productions via streaming or now be there in person with safe social distancing. I was very proud to support the Flight Path Theatre with a \$15,000 Community Building Partnership Grant. It will be used to soundproof the theatre, as it is under the flight path. I congratulate them all and wish them great success for this season.

SYLVIA GRANTURCO

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:57): I am delighted to announce Sylvia Granturco of Old Toongabbie as the Seven Hills electorate Woman of the Year. Sylvia runs the Wentworthville Seniors Knitting and Crochet Club at Reg Byrne Community Hall in cooperation with Karabi Community and Development Services. Sylvia assists many senior women with knitting terrific products for charitable causes, including sick babies at The Children's Hospital at Westmead, victims of the Black Summer bushfires and homeless persons across western Sydney. Her friends Emma and Rafia also assist the group and I thank them for their support of Sylvia and seniors across the Seven Hills electorate. The club helps seniors across the local area remain connected to the community and have fun with likeminded locals. The club has also assisted migrant women with social services support. I congratulate Sylvia on her recognition as the Seven Hills electorate Woman of the Year. I know her family and friends are thrilled and are celebrating this tremendous occasion. I formally acknowledge her great work.

AMANI IBRAHIM

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (17:58): I commend and congratulate a young up-and-coming artist in my local community, Ms Amani Ibrahim. I recently had the great pleasure of meeting Amani and her parents, where I had the opportunity to learn all about Amani's inspirations and desires to create art from a very young

age. At just 14 years of age, Amani has already managed to make a number of wonderful contributions to the art scene throughout our region and has received widespread recognition for her works. In 2016, at 10 years of age, Amani won first place in the Liverpool Art Society Annual Exhibition for a remarkable sculpture created from foil, feathers and pearls. Last year Amani won first place for her remarkable video submission, which highlighted the many significant events that took place throughout 2020 and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is no doubt that Amani has an extremely bright future ahead of her. I wish her every success in her future endeavours.

WESTSIDE TENNIS CLUB

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:59): The New South Wales Government is helping shine a light on the achievements of players at Westside Tennis Club in Coffs Harbour. The club made a successful application under the Community Building Partnership program for a \$25,266 grant for its Let There Be LED Light 2020 project. The club can now proceed with its plans to supply and install 10 state-of-the-art LED lights, while upgrading six existing light poles to allow the fitting of new LED lights for courts 5 and 6. Westside Tennis Club is a popular and well-used facility, which I visited recently to share the exciting news. The club is particularly proud of its strong and positive involvement in our community. They are led by president Penne Slaviero, secretary Kate Blackman, treasurer Robert Alford, committee members Lorraine Booth, Lesley Chouri and Ian Bensley, and complex manager Allan Pade. I wish them well as they continue to grow.

REBECCA WAUGH

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (18:00): I congratulate Rebecca Waugh, recognised as the 2021 Coogee Local Woman of the Year, who was given this award for her significant contributions to the Coogee Surf Life Saving Club, where she has given 30 years of service. Bec has tirelessly volunteered for years mentoring and training young people in the club, especially girls and young women as manager of the Minnows program, Coogee's Junior Surf Life Saving Club and now as the director of youth services. As manager of the Minnows program, she has built the largest number of participants and the highest retention rates in the State. Through her work with young people at the club, she has transformed the way in which youth interact with the club and has built a safe and inclusive space that promotes health and wellness. Bec is a valued member and role model at the Coogee Surf Life Saving. I congratulate Bec on receiving this award and thank her for all the work that she does in our community.

MOSMAN JUNIOR HOCKEY CLUB

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:01): I congratulate Mosman Junior Hockey Club, which was recently named as the Hockey NSW Community Club of the Year for 2020. The award recognises the club's excellent efforts to promote junior sport in our local community, while managing the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Established in 2009, the club now has over 200 boys and girls aged from 4 to 18 who play field and indoor hockey in competitive and development grades. Despite the challenges of COVID, the club was successful in launching a new program called Boomerang Play and Learn Hockey, intended for 4- to 12-year-olds to play in an easily accessible way. In the competitive ranks the club teams excelled, earning the North Area Hockey Most Improved Club award in local competitions for the second consecutive year. A record number of players also achieved recognition in New South Wales representative teams, squads, and academy selections, reflecting the strong standard of the club's teams. I acknowledge Mosman Junior Hockey Club convenor Mark Hewitt-Park for all his work. I congratulate the club and all of its players, members and volunteers on receiving this award.

NATALIE RANDALL

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (18:02): Tumut's Natalie Randall admits she has had to step out of her comfort zone many times in the past year as she continues to help her community to recover from devastating bushfires. In recognition of her dedication to the Snowy Valleys community, Ms Randall has recently been named as the Wagga Wagga electorate's Woman of the Year for 2021. Ms Randall has been on the board of Valmar and is chair of the Tumut Chamber of Commerce. She is also a founding member of Local Leading Ladies, a group that helps women in the Snowy Valleys Council area. More recently, the mother of three has been a strong advocate for the bushfire recovery in the Snowy Valleys and is a member of the council's bushfire recovery committee. In this role Ms Randall, a financial planner who runs her own business, has offered the perspective on what women and children have gone through in and after the bushfires. She did this at a particularly difficult time. I congratulate her on the award and thank her for her work for the community.

HYPRO PET FOODS

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:03): I update the House on my recent attendance to the premises of Hypro Pet Foods. When Hypro Pet Foods invited me to visit their premises in Hawkesbury recently, I was not sure what to expect. I was pleasantly impressed when I toured the factory and distribution operations. Hypro Pet Foods is a 100 per cent Australian-owned company that employs 75 people—many of them

Hawkesbury locals. It prides itself on manufacturing quality foods for champion pooches, working dogs and felines. Most of its products are stocked in regional Australia, with the ingredients locally sourced from Australian farmers. It was an honour to have met some of the team who have grown the business from humble beginnings. It was very interesting to hear about the history of the business and the path to its current success. I thank the team at Hypro Pet Foods for showcasing such a talented establishment

HUMAN APPEAL AUSTRALIA

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (18:04): Today I acknowledge Human Appeal Australia for holding a fantastic event recognising year 12 high achievers in the Muslim community. I thank Mr Bashar Al-Jamal, director of Human Appeal Australia, the staff, volunteers and everyone who is involved with the high achievers award. It was a fantastic evening a few weeks ago. The Grand Mufti was in attendance and many colleagues from Parliament. The purpose of the awards is to celebrate the outstanding achievements of students who attain an ATAR over 90. Human Appeal Australia empowers these students to become positive contributors in the community. Since the first Year 12 Muslim Achievement Awards were held in Melbourne in 2007, the organisation has expanded to accommodate an increasingly growing number of Muslim students across Australia. Congratulations to all our high achievers.

Community Recognition Notices

JIM KELLY

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I congratulate Mr Jim Kelly on being selected as the featured artist at the Bankstown Arts Centre with his exhibition entitled 'Lines and Landscapes'. Mr Kelly has been a longstanding member of the Bankstown Art Society, first joining in 1994. The Bankstown Art Society was founded in 1958 and is one of Sydney's oldest art societies. It has provided classes and workshops for aspiring artists of all ages for sixty-two years. Mr Kelly's artistic successes are testament to the potential opportunities provided by the community to embrace one's passions at any time in life. Mr Kelly discovered a talent for drawing at age 14, but it was not until after his retirement that he committed himself to art. his love of Australiana, its bush scenery and outback architecture has now been captured by his work. The initiative that Mr Kelly has displayed in pursuing his passions and enriching the artistic beauty of his community is admirable. I commend Jim for his work and I am excited to see what he creates for his next exhibition.

LYNETTE QUINN

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I would like to recognise Lynette Quinn for her longstanding commitment to volunteer work in her community. Ms Quinn is the longest serving Meals on Wheels worker in the Bankstown-Canterbury area, having spent forty-eight years delivering meals to vulnerable citizens in the area. During the COVID pandemic we came to value connection to those around us more so than ever. In these tough times, Lynn has been providing not simply meals to people but company as well. Lynn has a long history of service to her community beyond her work with Meals on Wheels. She was the long-time secretary of the ladies club at Immaculate Heart of Mary Sefton and previously worked as a netball administrator. In 2010, Lynn received an Order of Australia Medal for her service. Despite her many accolades, Lynn is not motivated by recognition and praise, instead volunteering purely for the sake of helping those around her. Lynn is a wonderful part of the community and her dedication to service for others is deeply admirable.

HEALTH SERVICES UNION

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)—I rise to offer my congratulations to the members of the Health Services Union who work in the public dental health system. Last week was Public Dental Health Week and the Health Services Union members continued to work throughout the Coronavirus pandemic making sure that those people in our communities who needed vital dental health work were able to have this work done uninterrupted. My thanks, and those of our communities goes out to these unsung heroes.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY – ONE STOP LOAN SERVICES.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—On 10 March, I was delighted to attend the International Women's Day Morning Tea at One-Stop Loan Services in Wentworthville to help raise funds for women and families fleeing domestic violence. This event was organised by the incredible Anusha Haran and her team. The company has been operating for 12 months now, helping people reach the right lender that suits them. The funds raised at the event reached an outstanding \$5,500.00. These funds went to women and families staying at Mount Druitt's House of Sakinah, a women's support centre that aims to support women in need. It was established in 2012, regularly conducting useful and innovative workshops, counselling referrals for women, assistance to refugees, seniors support programs and much more, emphasising the value that we are made stronger via the challenges faced. Once

again well done to Anusha and the organisers for a successful initiative on International Women's Day. Your contribution has helped women and families take a stronger step forward into the future they are fighting for.

MARYAM POPAL ZAHID, AFGHAN WOMEN ON THE MOVE

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—Maryam Popal Zahid is founder and director of Afghan Women on the Move, which works to create a safe platform for women as survivors of war and trauma. They gather and participate in arts and cultural programs outside of religious or political influences. With 18 years of experience working in the community sector, Maryam's work focuses on gender equality and women's rights. Maryam is also an emerging theatre writer and was the star of the play "The Good Woman", which explores oppression of Afghan women and questions their traditional roles. Maryam has successfully involved refugee women in arts and cultural programs. Recently, I joined Afghan Women on the Move at their High Tea on 13 March to celebrate International Women's Day and to acknowledge the exceptional contributions, achievements and commitment of Afghan Women in Australia. Throughout the event I was delighted to join other women to promote gender equity and equality, to raise awareness about women's health and to encourage Afghan women to be involved in our wider community. Maryam was instrumental in coordinating this event. A huge thank you to her and her team for the invitation and for working so hard to achieve women's rights and safety everywhere.

KAY DAVISON

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—Port Hacking resident Kay Davison recently celebrated 60 years of nursing. Beginning her training in 1960, Kay has spent her career caring for patients in the Sutherland Shire. Kay has worked in Sutherland Hospital's cardiac ward, high dependency unit and emergency department and has at various times held teaching and leadership positions. Having previously served as Night Assistant Director of Nursing, Kay has been in her current role as Night Duty Manager for more than 40 years. In 2013 she received the Premier's Award recognising her substantial contribution to nursing over many decades. I congratulate Kay Davison on this significant milestone in her career.

CRONULLA TRIATHLON CLUB

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—I acknowledge Cronulla Triathlon Club as a fantastic community organisation that provides an exciting and supportive environment for athletes of all ages and abilities. The Cronulla Tri Club, established in 1981, is the oldest triathlon club in Australia. It has nurtured multiple champions in the prestigious Hawaiian Ironman World Championships (Greg Welch OAM, Chris McCormack, Craig Alexander and Michellie Jones). The club holds races throughout the summer and winter season to allow their members to stay race-ready, as well as to foster community spirit. Cronulla Triathlon Club recently hosted its 35th Richie Walker Memorial Aquathlon [RWA]. Nearly 300 competitors took part in this year's event. All the profits from the RWA are donated to the Heart Foundation. To date the event has raised more than \$100,000. I congratulate Cronulla local and Triathlon NSW Development Squad member Nathan Breen on winning the 2021 race, with an impressive time of 29:56.

CELEBRATING MAITLAND AND DISTRICT CRICKET ASSOCIATION

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—I acknowledge the important work of the Maitland and District Cricket Association. For more than 125 years, this organisation has ensured the strength of local cricket in the Hunter Valley. The sport's strength in Maitland is due to the long-standing contributions of community members such as Peter Stace and Mark Warlands, who I thank for their part in Maitland's cricketing success. Last season the association had more than 2,000 registered participants. Regional cricket infrastructure is also set to improve with the refurbishment of the Robins Oval grandstand, thanks to investment from Maitland City Council and the Australian Cricket Infrastructure Fund. As a member of the Parliamentary Friends of Cricket Group, I have seen the valuable contribution the sport makes to regional economies. It brings \$5 million to Maitland each year. I am a proud patron of the Maitland District Cricket Umpires Association and would also like to take this opportunity to thank those umpires, coaches and support staff who make the game possible every week during our long, hot Australian summers.

EPILEPSY AWARENESS MONTH

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—March marks Epilepsy Awareness Month, a campaign started in 2008 by Epilepsy Australia. Their advocacy to Make March Purple is critical in helping to spread awareness and knowledge of the condition. Epilepsy is a neurological condition typified by recurrent seizures and occurs when the normal pattern of electrical impulses in the brain is disrupted. It is a disease that affects a quarter-of-a-million people in this country, and the second-most common neurological disease in Australia. Epilepsy can affect anyone – regardless of age, gender, or ethnicity. I offer my personal gratitude to the many groups across New South Wales fund-raising for the epilepsy charities across the state. As the Shadow Minister for Medical Research, I welcome

new advancements in the understanding of this disease, as they ensure better outcomes for patients suffering this condition. I thank the cornucopia of researchers across New South Wales who are dedicated to this issue, including the team at the Hunter Medical Research Institute.

CHRIS OHLBACK

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—With the next basketball season commencing imminently, the Central Coast Crusaders and coach Chris Ohlback are hoping to take out another title. After taking a step back in 2020 to take part in the coaching panel of the Youth League Men's team, Chris is back with the Central Coast Crusaders men's team and I want to send Chris and all players my best wishes ahead of the season beginning. 2020 was the first time that all four Crusaders teams qualified for the finals – with the Championship Women's and Youth League Men also making it to their respective grand finals. Members in this place would have heard me talk many times about the Central Coast Crusaders and the Breakers Indoor Sport Stadium, because I am their very proud patron. Again I would like to wish "Cru" good luck and extend my best wishes to all teams in the upcoming season.

CCAS LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I would like to acknowledge the three recipients of Life Membership Awards at the Central Coast Academy of Sport's 2020 annual awards night. Ian Robilliard, better known as 'Moose', founded the Academy 16 years ago, was acknowledged for his commitment and passion toward ensuring athletes, coaches and volunteers are positively impacted by the academy. Carolyn Kay has been involved with the Academy for over 15 years, specialising in marketing, promotion and business support networking as well as offering intricate knowledge of athlete pathways. Her dedication is evident through her attendance at events, Board meetings and Director's functions. Jan Mayfield has similarly been involved with the Academy for over 15 years, volunteering from the organisation's founding year in 2004. Jan is a quiet achiever always doing whatever was needed at the time and working behind the scenes. I want to congratulate everyone who provides sport development opportunities at the CCAS, and in particular pay tribute to the work of Ian, Carolyn and Jan.

INTERNATIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—They say that soccer is the world game – well it would be fair to say that those gathered at Waminda Oval in East Campbelltown recently would beg to differ. For several years the home ground of the mighty East Campbelltown Eagles Rugby League side has played host to international matches. On March 9, international league was again back at the ground when Peru and El Salvador met in the inaugural Sean Day Shield. It looked like the night would belong to the Peruvians when they headed into the sheds at half-time up 10-4. Things got from bad to worse when El Salvador's halfback, Oscar Mendoza, was sent to the sin bin. However, that only served to spark some like into the Mendoza and his teammates who ran out eventual winners, 18-10. One of the greatest characteristics of my electorate of Campbelltown is the diversity of residents. Events like the Sean Day Shield really show that. Well done to all the players, coaching staff, fans and organisers involved in the Sean Day Shield. It was not only a great game but also a great event for rugby league fans in Campbelltown.

APPIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—Once a small village, the town of Appin – located in between Campbelltown and Wollongong – is now a rapidly expanding town that has seen a surge in population. It's easy to see why it's a sought after destination too. Residents in Appin enjoy semi-rural living which is just a 20 minute drive from the stunning coast line of Wollongong. Small business in Appin, like in every other community, is the lifeblood of the community. And representing the needs is the Appin Chamber of Commerce. Recently I met with members of the chamber and I was extremely impressed with their foresight and passion. It is crystal clear the chamber to a tremendous job advocating for the town's businesses. It's so important to have likeminded individuals band together for a common cause which is the betterment of a community. And that is exactly what the members of Appin Chamber of Commerce have done. I look forward to getting back out to Appin soon and having a chat with local residents. Once again, well done Appin Chamber of Commerce – your hard work and dedication certainly has not gone unnoticed.

ALAN COWAN

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I commemorate and celebrate the life of Alan Cowan who was an integral member of the Manning Valley community. Alan was a man of great integrity and generosity who served our community through local government, as a former deputy mayor, a long-time member of the Taree chamber of commerce, the Apex and Rotary clubs, treasurer of the NSW National party and more. Alan started the accountancy firm now known as WLP Accountants in 1954, it was through this business that I first met Alan in 1981. Meeting Alan had a major impact on my life, as he was one of a few key people who encouraged

me to join the Nationals Party; which has ultimately lead to me being in the role I am today as Member for Myall Lakes. He's also been remembered as a great advocate for the indigenous community, most notably for helping the late Ella Simon establish the Gillawarra Gift shop which sold Aboriginal artefacts allowing the artistic work of local indigenous community to be recognised.

LARISSA COLLINS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I congratulate Old Bar resident, Larissa Collins on publishing her first children's book 'Be Brave Beatrice'. The mother of two has had a lifelong love of books, stemming from her parents owning a bookstore for the first seven years of her life. But it was only a few years ago that she set her sights on writing a book of her own. To kick start the project Larissa enrolled in a masterclass course at the Australian Writers Centre. The night her children's book assessment was due one of her daughters ended up in the emergency room with a serious bout of tonsillitis. It was here that inspiration struck for Larissa, deciding to base her children's book loosely around her daughter's experience. Once 'Be Brave Beatrice' was written there was still a long road ahead full of editing based on publishers feedback, but all Larissa's hard work has paid off with her book now available for purchase.

NEWROZ

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I wish to recognise Newroz or Kurdish New Year which was celebrated in this building in the Jubilee Room in an event held on 16 March. Speakers at the event included Mr Brusk Aeiveri, Ms Gulfer Olan and Ms Mira Ibrahim. The event featured traditional singing and dancing. Newroz is a time for new beginnings and for celebration. There have been comparatively few opportunities for celebration in Kurdish history. As the saying goes, the Kurds have no friends but the mountains. However Kurdish success in defeating Deash (as ISIS is known) in Rojava, in north and east Syria, is something worth celebrating. And the function heard that this year International Women's Day was celebrated in Raqqa. That new beginning should also certainly be welcomed. The Kurdish community certainly has a presence in Liverpool and several participants at the event were constituents of mine. They add positively to the strength and diversity of multicultural Liverpool.

PENPAL GIANTS PROGRAM

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I'm delighted to recognise the PenPal Giants program that has been co-designed with Liverpool Public School and St Peter Chanel Catholic Primary School. The program was born with an idea from Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre [MRC]. The program's primary objective aims to increase literacy in primary school aged children – that is in Years 2-6. The intention of the program is to connect participants from different schools through letter-writing, story-telling and quarterly meetups. The program additionally hopes to provide extra support for vulnerable children and families. As the MRC points out, primary-school aged children from refugee backgrounds often have gaps in education and schooling. Liverpool Public School has a significant base of children from refugee backgrounds. Collection and delivery of letters will be done by volunteers. The program was to have commenced in 2020 but was hindered by the pandemic. It is now commencing this month. The program is funded by Settlement Services International and seems to be a very positive initiative.

ARANI DUGGAN OF WINSTON HILLS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge Winston Hills resident, Arani Duggan, in being awarded CEO Magazine's Not-For-Profit Executive of the Year for 2020. As the head of marketing and fundraising at Ronald McDonald House Charities, Arani was recognised for the pivotal role she played in Ronald McDonald Houses' relocation in 2018. Amid the pandemic, last year, Arani is to be commended for demonstrating great leadership and courage in launching a virtual campaign entitled, 'Dance for Sick Kids', the success of which far exceeded all expectations having garnered international attention. Ronald McDonald House, based at Westmead, is a 24 hours-a-day, 365 days-a-year support network for over 2,100 families. The work of Arani and her team of seven ensured that access for Ronald McDonald House families to the Westmead facility could continue in 2020. Arani is to be recognised for her work and contribution to the happiness of individuals in our community.

SPOTLIGHT ON ALIVE 90.5FM

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—In late February I caught up with the Spotlight team at Alive 90.5FM. Darryn Capes-Davis, who serves as Deputy Chair of the station, and Jim Taggart OAM are terrific interviewers who are always looking for local content for listeners. Spotlight is a great half hour community radio program which seeks to interview local community leaders. Darryn and Jim discuss with the interviewee their career, what drives them to serve their community and touch on current topics across the Cumberland radio network through The Hills and Parramatta local government areas. I thank Darryn and Jim for having me on the

Spotlight program at Alive 90.5FM and for their continued efforts in ensuring locals have quality community radio to turn to for information and stories about our local area.

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY 2021

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—Every year on Clean Up Australia Day, tens of thousands of ordinary Australians from all over the country roll up their sleeves and get to work restoring and protecting our beautiful and unique natural environment. Between our extraordinary beaches, the shores of Lake Macquarie and large areas of local woodland, the Charlestown Electorate is an especially beautiful part of this beautiful country, and I would like to thank the many volunteers who attended Clean Up Australia events around the Electorate on Sunday 7 March. I spent some time with the volunteers at Lance York Oval in Garden Suburb. There was a big turnout, and I would like to thank organiser Gavin Ord for putting the event together. It was good to see a reduction in the amount of recyclables for collection, but there was still quite a lot of plastics and general waste - including a mag wheel and an old 600ml milk bottle! To those who weren't able to help out on the day, I urge you to still do your bit—keeping Australia clean is a job we can all do, all year 'round.

LINEN SERVICES CARDIFF

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—The workers at the Cardiff facility of Linen Services are among the many unsung heroes of the COVID-19 pandemic. These workers, along with their colleagues around the state, supply clinically safe linen to New South Wales hospitals—without this supply, without Linen Services ensuring that the correct type and quantity of linen is available, basic patient care would be nearly impossible. I toured the Cardiff facility recently, and the dedication and hard work of the workers is evident. Their commitment ensures that every item of linen meets strict quality standards and arrives in hospital wards and surgical theatres on time and as ordered. Without them, our hospitals would stop functioning—and the course of the COVID-19 pandemic might well have been different. Like many who work in our healthcare industry, their work is vital but rarely acknowledged. These workers, at Cardiff and around the state, deserve our recognition, our thanks and most of all our support.

GRANT AND DENISE HEARN

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—I would like to recognise Grant and Denise Hearn of Griffith for their unfailing support of cancer survivors over nearly two decades. Grant and Denise have been central to Relay for Life since its inception in Griffith in 2002, and have since raised close to a million dollars through tireless campaigning. The couple were motivated to their work after Grant supported Denise through her own battle with the disease. Experiencing first-hand the challenges of travelling from the country for treatment in Sydney, they have been strong advocates for regional facilities, so that cancer patients can receive therapy with the support of their communities. But for all their wonderful awareness-raising, perhaps Grant and Denise's most valuable contribution has been the most hidden. They go out of their way to check in on cancer patients, assisting with the challenges and logistics of the health system, or simply offering a friendly ear and the sympathy of their own experience. Grant and Denise Hearn have touched so many lives, and I thank them on behalf of Griffith for their devotion and commitment.

NSW INDO-CHINA CHINESE ASSOCIATION LUNAR NEW YEAR

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I would like to take this opportunity to wish the NSW Indo-China Chinese Association [ICCA] a very happy Lunar New Year in the Year of the Ox. The ICCA's Lunar New Year event was a celebration of Indo-China Chinese heritage and tradition through music, song, dance and colourful costumes. The event was very successful and held in a COVID safe manner. I take this opportunity to congratulate all performers for showcasing their talents throughout the evening. The dinner was also a welcome back to service for the community following the previous year's absence of cultural activity due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Tien Hau Temple is an integral part of the ICCA in its preservation of culture and heritage. I was honoured to have witnessed the unveiling of the 2021 scroll of health and prosperity at the event. The scroll was written in traditional calligraphy and is a constant reminder of the rich heritage of the Indo-China Chinese community in Fairfield. I thank ICCA President Mr Henry Wu, Committee Member Mr To Ha Huynh (Mr Chiu) and volunteers for hosting the 2021 Lunar New Year celebration.

RITZ CAFE FAIRFIELD

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—An iconic store in Fairfield, the Ritz Cafe is located on Ware Street, Fairfield. Mr Louis and Mrs Anastasia (Tess) Tsioutsias, opened their business thirty five years ago. The Ritz Cafe began as a kiosk and later relocated to the present premises due to its popularity and growing clientele. The Ritz Cafe serves hamburgers, salads, gourmet sandwiches, sweets and much more, always served with a smile and a chat. Tess is a true local, having lived in Fairfield since she migrated to Australia fifty two years ago. Louis and Tess were extremely grateful for their customers during the COVID-19 pandemic. They expressed their

gratitude for those who ordered take-away which allowed the Cafe to sustain business throughout the lockdown. I commend them for their efforts throughout this time in adapting their business model to keep their business thriving.

VALE LAUREL HARRIS

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains)—I rise to acknowledge the life of Laurel Harris, a long-time local Labor Branch Member. Laurel lived in the Blue Mountains since 1992. Prior to retiring, she was an Associate Dean in the Faculty of Nursing at Sydney University. Laurel and Norm dedicated their lives to environmental causes, and were key members of Gordon Falls Bushcare - often found weeding, planting and mowing the reserve, much to the delight of other Leura residents. Visitors to the site will note the mountain giants—Eucalyptus Oriades or Mountains Ash forests. They dominated much of the Katoomba-Leura area, but unfortunately only remnants now remain. Laurel's planting of the Oriades is a significant contribution to their sustainability. Laurel had been declining with dementia over the last decade. Her gorgeous husband Norm cared for Laurel over the last few months, himself struggling with a cancer diagnosis. Both Laurel and Norman have contributed much to the community and the Party. Laurel was a delightful person and thoroughly deserved the devotion and attentiveness Norm provided her. Rest in peace, wonderful woman.

WAYNE GEALE

Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Former Wagga Wagga mayor Wayne Geale will be remembered for his life-long dedication to the community. Mr Geale, who recently passed away at the age of 71, was committed to the Scouting movement from a young age, was a board member of the Riverina Conservatorium of Music and was a former leader in regional media. Mr Geale joined the Scouts as a cub, embarking on a lifetime of service including leadership positions at both regional and national level which saw him given life membership of the association. Mr Geale, along with his brothers Kerry and Barry, was part of the first set of triplets to be given the Queen's Scouts Award. His dedication to scouting saw him awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2005. Mr Geale served as mayor of Wagga Wagga from 2010 to 2011. In addition to his voluntary community roles, Mr Geale was general manager and later chief executive officer of the Riverina Media Group. The company owned a number of regional newspapers including The Wagga Daily Advertiser until the group was sold to Rural Press in 2007. I extend my sympathies to Mr Geale's wife Barbara, their sons and family.

PUBLIC DENTAL RECOGNITION WEEK

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—Today I would like to highlight Public Health Dental Recognition week, held from the 8th March and recognise the hard working dentists and support staff we have within our public dental practice at Tweed Hospital. We are fortunate to have almost 30 staff providing oral health support at the Tweed Clinic. These amazing staff continued to provide their services during the pandemic to ensure no-one in the community went without vital oral health services. Oral health is sometimes seen as an optional extra but it is possible to fit caring for your teeth and gums into any busy lifestyle. Thank you to each and every one of the dentists, dental assistants and support staff that provide support to the Tweed community.

LEOPARD LADIES

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Recently, the Leopard Ladies made a very generous donation of \$1,000 to Fire and Rescue NSW to assist in the purchase of specialised smoke alarms for residents who are deaf or hard of hearing. The origin of the Leopard Ladies started out with a group of friends who would meet up for lunch to celebrate their respective birthdays. Eventually, they decided that instead of buying each other presents they would raise money for causes or individuals who need a hand. Once a month, this group of 20 friends meet up for lunch in their leopard print clothes and raise money through different means. In the 10 or so years since the Leopard Ladies formed, they have raised approximately \$85,000 for the community, along with other in-kind donations. The ladies include: Louise L, Doreen B, Diane B, Diane E, Toni S, Beth D, Denise D, Joan D, Sheila S, Vicki T, Sophie L, Pam R, Clare M, Barbara B, Robyn G, Kaye F, Kim S, Sandra P, Sue Q, Susie T. Thank you to the Leopard Ladies for this generous donation and their continuing support of the community.

PAT MCMAHON

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—60 years' service to any organisation is remarkable. Lambton's Pat McMahon has dedicated 60 years of her life to the Lambton-New Lambton RSL Sub Branch Women's Auxiliary. She joined the Auxiliary in 1960 and eventually served as Secretary for 15 years, followed by a stint as President for 35 years. The Auxiliary recently celebrated their 80th year and Pat was very surprised to be honoured for her time with the organisation. Over the years, she has also dedicated her time to serving the community through her work with the aged, the War Widows Association, the former New Lambton RSL Club, New Lambton Chamber of Commerce, One to One, New Lambton Community Centre, Lambton Park Bowling Club, Lambton Park Ladies Bowling Club, Central Newcastle Swimming Club, Lioness Club of Lambton-New Lambton, Our Time Ladies

and Adamstown Probus. Pat is held in high regard by many for her tireless work ethic and attitude. She is a humble person who just likes to get on with things and has no plans to end her work anytime soon. Thank you for your dedication and lifelong service to the community.

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield)—I bring to the attention of the House a day of great significance for our Greek Australian community, the 200th anniversary of Greek Independence on Thursday 25th March 2021. The Greek people's struggle for independence proved that a small nation could win its self-determination from an empire. As we reflect on the founding of a new independent nation in 1821, we also recognise the contribution of our Greek Australian community. Australia is home to one of the largest Greek diaspora in the world. Many Greek migrants call New South Wales home and the Greek Australian community is an integral and important part of the fabric of our nation. They have blazed a trail wherever they have gone. Modern Australia would be unrecognisable without them. This is a day of enormous pride for Greek Australians and for the Greek people across the world. I extend my best wishes and that of the NSW Labor Party to all Greek Australians and the people of Greece on this important and historic day.

KOGARAH WOMAN OF THE YEAR 2021

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—Congratulations to Dianne Cameron, Kogarah's Woman of the Year 2021. Dianne has been volunteering with the Salvation Army for most of her life. Dianne's parents were Salvation Army Officers and through their guidance, Dianne learnt very early the importance of helping other people and serving her community. Dianne has volunteered in the local area and her local church, Hurstville Corps, for decades. In 2014, Dianne became the Manager of Hurstville Community Centre and Narwee Community Centre. This role comprised a variety of responsibilities including helping to prepare community meals and looking out for the physical and spiritual needs of those in need, especially those affected by homelessness, single parent families and other areas of vulnerability. Dianne organises the collection of food and toys ready to distribute to those in need at Christmas time. In 2019, Dianne had to relinquish her role as Manager when she had a severe stroke, but it didn't stop her from volunteering and she continued to support others in every way she could. Dianne is a strong willed and compassionate woman who is dedicated to helping others and it was a privilege to present this award to her. Congratulations Dianne.

KOGARAH COMMUNITY SERVICES AGED CARE STAFF

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—I would like to acknowledge an outstanding local aged care provider in my electorate. Kogarah Community Services provides in home care services to local residents, and a constituent recently came to me to share the outstanding care his mother, Joan, has been receiving from KCS. Mariana Dedich has been working for Kogarah Community Services for the past six months and has had quite an impact in that short time. Mariana visits Joan twice a week and helps with care tasks and tidying up before sitting with Joan while she plays the piano. I am told Joan is a classical pianist who still plays beautifully, and Mariana making the time to ensure Joan can play a few times a week makes her, and her son, feel valued and special. Thank you to Mariana, and to all aged care workers in the Kogarah electorate for their outstanding care services and thank you to Shelley Ross, the Executive Officer and Trinidad Montalvo, the Senior Coordinator of Aged Care at Kogarah Community Services for ensuring high quality, local based care is available for the elderly in our community.

LIVERPOOL HOSPITAL VACCINE ROLL OUT

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—I'd like to recognise all of our incredible health workers at Liverpool Hospital who have been administering the COVID-19 vaccine. I had the pleasure of meeting some of these healthcare workers at the hospital, along with the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian MP, New South Wales Premier, on 25 February. They are doing a fantastic job, and so far have already vaccinated over 5,000 people. It's great to have the vaccine roll out happening so that we can keep New South Wales safe. At the moment the vaccine roll out is focusing on frontline quarantine and health care workers who have the greatest risk. Liverpool Hospital is one of just three hospitals in the State that had the capacity to store and administer the vaccine. I commend all the workers at the hospital for stepping up during this time and ensuring that our community is kept safe. Once again I would like to thank the healthcare workers at Liverpool Hospital for all of their hard work in starting the vaccine roll out and also I thank the Premier for coming out to visit.

TURBANS 4 AUSTRALIA

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—I acknowledge Turbans 4 Australia for being successful recipients of funding through the 2020/21 Multicultural Community COVID Support Grants Program. Turbans 4 Australia's program is called Community Voices, and will be a combined initiative with Rainbow Inc. The program will prepare multilingual videos that involve local members of the community to spread education and awareness. Some topics that they want to cover in these videos include COVID safety guidelines, domestic

violence, awareness videos for newly arrived migrants and so on. This is a fantastic initiative and I commend Turbans 4 Australia for all of the hard work they do for our multicultural community, as this program will go a long way in supporting our multicultural members of society. Once again, I congratulate Turbans 4 Australia for being successful in receiving this funding and for creating such an important initiative for the Holsworthy electorate and across the State. Thank you.

NISIBIS ASSYRIAN THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—I had the pleasure to attend the opening of Nisibis Assyrian Theological College on Saturday 28th February 2021. The vision for the college is to move the cultural, intellectual and spiritual heritage of the Assyrian Church of the East to the wider community. The college will provide a tertiary education and training for members of the clergy as well as the laity of the Assyrian Church and to all Christians to help spread the knowledge of the Assyrian Church. The College will also welcome a cross denominational mix of teachers so that its students can learn from a wide variety of leaders. I would like to thank His Grace Mar Benyamin Elya, College Principal for his work in founder this institution, as well as Professor Matthew Del Nevo and Sub-Deacon Esho Dinkha for helping to make this new college a reality. I would also like to thank His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia AM for blessing us with his presence and becoming the inaugural Chair of the College Board. "God Grant knowledge, to the one who loves knowledge. And the Master who teaches excellently, make him great in Your kingdom."

ST GERTRUDE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL SMITHFIELD

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Tuesday March 2nd, I visited the staff and students at St Gertrude's Catholic Primary School, Smithfield. The school is going through an exciting period of change with current Principal Linda O'Regan moving on to a new role after serving for six years at the School. I thank and congratulate Linda for her dedication to St Gertrude's and wish her well for the new chapter of her career. The new Principal, Linda Katsibras, commenced in March 2021 and from my early conversations with her and the staff, it is clear that she has an exciting vision for the school. St Gertrude's provides an opportunity for students to celebrate and grow with their Catholic faith. The Religious Education curriculum allows students to gain a deeper understanding of their Catholic values and traditions, recognising God in their lives and the lives of others. St Gertrude's is a vibrant place, with a high level of energy amongst the students. I was particularly impressed with the vision the staff had for how students use space, including new plans to develop the Library facilities with a break out area for students.

IRENE HATZIPETROS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—I congratulate Ms Irene Hatzipetros on her appointment as the new Chairwoman for the St George Football Association ahead of the upcoming season. Ms Hatzipetros is the first female to be elected as Chair since the establishment of the Association. The St George Football Association is the main governing body for Football and Futsal teams in the area, representing 23 clubs and 9500 players. As Chair, Ms Hatzipetros has expressed her concerns and plans to further grow female participation rates in the sport. The story of women's Football in this country is the greatest growth story in Australian sport. Over 20% of all participants in the game are female and this trend is soaring upwards. I strongly encourage and support Ms Hatzipetros in her quest to further motivate young girls and women to participate in the great game of Football. I look forward to working with Ms Hatzipetros in continuing my ongoing support for the Association and the local soccer clubs in the Oatley electorate, and congratulate her again on her historic appointment.

LOCAL HEALTH WORKERS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—I acknowledge the work of local health workers in the vaccine roll out. The Newcastle COVID-19 vaccination hub at the John Hunter Hospital opened on 15 March with staff from intensive care units, emergency departments, COVID wards and swabbing clinics, the first to be vaccinated. Local GPs will begin administering the jab on March 22. It was pleasing to see frontline health workers from Belmont Hospital receive the COVID-19 jab in late February, although they had to travel to Sydney. Belmont Hospital staff have done a fantastic job during this pandemic establishing a drive through testing centre. I would like to thank all the local frontline workers who have played a pivotal role in helping our community during this pandemic, along with extending my gratitude to all the local health workers who will administer the vaccine in the months ahead.

SURF LIFESAVING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—Today I congratulate everyone involved in organising the 2021 NSW Surf Lifesaving Championships, which required a herculean effort to bring the event into line with COVID restrictions. The championships had to be held over four weekends and across two beaches in order to adhere to attendance limits. Before the championships draw to a close this weekend, I would like to acknowledge

Swansea-Belmont Surf Lifesaving Club – especially President and Championships Organising Committee Chief Graham Burge – for hosting the event for the past five years. I also thank Redhead Surf Life Saving Club for hosting the beach events and NSW Surf Lifesaving for leading the charge. And I acknowledge the efforts the 100-strong volunteer workforce, many of whom worked from dawn until dusk to ensure the championships ran smoothly. Finally, I congratulate the many winners from my electorate – including Swansea-Belmont for coming third overall in the Open Champions. They are too many to name but I am very proud to be the local member for an electorate with so much surf lifesaving talent.

ELVIO MUNZONE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Today I would like to recognise a dear friend and an inspiration to the local community, Elvio Munzone. Elvio has been a member of the Lions Club for over 31 years and in this time he has served as President, Secretary, Treasurer and pretty much every other position that the organisation has to offer. He is also a well decorated member with a number of awards including the International President's Star Award and three International Presidents Medals. Elvio is an icon of the Lions Club throughout Australia and he is always more than happy to organise events and activities to connect members and bring everyone together. Last year I had the honour of presenting him with an Individual Award as part of the St George Community Awards. These awards honour a number of hard working individuals' and groups across the region who go above and beyond to make our community even better. Well done Elvio, I wish you all the best for the year ahead and I hope that you continue your role within the Lions Club for many more years to come.

PINK FISHING DAY

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I wish to recognise the NSW Department of Primary Industries Fishcare Volunteer Program and the McGrath Foundation on a wonderful joint initiative, hosting the Pink Fishing Day at Lions Park in Forbes on Monday 15th March 2021. Pink Fishing Day is an initiative which brought together 12 local women who are presently undergoing treatment for breast cancer, to learn how to fly fish, which is a peaceful, relaxing and enjoyable traditional outdoors activity. This exercise provides physical therapeutic benefits for their health condition, helping to reduce the side effects following medical treatment or surgery. I wish to thank those who hosted the event, and provided equipment and fly fishing instruction for the participants. I wish to acknowledge the ladies who participated in this event, whom each have faced, and continue to bravely face, significant health challenges. Pink Fishing Day is a fantastic initiative, providing broad social, psychological and physical benefits to the participants; developing sporting skill and technique, social interaction and exercise in the great outdoors. Congratulations to all who were involved and well wishes to ladies who participated, and hoping fly fishing brings them all joy, long into the future.

SPEAKER VISIT TO ROUSE HILL

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I recently had the pleasure of welcoming the Speaker of the House, Jonathan O'Dea, to my Electorate Office in Rouse Hill. This is a part of the Speaker's tour around electorate offices along the length and breadth of the State. I was interested to hear the improvements that are currently underway within the parliamentary bureaucracy, and note the opportunities that the Department of Parliamentary Services are providing staff across the Parliament. Ultimately, these sorts of visits are important in enabling me and my staff to best assist my constituency, by ensuring my office runs smoothly behind the scenes. I thank the Speaker for taking the time to visit.

PARRAMATTA EELS KELLYVILLE CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I recently had the pleasure of having a tour around the new Parramatta Eels Training Facility located in Kellyville. It is an incredible state of the art facility that will soon have 5 full sized training fields that will support training for the youngest league players, all the way up to the elite level. I was particularly happy to hear how the facility will benefit the wider community, with grassroots sport also having the opportunity to use the grounds. As well as this, the facility will have a keen focus on women's sports, and will recognise the need to grow this particular area of the game. Ultimately the decision to invest \$40 million into these premises is testament to the opportunities that this Government has opened in Western Sydney and the Hills, with many companies choosing to invest in this growing part of Sydney. I'd particularly like to thank Joshua Drayton and Jim Santonios who accompanied me on the day and congratulate them on their part in creating this wonderful facility.

HEATHCOTE LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—I wish to congratulate the extremely deserving recipient of the 2021 Heathcote Local Woman of the Year, Eliza Clark. Mrs Clark realised there was a need for greater support for local mums especially during the COVID-19 lockdown. This drove her to start "Engadine/Heathcote & Surrounds New Mum Village" to create a space for mums and their bubs, newborns or babies up to 12 months

old to interact and gain support. The group has 300 members and is growing daily. I commend Mrs Clark's hard work and wish to recognise the significant impact she has on our local community. Her kindness and generosity ripples through the community like a pebble thrown into a pond.

MARCH4JUSTICE

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I wish to put on record my appreciation for the organisers and participants of the Women's March 4 Justice on 15 March 2021. March 4 Justice brought demonstrators together across Australia, calling for our leaders to be held accountable, demanding an end to violence against women and for systemic change to stamp out sexism and misogyny within our parliamentary systems, workplace cultures and broader society. I was proud to join thousands of determined people who attended the rally at Sydney Town Hall. I stood with activists, workers, students, retirees; people who were new to the cause and people who have fought for women's equality for decades. United together, this diverse crowd raised their collective voice to say "Enough is Enough". Speakers talked of the importance of listening, believing and supporting victim-survivors as critical to addressing gendered violence in our society. I thank the Women's March 4 Justice for mobilising the people of Sydney and Australia and demonstrating that urgent change is necessary to create a culture where women are safe and treated respectfully as equal human beings.

WOMEN'S ELECTORAL LOBBY

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I acknowledge the dedicated work and advocacy of the Women's Electoral Lobby [WEL]. Since 1972, WEL has been a powerful advocate for women in policy development, law reform and community education. WEL's focus on anti-discrimination and equal opportunities for women has contributed to vital reforms to address domestic violence, sexual harassment and rape, and workplace discrimination. I witnessed firsthand the instrumental role WEL played during the campaign for abortion law reform. WEL brought health, welfare, community, legal and medical professionals together to provide a common voice for reform, plus support and advice to members wanting to be advocates. Since this win, WEL has worked on the over-representation of women experiencing unemployment, homelessness and poverty, and to women's safety in the workplace, educational institutions and the home. WEL supports women in leadership and public office, where more equal gender representation will improve governance and change cultures. We've been reminded again that equality, justice and safety remain something to fight for and I thank the Women's Electoral Lobby for nearly 40 years relentlessly fighting for women's equality and helping to create a better, safer society for all.

PASSING OF AN ICON

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)—The South Coast is less for the loss of an absolute icon with the passing of Reg Wood this month – stalwart of the Surf Life Saving organisation and the community of Sussex Inlet. Reg had just clicked over his 68th year with Surf Life Saving, first joining Avalon as an 18 year old and on moving to Sussex Inlet in 1989, he joined the local club – he was awarded Life Membership of both such was the esteem he was held. Over the years Reg was integral in the local club graduating from a shipping container to a clubhouse to call home. He was an active member, trainer and examiner, at all levels held positions with South Coast Branch and NSW Surf Lifesaving – a legend with this volunteer organisation. In the words of Steve Jones, President of South Coast Branch Surf Lifesaving 'Reg was a man who gave 68 valuable years of community service, gave his knowledge, skills and friendship to many in the Surf Life Saving movement. Reg was well known for his tenacious commitment and enthusiasm to anyone who had an interest in learning and being part of that wonderful organisation.'

ALYSSA DUNCAN – HEYWIRE WINNER

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise Moree's Alyssa Duncan, who was one of 35 young regional Australians recognised in the 2021 ABC Heywire storytelling competition. Alyssa shared her story of being subject to racism as an Indigenous kid and how she is a proud Kamilaroi young woman and past school captain at Moree Secondary College. Each year the ABC Heywire competition celebrates the stories and ideas of young regional Australians. Since 1998, Heywire has become an influential platform for rural youth to share their stories and make a difference in their communities. Alyssa's entry 'Racism is real, but I won't let it drag my brothers and me down' is also setting an example for her younger siblings. I congratulate Alyssa for 'telling it like it is' and entering her story. Well done!

PETER CADDEY–INVERELL VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise Peter Caddey, the Manager of the Inverell Visitor Information Centre, who has been instrumental in making the Visitor Information Centre truly 'the heart of the city' with its riverside restaurant/function centre and outdoor café within the spectacular gardens. On a hot day it is a real pleasure to

enter the spacious information centre, to be greeted at the reception guest and enjoy one of the most interesting displays of blue sapphires and other gems, local produce and craft, and an historical photography display that captures the imagination of times past. I congratulate Peter and his team for not only keeping the high standard of the Inverell Visitor Information Centre but also enhancing its presentation. I commend Peter for his dedication to his community through his service and leadership skills at the Inverell Visitor Information Centre.

BROKEN HILL HERITAGE WALK TOUR GUIDES

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—The Broken Hill Heritage Walk Tour is one of the ways that tourists can experience the heritage buildings and understand the rich mining history that is synonymous with the city. This free service is run entirely by volunteers; seven local people with an extensive knowledge and passion for Broken Hill. The volunteer group re-started the Heritage Walk program in 2017 and have since raised \$8,000 from tourist donations. They recently decided to donate \$2,000.00 to four worthy causes. The Far West Local Health District's Palliative Care Unit, Silverlea Early Childhood Services, Bishop Fox Memorial Meal Centre and RSPCA Broken Hill were the recipients of these funds. I extend my congratulations to the Heritage Walk Tour Volunteers, for sharing your knowledge and passion for Broken Hill and thank you for your commitment to promoting tourism.

AMANDA CHEAL – BARWON WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—Amanda Cheal is a champion of young people, so it comes as no surprise the positive effects she has had on the youth of Walgett since starting with the Walgett PCYC in 2014. Amanda has been the driving force behind ensuring the Walgett PCYC receives funding to enable them to get out of a demountable building and into a purpose built facility. The love Amanda has for the youth of Walgett is life changing for many. Amanda along with the PCYC guide the kids into pathways that lead to a better future. As a result Amanda and the team at the PCYC's constant dedication there has been a decline in police – youth reportable interactions in Walgett. Amanda shows individuals that can make a large difference in communities and the lives of young people. During every visit I've made to the PCYC at Walgett I have seen first-hand young people who are comfortable and confident in the company of the adults around them be it a didgeridoo making, aboriginal dance class or just chilling out. Amanda is a dynamo exhibiting dedication leadership. She is great example of the leadership demonstrated by women across Barwon.

MAX BRISTOW

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—For some people, age really is no barrier to accomplishing amazing feats of fitness and strength. 77-year-old Max Baristow of Blackalls Park is one such person. For more than 60 years, Max has competed in power-lifting championships around the world and during that time has secured an impressive 24 world records. Incredibly, four of those records still stand. Throughout his life-long dedication to weight and power-lifting, Max has never let illness nor injury deter him from competing in the sport. Five years ago, Max had both a hip replacement and triple bypass, yet was competing again within weeks of these surgeries. More recently he contracted COVID-19 and survived. Max's unrelenting dedication to power-lifting has seen him qualify as a finalist in the Lake Macquarie Sports Awards for 24 years straight, winning the Masters section six times. I congratulate Max on all he has achieved during his noteworthy power-lifting career. Well done.

LESLIE ERNEST FIELDING

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I'd like to pay tribute to Les Fielding from Toronto who passed away recently and extend my sympathy to his wife Marcia, sons Brian and Michael, daughters-in-law Michelle and Saretta, and his grandchildren Jasmin, Levi and Jaxon. Les was devoted to his family. As a young man he met Marcia and they spent many happy decades together, building a life and raising a family. He excelled in sport, particularly rugby union and lawn bowls. Les served with distinction in Malaysia and South Vietnam. He also served as an instructor at the School of Infantry at Singleton. He was admired and respected by all who served with him for his outstanding professionalism, leadership and devotion to duty, particularly during his active service in Eight Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment in South Vietnam. Les was an outstanding Infantry soldier who led by example and set high standards for others. His army career saw him reach the rank of Sergeant Major. Photographs of Les helping to evacuate and tending to his wounded comrades in the Phuoc Tuy Province during Operation Atherton can be found in the Australian War Memorial's online collection. Vale Les Fielding.

WOODSTOCK COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I was delighted to see the inaugural edition of the Woodstock Community Newsletter pop into my inbox recently and I take this opportunity to congratulate the Woodstock & District Progress Association on such a great initiative. It takes a huge amount of work to nurture a strong sense of community in our villages, and a large part of that is knowing what is going on and celebrating local achievements – a quarterly Community Newsletter is certainly a great way to do this, with the added benefit of

helping other local businesses and organisations extend their profile too. I am constantly inspired by the events, projects and publications our village communities initiate to show just how proud they are to live where they do! Well done Woodstock!

CLEAN-UP AUSTRALIA DAY

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—Clean Up Australia Day, which was held on March 7, is the nation's largest community-based environmental event. This year, Clean-Up Australia encouraged children and young people to participate with School Clean Up Day and Youth Clean-up Day, which are great opportunities for teaching children about the impact of rubbish on their local environment. It also encourages them to take on an active role in their community. I am very pleased that so many schools in my electorate agreed to participate including:

Wilton Public School
Bright Sparks Early Learning
St Anthony's Picton
Yanderra Public School
Douglas Park Public School
Appin Public School
The Oaks Public School
Camp Australia Bowral Public School

I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of local youth organisations that also participated including:

- 1st Appin Scouts
- Bowral High School
- Chevalier College
- Mittagong District Girl Guides

Thank you to all involved. The Wollondilly Electorate is an even more beautiful place because of your efforts.

WILLIAM HOLLIDAY

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House a formidable local advocate, William Holliday – known as Bill - for his enormous contributions to the Balmain Electorate. Bill has lived in our community for over 50 years. He has been a strong voice against excessive car dependency and destructive expressways and an ongoing champion for public and active transport. You'd be pressed to see him out on the street without his bicycle. Bill was arrested with others at the 1974 Fig Street Ultimo demonstration which stopped the Western and North Western Expressways and in 2016 he occupied dwellings in Haberfield in an attempt to stop the M4 East and was arrested twice. For the last five years Bill has been my representative on the Inner West Council and City of Sydney traffic committees and has advocated for safe road management, prioritising of greener transport options and more amenable local parking. It's not an easy feat to examine traffic issues with the care, consideration and detail that Bill brings to every matter. I thank Bill for his tireless efforts. Our community is lucky to have someone so committed to making our local area a better place to live.

CLEAN UP INNER WEST DAY

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—5 March was Clean Up Inner West Day, led by Inner West Council. Across the inner west, kids, families and local volunteers rolled up their sleeves to help protect our precious biodiversity, parks, streets and waterways. Over 60 bags of rubbish were collected by inner west volunteers on the day from over 20 different sites across the inner west. In Ashfield, Bethlehem College students spent the weekend cleaning up Richard Murden Reserve, while the Ekushe Academy and Guardian Childcare both picked up rubbish in Ashfield Park. In Marrickville, the Warren Neighbourhood Group focused on cleaning up Mackey Park and Paddle NSW cleaned up Ewen Park by the Cooks River. I also acknowledge My Stepping Stones Early Childhood Learning Centre in Haberfield, Ferncourt Public School, Marrickville Public School, Summer Hill Public School, Fort Street High School, Christian Brothers Lewisham, for helping keep their school communities rubbish free. Thank you to all the inner westies who participated and gave up part of their weekend to help protect our natural environment. A special thank you to local inner west environmental groups including the Mudcrabs, Cooks River Alliance, and Friends of Ewen Park.

MARCH 4 JUSTICE

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—On 15 March, over 100,000 women and allies marched across the country in a powerful demonstration of support for survivors of sexual assault and harassment. They rallied together to say enough is enough, spurred by the powerful stories of survivors and activists including Brittany Higgins and Australian of the Year, Grace Tame. I joined the thousands of feminists at Town Hall in their call to end violence against women in their workplaces, homes, universities, and in the halls of power in Government. 1 in 5 women experiences sexual assault in their lifetime. The ACTU notes 64% of women report being sexually harassed and assaulted in their workplace. This is an issue that effects every workplace, including here in New South Wales Parliament. Our Parliaments must be safe, especially for the young women who come to work here every day to make a difference. All leaders, particularly elected representatives from across the political spectrum have a responsibility to listen to survivors and take steps now to strengthening reporting mechanisms and work health and safety policies. Thank you to March4Justice, feminist organisations, trade unions, and the thousands of inner westies who attended the rally. I stand with you.

BONDI 2 BLUE MOUNTAINS

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—On Tuesday 9 March I had the privilege of being at the finish line and presenting awards to the fantastic riders from the first ever Bondi 2 Blue Mountains, a charity bike ride which raises both awareness and funds for Dementia Australia. Across four days, the riders cycled for 650km, travelling from Bondi to Katoomba on the first day, then to Goulburn on the second day, from Goulburn to Kiama on the third day, and then back to Sydney on the final day. Between these truly impressive sections of their journey, they also visited a number of schools to talk to students about both dementia and bike safety. Between this Bondi 2 Blue Mountains ride, and the Bondi 2 Berry ride that took place at the end of last year, this wonderful group raised over \$175,000 to go towards research for a cure for Dementia. On behalf of our community, I would like to extend my gratitude to all involved for their tremendous efforts.

ST PATRICK'S DAY

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—Happy St Patrick's Day to all of the wonderful Coogee constituents and to people across New South Wales, on what is truly the most important day of the year in the Irish calendar. It is a celebration of Irish history and culture and is widely celebrated by Irish diaspora all across the world. The electorate of Coogee is home to the largest number of people either born in Ireland, or of Irish descent in all of Australia. I'm sure with the last name O'Neill you won't be surprised to find out that this includes me and my family as well. Our Irish community has so much to be proud of, including from over the last few years. When bushfires were raging across regional New South Wales and much of the state was in drought, the Irish community banded together to cart over 90 trucks of water and other supplies out to Armidale. So, to our wonderful Irish community both in Coogee and across New South Wales I hope you had a fantastic St Patrick's Day with family and friends.

MIRANDA CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge Miranda Congregational Church who are the successful recipients of \$12,998 from the New South Wales Government's 2020 Community Building Partnership Program. Miranda Congregational Church is home to families across the Sutherland Shire who come together to worship, sharing in both faith and friendship. The church holds a number of gatherings across the week, accommodating their intergenerational congregation including youth groups, study groups and a number of services every Sunday. The funding will enable the installation of a new security and fire detection system which will enhance existing facilities and improve safety for the church community. I commend the project team consisting of Pastors Heath Smith and Jeremy Hodson, Treasurer Ray Kehoe, Secretary Craig Pring, Project Manager Craig Fitzpatrick, Facilities Coordinator Michael Gledson and Administrative Assistant Kim Hunt. I also commend the leadership team at Miranda Congregational Church, namely Kathleen Banner, Kimberley Fitzpatrick, James Follent, Hilaire Fraser, Nerelle Fraser, Ben Smit-Colbran and Robert Turner. I thank Miranda Congregational Church for bringing the importance of this project to my attention.

SUTHERLAND HOSPITAL NEW NURSES AND MIDWIVES

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I commend the 17 new graduate nurses and midwives who are launching their careers and joining the team at Sutherland Hospital. The new recruits join more than 2,500 graduate nurses and midwives who started work from mid-February in approximately 130 public hospitals and health services. The new recruits will be exceptional additions to the outstanding Sutherland Hospital team as they care for our local patients and their families. I was delighted to welcome the new graduates to Sutherland Hospital on 8 March 2021 and was pleased to see that so many of them will be supporting our local community which they already call home. I especially acknowledge Miranda electorate constituents Hannah Rhodes and

Tamara Latham, who will be providing expert care to our local community as newly registered nurses. Our nurses and midwives are immensely valued for their crucial work. More than 54,000 nurses and midwives currently work in the New South Wales public health system which has seen an incredible increase of 24.7 per cent since 2011. I congratulate the new nursing and midwifery graduates and thank them for the care they will provide to our community at Sutherland Hospital.

FAREWELL TO MR HOBBS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I sadly inform this place that the beloved Taronga Zoo Sun Bear, Mr Hobbs, passed away earlier this year. In 1995, a tiny black sun bear was trapped in a cage in Cambodia, destined for death. An Australian businessman, John Stephens, rescued Mr Hobbs from a Cambodian restaurant and joined with 'Free The Bears' Director Dr Mary Hutton, to rescue and relocate three sun bears to Australia. Arrangements were made and in 1997 the three bears, Mr Hobbs, Victoria, and Lucille, were unveiled at Taronga Zoo. Mr Hobbs had spent the last 24 years melting the hearts of his visitors and zookeepers. With all the fanfare surrounding their arrival, 'Free The Bears' was plucked from obscurity and received a large amount of donations. This allowed the construction of a rescue sanctuary in Cambodia in 1997. Because of Mr Hobbs it is estimated that over one thousand bears have been rescued and saved from slaughter. My condolences go to the entire Taronga Zoo family, particularly Senior Keeper Lesley Small who cared for Mr Hobbs from the day he arrived.

LOCAL PRESCHOOLS RECEIVE QUALITY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT GRANTS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I wish to acknowledge the local organisations in my electorate of North Shore who received funding through the New South Wales Government's Quality Learning Environment Grants. Congratulations to St Thomas' Preschool, Uniting Shirley Road Preschool, Goodstart Early Learning centres in North Sydney, St Leonards, and Mosman, KU Greenwood Child Care Centre, SDN Mosman, Froebel St Leonards, and St John's Child Care Centre. These Quality Learning Environment Grants provide not-for-profit community and mobile preschools across the state, with funding to purchase resources and activities that improve physical and educational learning. I would like to thank the staff of St John's Child Care Centre for welcoming me to present their centre with a grant certificate, in particular the Centre Director Luiza Mustafina. I would also like to thank the staff at Goodstart Early Learning Centre who I visited recently to present them with a grant certificate and hear about the certain equipment they will be purchasing for the centre. A special thanks also to the new centre director Julie for welcoming me to their centre. Congratulations.

JUNE RIEMER

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing)—I would like to congratulate inclusivity champion June Riemer for being named Cancer Institute New South Wales Aboriginal Woman of the Year, one of the top accolades at the New South Wales Women of the Year Awards held in Sydney last week. June is a Gumbaynggirr - Dunghutti woman who has spent 40 years advocating for the rights of First Nations People and those living with a disability. June has been instrumental in developing films, tools and templates for people with a disability, drawing on Aboriginal artwork, storytelling and culture. This included the first research on autism in Indigenous communities. June has led national conferences and workshops on working with Aboriginal people inclusively and culturally appropriate access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. She's an accomplished speaker who has shared insights from rural and remote Aboriginal communities at the United Nations. June is also an active member of the Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum and Pacific Disability Forum. June's passion and dedication will ensure Aboriginal voices and cultural beliefs are incorporated into policies and planning and her work more broadly highlights the power and potential of incorporating Indigenous culture into materials and resources to improve wellbeing.

ILONA HARKER

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today, I wish to congratulate Ilona Harker for her pivotal role in the March4Justice rally held on 15 March 2021 in Mullumbimby. Tens of thousands of people marched throughout the country to highlight the appalling rates of sexual violence perpetrated against women. Ilona is a valued resident and has spent years advocating for the rights of women. As part of her successful advocacy projects Ilona adapted a 1950's song and called it 'Another Woman Gone'. Her deeply moving version of this song includes the names of women that have lost their lives to domestic violence. In 2016 Ilona ran a mental health awareness program, creating a permanent sculpture of a chandelier, representing the 'Lost and Broken'. Other works of significance include her initiative 'Hearts' (Health Entertainment Arts), a program that uses music as a therapeutic and educational tool in the health care sector. Through this program she has improved the quality of life for patients and community groups. I commend Ilona for the work she has done in the women's advocacy and mental health space. We need strong women like Ilona in the community to give voice to the voiceless and vulnerable women in our community.

BALLINA REGION FOR REFUGEES

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I acknowledge the incredible work of Ballina Region for Refugees. Ballina Region for Refugees started in 2015 when resident Sue Kelly started the group in response to the Australian Government's increasingly inhumane treatment of and policies towards asylum seekers. In the last six years this group of volunteers has organised rallies, vigils and discussions highlighting the plight of refugees. Through fundraisers they have provided financial, medical and material assistance for refugees and people seeking asylum in on-shore and off-shore detention, as well as those needing support in the community. As part of their programs, the volunteers have welcomed refugees in the community by supporting them as they settle into a new life. Some members have generously provided refugees accommodation in their homes through the Homestay program. I would like to thank the volunteers, members and committee of Ballina Region for Refugees for the tireless work and significant contribution to the community. Their efforts in promoting the acceptance and integration of refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia demonstrates the kind of compassion we as a Nation need when upholding the Human Rights of refugees.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—On 8 March we celebrated International Women's Day. It represents an important opportunity to pause and remember the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women from all around the globe. Although, to be honest, we should do this every day. Last Saturday I had the pleasure of attending the Women in Excellence Awards [WWIEA] hosted by the Wollondilly Women in Business Network. I would like to make special mention to the winners in each of the nine categories:

Melissa Owen Doughty - Outstanding Young Entrepreneur

Annie Hughes – TKR Consulting Business Start Up

Naomi Williams – Outstanding Employee

Kirsty Reynolds – Best Wollondilly Business

Mali Dillon – Warrior for Change

Debra Monte – Community Patron

Kerrie O'Grady – The Diamond Award

Dr Anna Pham – Inspiring and Outstanding Leader and Wollondilly Woman of the Year

Michelle Legg – People's Choice

To all the women in my electorate of Wollondilly, I thank each and every one of you for your contribution to making our community a better place.

**The House adjourned pursuant to standing and sessional orders at 18:05 until
Tuesday 23 March at 12:00.**