



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 25 March 2021

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Bills	6111
Civil Liability Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2021	6111
Second Reading Debate	6111
NSW Jobs First Bill 2021	6116
First Reading	6116
Second Reading Speech	6116
Canterbury Park Racecourse (Sale and Redevelopment Moratorium) Bill 2021	6120
First Reading	6120
Second Reading Speech	6120
Liquor Amendment (Right to Play Music) Bill 2020	6121
Discharge of Order of the Day and Withdrawal of Bill	6121
State Insurance and Care Governance Amendment (Employees) Bill 2020	6121
Second Reading Speech	6121
Motions	6134
Greek Independence 200th Anniversary	6134
Shoalhaven Anglican School	6143
Announcements	6144
Member for Tweed	6144
Member for Oxley	6144
Member for Lane Cove	6144
Member for Albury	6144
Photographer in the Chamber	6144
Bills	6144
COVID-19 Legislation Amendment (Stronger Communities and Health) Bill 2021	6144
COVID-19 Recovery Bill 2021	6144
Assent	6144
Question Time	6144
Member for Upper Hunter	6144
Floods and Hawkesbury Electorate	6144
Member for Upper Hunter	6146
Natural Disaster Assistance	6146
Member for Upper Hunter	6148
Floods and Road Infrastructure	6148
Berejiklian Government	6149
State Economy	6150
Firearms Registry	6152
Floods and Emergency Services	6153
Documents	6154
Public Inquiry into Blue Mountains City Council	6154
Reports	6154

TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Unproclaimed Legislation	6154
Committees	6155
Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure.....	6155
Government Response: Electric buses in regional and metropolitan public transport networks in NSW	6155
Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety	6155
Reference	6155
Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission	6155
Reference	6155
Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics	6155
Membership	6155
Petitions	6155
Petitions Received	6155
Private Members' Statements.....	6155
Sexual Assault	6155
Floods and Penrith Electorate.....	6156
Randwick Precinct Redevelopment	6157
Parramatta River	6158
Disclosure of Interests	6159
Health Habits	6160
Electric Scooters	6160
Floods and Hawkesbury Electorate	6161
Taxi Industry.....	6162
Dubbo Electorate Road Infrastructure	6163
Documents	6164
Public Service Commission	6164
Reports.....	6164
Petitions	6164
Freshwater Manly Ferries	6164
Private Members' Statements.....	6170
Bangladesh Independence Fiftieth Anniversary	6170
Member for Kiama	6170
Road Tolls.....	6171
Voluntary Assisted Dying.....	6172
Pearce Reserve Cricket Pavilions	6173
Wyong Electorate Arts Community	6174
Service NSW	6175
Government Oversight Bodies Funding	6176
Suicide Prevention	6176
Social and Affordable Housing	6177
Community Recognition Statements	6178
Regional Youth Taskforce	6178

TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Ourimbah Yarning Circle	6178
Turrumurra Public School.....	6178
Ben and Paul Lister.....	6178
Cowra Hospital Auxiliary.....	6179
Beach Couture Exhibition.....	6179
National Cartoon Gallery.....	6179
Jacky Finlay-Jones.....	6179
SES Volunteers.....	6179
Northmead Creative and Performing Arts High School	6180
Central Coast Older Women's Collective Action on Homelessness	6180
Bob Walsh	6180
Inner West Indigenous Women	6180
Tribute to Michael Molloy.....	6180
Aussie Student Inventions That Changed the World Competition.....	6181
Rob Pirina	6181
Time Out Best Bars	6181
Australian Reptile Park.....	6181
Passover	6181
Balmoral Swim for Cancer	6182
Dulwich Hill Fruit Market.....	6182
Aspect South East Sydney School.....	6182
Tom Robinson	6182
Inner West Bakeries.....	6182
Seven Hills Electorate SES Volunteers	6183
Kareela Public School.....	6183
Jumbuck Meats	6183
East Coast Beverages.....	6183
Junee Youth Council.....	6184
Perry Gilsenan, OAM	6184
National Ride2school Day	6184
Canine Court Companion Program	6184
George Institute	6184
Community Recognition Notices	6185
Bulldogs Season Launch.....	6185
Muslim Women's Welfare of Australia – International Women's Day Breakfast.....	6185
Ashlee Green	6185
Chelsea De Jong, Randwick Council Art Prize	6185
NSW SES and Rural Fire Service	6185
Andrew Romano.....	6186
Emergency Help in Flood Times.....	6186
Hannah Trevena.....	6186
First Class 20 at Mac	6186

TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Associate Professor Doan Ngo	6186
Mikayla Hughes – Grenfell	6187
Fundraising Efforts in Cowra – Steph Cooke MP	6187
Myah Pacey	6187
Marnie's Big Chop	6187
NSW Bowls Championships	6187
James Burns 100th Birthday	6188
Bernie Mullane Complex.....	6188
Tribute to Florence Carter.....	6188
8rar Long Hai Day Commemoration Service	6188
Allan McDonald	6188
Cambridge Gardens Public School House Captains	6188
Bate Bay Surf Clubs' Flood Efforts	6189
Caring Hearts Community Quilters	6189
Marie Haining.....	6189
George Lopes.....	6189
Alexander Dudley	6189
Sri Om Foundation Toongabbie	6190
Amanda Turnbull.....	6190
Doug Kinlyside	6190
Good Morning Macarthur.....	6190
St Patrick's College Gala Ball.....	6191
Emily Brown.....	6191
Jahvis Loveday	6191
The Atlantic and Surfaid Charity Art Exhibition.....	6191
Bayside Men's Shed	6191
Mr Ted Smith.....	6192
Mrs Robyn Livermore	6192
Awesome Lake Mac	6192
Catherine Henry	6192
Greek Community of Newcastle	6192
Social Justice Group, St Francis Xavier Ashbury.....	6193
Marrickville South Collective.....	6193
Congratulating Kyogle Council on the Missing Link Project, Bridges	6193
Lismore Recycled for Sight	6193
Timmy the Turtle.....	6194
Taren Point Public School Captains	6194
Evelyn "billie" Trebley 102nd Birthday	6194
Howlong Country Bakery.....	6194
North Shore School Students' HSC Exhibitions	6194
North Sydney and Mosman SES Volunteers	6195
Alfords Point Public School Captains	6195

TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Tribute to Paul (Poel) Raveneau	6195
Full Face Orthodontics Opening.....	6195
Pakistan Resolution Day	6196
Bangladesh 50 Years of Independence.....	6196
Epetition Hastings Secondary College Upgrades	6196
Tribute to Warwick Cary, ESM.....	6196
Georges River Association Gala Dinner.....	6196
Nowruz New Year	6197
Rydalmere Lions Football Club.....	6197

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 25 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.

[Notices of motions given]

Bills

CIVIL LIABILITY AMENDMENT (CHILD ABUSE) BILL 2021

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 17 March 2021.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (09:46): I lead for the Opposition on the Civil Liability Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2021. The Opposition does not oppose the bill. The objects of the bill are:

- (a) to enable courts to set aside certain agreements that settled claims for child abuse where it is just and reasonable to do so in circumstances where there were certain legal barriers to the victim of the child abuse being fully compensated through a legal cause of action, and
- (b) to ensure Part 2A of the Civil Liability Act 2002, which deals with personal injury claims by offenders in custody, does not restrict awards of damages for child abuse.

I will turn to the first of those objects. It is well accepted that an important principle in litigation and the legislation that surrounds it is finality—that is, once a case is settled or completed it should not be reopened. The bill flies in the face of that principle, but it does so for good reason. It is very similar and closely related to the removal of limitation periods for actions for damages for child abuse. That was eventually done by this Parliament in 2016. The argument was made that limitation periods might make sense for an action resulting from a fall in Kmart but are completely inadequate and inappropriate for actions for child abuse given the significant length of time survivors take to disclose. The same arguments apply here to settlements, agreements and deeds.

One of the very real reasons that settlements were compromised was that in many cases limitation periods meant claims might fail. The 2016 changes to limitation periods meant that if no child abuse claim had been made or deed signed, a claim could be commenced. That is because the changes were retrospective. If a deed had been signed or a settlement reached then that was binding. That decision was recently confirmed in *McGann v Trustees of the Roman Catholic Church of the Diocese of Parramatta* [2019] NSWSC 1453. Even the Contracts Review Act could not overturn the deed. It means that the people who settled are in a much worse position than those who did not bring a claim despite being, in other relevant aspects, in the same position. The only other category are those who brought a claim and lost. They did not participate in a settlement so will not, as I read it, be assisted by this bill. I would appreciate the Attorney in his reply indicating if any redress is available to that category of survivors. I note the reality that there may well be very few such cases given that claims that look like they might fail would be settled on the basis of what lawyers might call commercial reality. There are a few things to note about the provision to overturn settlements. It was not recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The royal commission said:

... many survivors do not consider that justice has been, or can be, achieved for them through existing civil litigation systems or through previous or existing redress schemes that some governments and nongovernment institutions offer.

It also recorded the dampening impact that the limitation periods had on the quantum of settlements and on the decision whether to proceed at all. It found that victims were often unrepresented, not independently advised and felt coerced into settling claims. The royal commission also found significant power imbalances between institutions and survivors. Another point to be noted is that other jurisdictions including Western Australia, Queensland, Victoria, the Northern Territory and Tasmania have already introduced legislation to set aside settlement agreements for child sexual abuse or child abuse actions.

Queensland and Western Australia did so at the same time as amending their statute of limitations legislation, in contrast to New South Wales. The provisions are certainly not identical to each other nor are they identical to this bill, but the fact that they have done what they have is significant. Another interesting point to note is that, as recorded at page 10 of the Government's discussion paper on setting aside settlement agreements for past child abuse claims, the exact number of these settlement agreements is unknown. Obviously there are

confidentially arranged settlements outside litigation and in a number of cases there were privately run non-government organisation [NGO] schemes, so it seems impossible to know exactly how many claims we are talking about.

The Government discussion paper also notes there will clearly be a financial impact on both government and non-government bodies, although it does not seem that anyone has quantified that risk—or at least not on the record. I ask the Attorney in his reply to indicate what the financial impact of these changes will be on the State of New South Wales. I emphasise that the priority here is justice not finances and the changes should be adopted no matter what answer is provided to my question by the Attorney. Whatever estimate is available should be on the public record. The bill amends the Civil Liability Act. It inserts a new part 1C into the Civil Liability Act. New section 7B provides an object for the new part 1C. It reads:

The object of this Part is to provide a way for a person to seek to have an agreement set aside if—

- (a) the agreement settled a claim for child abuse perpetrated against the person, and
- (b) at the time of the agreement, there were certain legal barriers to the person being fully compensated through a legal cause of action.

New section 7C defines "affected agreement"—the types of agreements that can be potentially set aside. It applies to agreements concerning actions referred to in section 6A of the Limitation Act, which is the definition of child abuse in that Act. It includes sexual abuse, serious physical abuse and connected abuse. Agreements about such actions are affected if the agreement occurred before section 6A commenced and a relevant limitation period had expired or the agreement occurred before the 2018 proper defendant changes commenced and an organisation that would have been liable for child abuse under those changes was not incorporated.

New section 7C (2) makes it clear that a limitation period is taken to have expired even if it were possible to seek the leave of the court for an extension of the period. New section 7D allows the court to set aside an affected agreement if it is just and reasonable to do so. The section makes it clear that the application to set aside the agreement is run at the same time as the new claim. That is entirely sensible. New section 7C (3) provides a non-exhaustive list of things the court may consider in making its decision to set aside an agreement. They include the amount of the settlement, the bargaining positions of the parties and the conduct of the other parties and their representatives. New section 7D (4) allows correspondence about settlement negotiations to be admissible in contrast to the usual position.

Clearly this does not mean every child abuse settlement will be set aside. The legislation is somewhat more prescriptive than in other jurisdictions and on one view may be regarded as narrower than some other jurisdictions by tying it to two specific legal barriers. Recent case law in other jurisdictions suggests that other jurisdictions may be considering the same factors as set out in this scheme, although this scheme does seem narrower than in some of the other States. On the other hand, some other jurisdictions seem to restrict the cases that can be reopened to the ones that had a limitation period problem. That is narrower than the cases to which this bill will apply. Proposed section 7E gives power to a court to set aside other contracts, deeds agreement or orders flowing from the set aside agreement. However, it protects national redress scheme agreements. Proposed section 7F, among other things, allows any money paid under the set aside agreement to be taken into account in determining damages. It also has a provision relevant to class actions.

The rest of the bill relates to the second of the two objects of the bill. It relates to the position of people who were subject to child abuse while in custody. In 2004 the then Carr Government amended the Civil Liability Act ensuring there were severe limitations placed on the amounts that could be recovered in damages by offenders in custody. Section 26A defined "offender" to include, among other things, "a detainee under the Children (Detention Centres) Act". As a matter of simple statutory interpretation it would include detainees who were the subject of child abuse and child sexual abuse as defined. The Act imposed a number of restrictions on the recovery of damages.

In these cases no damages could be awarded at all unless the degree of impairment was at least 15 per cent. The maximum amount of damages for non-economic loss is restricted by reference to workers compensation legislation. That is a significant restriction on the quantum of damages that could be recovered. A new section 26B (2A) provides that these provisions do not apply and are taken never to have applied to an injury arising from child abuse. Further provisions to be included in the schedule to the Act allow proceedings to be commenced regardless of previous judgements or settlements. The court may, if it decides it is just and reasonable to do so, set aside an earlier judgement or settlement in those cases. This is a much fairer provision and treats child abuse survivors equally and fairly. The Opposition does not oppose the bill.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (09:55): I support the Civil Liability Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill. I do so as the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services with the chief responsibility for child protection in New South Wales.

I thank my friend and colleague the Attorney General for his work and advocacy on this and other matters related to child protection. Before I had the privilege of serving in this portfolio I had met survivors of child sexual abuse in my electorate. One such survivor is a member of my electorate office staff. When you sit, speak with and listen to the stories of people who have lived through horrendous abuse and exploitation, your heart breaks for them. Whilst you may impose prison sentences on people who have done wrong to children, it is the victims who have a life sentence. We must continue to strive to lift up the victims and wrap every level of care and support around them. I am proud that, for a moment, the House comes together on matters such as child protection, which is beyond politics. There is no Labor or Liberal thing to do; there is just a right thing to do.

I am proud of these reforms. I am proud that this Government has led the way in so many respects in making children safe and putting children first. These reforms remove more legal barriers to provide a clear pathway for access to justice for survivors of child abuse by giving the courts the power to set aside affected agreements for child abuse claims where it is just and reasonable to do so. The reforms ensure that a person who suffered personal injury as a result of child abuse while in custody is not limited by part 2A of the Civil Liability Act 2002 in terms of the damages they can recover under the Act for that abuse. These important reforms go above and beyond the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in its 2015 *Redress and Civil Litigation Report*. It builds on the New South Wales Government's 2016 and 2018 reforms to allow survivors who entered into certain settlements before these reforms to have the same access to justice as those who brought a claim after the reforms.

The royal commission made 409 recommendations, including previously released reports relating to redress and civil litigation, criminal justice and Working With Children Checks. I acknowledge the great work of the Office of the Children's Guardian and in particular the outstanding work of the Children's Guardian, Janet Schorer. She has not just been an occupant of that office; she has been an advocate for change and for child protection. I commend her and her team. They are a statutory independent office but they work closely with my office and all sides of the Parliament.

The Government publicly responded to the royal commission's final report in June 2018, accepting or accepting in principle the overwhelming majority of recommendations. Following the National Apology to Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse on 22 October 2018, Premier Gladys Berejiklian delivered an apology on behalf of the New South Wales Government at the Sydney Opera House. The apology paid tribute to survivors and thanked those who bravely shared their experiences through the royal commission. This was not just about an apology for today. It was about an apology for yesterday and the day before, and every day that survivors had to walk an incredibly lonely and dark journey. I thank her for giving that apology to all of those who have suffered so much in recognition of their suffering and acknowledging their hurt.

Also in October 2018 the Government announced a \$127 million package to implement responses to the royal commission's recommendations. The package is strengthening prevention measures, ensuring greater access to treatment and support services, toughening the criminal justice responses and strengthening measures in organisations providing child-related services. In response to agreed commitments, New South Wales has passed legislation to make it easier for survivors to access civil justice and improved government responses to reduce trauma for survivors. New South Wales has also implemented the vast majority of criminal justice recommendations, ensuring that victims are supported through the criminal justice process and perpetrators are properly held to account through prosecutions and sentences.

New South Wales continues to work with the Commonwealth and other jurisdictions on the implementation of the National Redress Scheme. The scheme provides critical support to people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse. New South Wales has implemented all 15 recommendations to improve the capacity of civil litigation systems to respond to child abuse. We have implemented the vast majority of criminal justice recommendations, ensuring that victims are supported through the criminal justice process and, as I mentioned earlier, that perpetrators are held to account. Our Government is committed to progressing the implementation of the New South Wales Government's response to the royal commission's final report. That report recommended that child-related organisations be required to implement 10 Child Safe Standards, drawing on its findings and extensive research and consultation about what makes institutions child safe.

I say to the House and to anybody who has an interest in this area that you do not need to wait for government to make your institutions child safe. You can do it now by putting the voices of children and young people at the heart of what you do and by making sure that you create a culture that encourages safety and security for every child. Whilst we can provide laws for all of the circumstances that we can envisage, it is important that people proactively seek to protect children and take active steps to make sure that they have the support, encouragement and safety they deserve.

The New South Wales Government accepted the standards and accepted in principle that child-related organisations be required to implement them. The Child Safe Standards encompass existing child safety

requirements such as the Working With Children Check; the Reportable Conduct Scheme, which this House passed in 2019—I thank members in this place and the other place for supporting it; and requirements to report information to New South Wales police and to the Department of Communities and Justice.

The aim of the standards is to achieve and maintain a genuine commitment to child safe culture and practice through incremental and continuous improvement over time. We have tasked the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian with consulting, designing and bringing to government a model of regulation that would respond to the commission's intent. Indeed, yesterday I met with Robert Fitzgerald, who was one of the commissioners. He did some exceptional work as part of the royal commission. He is now our State's Ageing and Disability Commissioner, but nonetheless he is still incredibly committed to protecting the vulnerable. I thank him for his work and his continuing work in government.

The Office of the Children's Guardian consulted widely on introducing a mandatory child safe scheme in New South Wales. The Office of the Children's Guardian undertook a significant engagement and consultation process with a range of child-related organisations. On 5 July 2019 the Office of the Children's Guardian released the *Making organisations safer for children* report, following extensive consultation on options for regulating Child Safe Standards in New South Wales. An exposure draft of the Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Bill 2021 was recently released to provide the Office of the Children's Guardian and our Government with feedback on the proposed legislation and to ensure the voice of child-related organisations and survivors of child sexual abuse are heard. Victims so often ask to be heard. So often in their lives they have not had that opportunity. We need to make sure that the voices of people who have experienced the most heinous abuse are at the heart of everything we do in relation to these matters.

The child safe scheme bill will seek to implement the vision of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse to make organisations safer for children. The royal commission recommended that child-related organisations be required to implement Child Safe Standards and be held accountable for their implementation through independent oversight. Consultation on the bill was open from 16 December 2020 to 29 January 2021, with extensions granted to agencies on request. The scheme will embed the Child Safe Standards in legislation to set an expectation that children must be safe in organisations. It will also strengthen the monitoring and enforcement powers of the Office of the Children's Guardian to ensure organisations have adequate systems, processes and policies to protect children from harm. I seek an extension of time. [*Extension of time*]

The royal commission continues to have a profound impact across our State and across our country. Over the course of its five-year inquiry the royal commission heard more than 8,000 personal stories from survivors in private sessions who suffered horrendous abuse and mistreatment while under the care of institutions that should have kept them safe. Many survivors gave evidence of entering into settlements that they identified as inadequate or far too low. In many cases, these people were taken advantage of at their lowest ebb. Survivors reported to the royal commission that they felt forced to accept the settlement offers due to "legal technicalities" such as the limitation period for the claim having expired or there being no proper defendant to sue.

If those legal barriers had not existed at the time of the settlement, those survivors would have been in a better negotiating position. The victim may have negotiated higher settlement amounts that duly reflected their pain and suffering, rather than being caught in mounds and mounds of legal red tape. That should not have been the case. The royal commission found there was often a power imbalance between the survivor and the defendant when negotiating claims, with the nature of the trauma suffered by survivors creating an enormous power imbalance between these perpetrators their victims—what the perpetrator had done versus the cloud that had hung over the lives of people simply seeking adequate redress. Generally, survivors who entered into these settlement agreements would be prevented from seeking any further compensation for the abuse because of terms in the agreement that released the responsible institutions from liability.

The New South Wales Government implemented an important package of reforms in 2016. This included removing limitation periods for child abuse with the passage of the Limitation Amendment (Child Abuse) Act 2016. That reform went further than the royal commission's recommendations by amending the Limitation Act 1969 to retrospectively and prospectively remove limitation periods for both sexual and physical abuse and any connected abuse. On 1 July 2016 the Premier issued the Model Litigant Policy for Civil Litigation and the NSW Government Guiding Principles for Government Agencies Responding to Civil Claims for Child Abuse. The updated Model Litigant Policy for Civil Litigation has been adopted to assist in maintaining proper standards in litigation and the provision of legal services in New South Wales. It applies to civil claims and civil litigation involving the State or its agencies.

The NSW Government Guiding Principles for Government Agencies Responding to Civil Claims for Child Abuse are binding and aim to make litigation a less traumatic experience for survivors, and to ensure a compassionate and consistent approach to civil claims for child abuse across New South Wales. One of the issues with some of the claims is that they have been so inconsistent. It is impossible to monetarise people's hurt and try

to find a balance that applies consistency. However, that is necessary in order to make sure that we get the right outcomes for victims. The updated model litigant policy and guiding principles formalised the commitment of New South Wales government agencies in late 2014 not to rely on the expiry of a limitation period as a defence in relation to child abuse claims.

In 2018 the Government implemented a large suite of reforms that included, first, a prospective and retrospective requirement that a proper defendant be appointed for cases brought against unincorporated organisations, removing the Ellis defence that allowed unincorporated organisations to evade liability on the basis that they had no legal personality. I am sure many would remember the movie with Billy Connolly involving the man who sued God. That was, in essence, what the Ellis defence was about. Secondly, prospective statutory duty on certain organisations to take reasonable steps to prevent child abuse, with a reverse onus of proof, and, thirdly, a prospective extension to the common law of vicarious liability so that it applies not only to employees but also to those akin to employees, such as priests and volunteers.

In 2018 the New South Wales Government was also one of the first jurisdictions to announce it would join the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse and was the first State to refer powers to the Commonwealth to enable the redress scheme to be established. The redress scheme is an important alternative to civil litigation for claims regarding past child sexual abuse occurring before 1 July 2018. The royal commission acknowledged that civil litigation is not an effective way for all survivors to obtain adequate redress and to address or alleviate the impact of institutional abuses. There is still much more to be done. But these reforms go a long way to providing the assistance that victims need and the support that they deserve. Much, much more needs to be done.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (10:10): In the short time we have today, I will begin my contribution to the Civil Liability Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2021 introduced by the Attorney General. The protection of the most innocent in society, our children, is a basic standard we expect from our governments and institutions. Sadly, history has shown that we have repeatedly failed our vulnerable children in our schools, in our orphanages, in out-of-home care and in our health facilities. Where respect, care and love should have been a basic right, it was often abuse, trauma and predatory behaviour that was allowed to impact and damage a generation of children in State- or private-run care. The royal commission into institutional abuse exposed the horrors that our system allowed children to live through. Today, in this debate, I will highlight some of the injustices of this abuse.

The Civil Liability Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2021 creates two reforms. The first reform under 1C will be a new part inserted into the Civil Liability Act 2002. The amendment will give the courts the power to set aside certain agreements that settle child abuse claims where it is just and reasonable to do so. The second reform, part 2A of the Civil Liability Act, will be amended to ensure that a person who suffered personal injury as a result of child abuse sustained while in custody is not limited in terms of the damages they can recover for that abuse under the Act. The bill is the third set of amendments following updates in 2016 and 2018 to allow greater access to justice for child abuse victims and survivors following the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

These reforms will allow victims who previously have accepted certain agreements to pursue new and fair settlements through the New South Wales courts. Abuse survivors of State institutions that made unfair settlements prior to these proposed reforms will finally have the same access to justice and redress that survivors of abuse in other non-State institutions were entitled to. The interim report of the royal commission was released in 2014. The final report recommendations were published in 2017. The findings of the royal commission truly shocked Australians. What was detailed were the horrors institutions inflicted on our children and the damage that still echoes down with survivors from the past to today. Survivors have been shamed and endured trauma, and when seeking settlements through the legal system they have been pressured to accept inadequate financial outcomes.

It has been well documented through the royal commission and in the media that many people suffered greatly as the years passed from their abuse as a child. It is a blight on our justice system. The bill has come very late in the piece for many child abuse survivors. The Government has known about the injustices victims have suffered in attempting to be compensated and for the systematic failures that allowed abuse to occur. The royal commission highlighted the incredible power imbalance between individuals and organisations when it came to negotiating a fair and just settlement. Those who entered into such settlements in the past would have been prevented from seeking further compensation in the future as part of the agreement. This legislation will remove that barrier for those individuals.

The application of part 2A has led to inconsistent outcomes between claimants who experience comparable abuse at different times or in different institutions. The proposed reforms will ensure that these claim are treated consistently with other historical abuse claims from those in State care. The result of this would allow survivors who entered into settlements before the 2016 and 2018 reforms to have the same access to justice as those who

brought a claim after the reforms. Additionally, the bill will ensure survivors whose claims have been historically restricted by part 2A of the Civil Liability Act are no longer subject to such restrictions.

The New South Wales Government has been slow to provide clarity—clarity for victims, the legal profession and for those organisations that seek to defend themselves from abuse claims. At long last, the bill will provide some hope for people who have been suffering in the dark for far too long. NSW Labor will always fight for the rights of victims and survivors, especially when they are challenging powerful institutions. My family knows from personal experience about the pain suffered by our vulnerable children under the care of State institutions. Circumstances brought my mother to a children's home in Glebe known as Bidura House during her early years.

Debate interrupted.

NSW JOBS FIRST BILL 2021

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Yasmin Catley, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (10:17): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It gives me great pleasure to once again introduce Labor's jobs first bill to this House. This is the second time I have read the bill in this place. *The Daily Telegraph's* State political reporter James O'Doherty often complains to me that he thinks I have announced this policy and our bill a dozen times by now. Poor old James keeps hearing about it because I will not stop talking about it with him. I congratulate him on his tireless pursuit of the Manly ferries issue. He knows, as I do, that the cheap junk Andrew Constance has been buying from overseas will not cut it on the Manly run and he has been running a campaign to save the Freshwater class ferries. In today's *The Daily Telegraph* James reveals that there are more than 80 defects in the new Emerald Mark 2 ferries that have been imported from China.

The Emerald Mark 2 ferries have unsafe and defective window mechanisms. The plumbing within the engine bays is not of a good enough quality and needs to be redone. Here is the worst problem, and it is one that can actually never be fixed: The aluminium plating is so thin that if you stand at one end of the boat and look along the full length of the hull you can see a wavy pattern. That is how cheap and flimsy these boats are. So these new boats are no good, they are not safe and they will inevitably take many more months to make right. That begs the question: Why were they not built here? The current Freshwater class ferries were built in Newcastle by a Labor government. They are sturdy, reliable and safe vessels. More than that, they are iconic, beautiful ships that are a symbol of our beautiful Sydney Harbour. They have a heart and a soul, which people travel across the globe to enjoy. That is what you get when you build locally. You get quality. You get reliability. You get safety. You get character. You also get iconic Australian-made design.

With Labor's Jobs First policy and my bill, the replacement ferries would have been built here in New South Wales. They would not have been built in China or Indonesia and imported, containing asbestos or being riddled with defects. The new River Class ferries cannot switch from ahead to astern without stalling. I want people to think about that. Boats do not have brakes, for those who are unfamiliar with boats. So how does a boat slow down or stop in an emergency or coming in to a wharf or just doing a three-point turn in the middle of the harbour? The master of the vessel moves the engine from ahead—for those who are not familiar, that is going forward—to astern, which is reverse. If the boat engine stalls, it does not stop moving. It crashes. So Minister Constance has basically bought boats that do not have brakes and that will crash if the problems are not fixed. That is what happens when you buy cheap. You get poor quality, you get poor safety and, at the end of the day, you pay twice.

These problems would not have happened if the NSW Jobs First Bill was passed as law. We want to see taxpayers get value expressed through high-quality, good workmanship and the best materials available. We want to see taxpayer value understood as being more than just a price tag but as the social and economic value of supporting local jobs and giving local businesses an opportunity to do their very best work. The Labor Party, my colleagues on this side of the House and I know that if we had bought Australian-made and Australian-designed ferries, trains and trams, we would not be stuck with this cheap junk that Minister Constance has saddled our State with. We would have trains—believe it or not—that fit the tracks. We would have ferries that fit under bridges. We would have trams that do not break down all the time. Together with all those things, do you know what else we would have?

Mr Clayton Barr: Jobs.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: The member for Cessnock has got it—good local jobs and strong local industry.

Mr Clayton Barr: Hear, hear!

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I have made a lengthy contribution in this place already when speaking to an earlier version of this bill. I seek leave to have that second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce to Parliament the NSW Jobs First Bill 2020 and with it place on the record Labor's unwavering commitment to workers, industry and, crucially, jobs in New South Wales. The NSW Jobs First Bill is the product of Labor's NSW Made policy. I want to express my gratitude to my Labor colleagues who have provided valuable input and contributions to this process. We have been working with industry, business, unions and workers to produce a policy that will guarantee real, long-term, stable jobs for workers in this State. Long-term, stable and permanent employment underpins families, neighbourhoods and communities at large.

We cannot be a nation of gig economy workers, fly-in fly-out workers or zero hours contractors. We cannot allow the casualisation of entire industries and careers to march on unchecked. We cannot give up on the ingenuity, innovation and expertise of local engineers and designers. We cannot continue to justify the economic nonsense of sending taxpayers' money offshore on services sector work that could be done and should be done here locally. Moreover, we cannot keep perpetuating the lie that there is a skills shortage or an expertise shortage in this country or that Australia and New South Wales cannot make things or do things locally.

NSW Labor believes in local jobs and local communities. NSW Labor believes in local industry and the businesses here that want to make a go of it locally. We want to support good businesses which employ local workers fairly. We want to make sure good businesses thrive and we believe that the State has a responsibility to offer these businesses the opportunity to do just that. The State Government is one of the nation's biggest customers. New South Wales spends approximately \$34 billion per annum on goods and services. That is everything from multibillion dollar ferry and train procurement contracts down to the pens and pencils in our schools. But too much of that public money is being sent overseas when it could be kept here working harder for the local economy.

Sadly, too much of that public money is being wasted. The Berejiklian Government has recklessly and wilfully wasted billions upon billions of dollars on failed projects from overseas. It does this because it does not believe in our local workers. Ms Berejiklian herself admitted that she thinks New South Wales workers are no good at it. Mr Constance has been telling us that he feels the same way.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: The unions ruined it.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: That is why the Government bought South Korean trains that do not fit the tracks. That is why it bought Indonesian ferries that are riddled with asbestos and that do not fit under bridges. That is why it bought Spanish and French trams that keep breaking down. That is why it bought buses from Malaysia instead of building them in western Sydney. But local workers know, and NSW Labor knows, that every dollar spent on these projects is a dollar wasted.

It does not matter if the trains were a bit cheaper to buy if you have to shave off the platform edges, lift up the track and re-lay it, and bore out the width of the tunnels to make them fit. It does not matter if the ferries were a bit cheaper if your passengers run the risk of being decapitated under a bridge at high tide. We all know that if you buy cheap you buy twice. There is nothing to be gained by short-changing yourself with cheap junk that does not work. Premier Berejiklian and Minister Constance know this, but they are not motivated to save money in the long run. They are motivated only by their irrational obsession with neoliberalism and their heartless view of the world that the State Government should just be simple contract managers.

This bill is about more than just the failures of an inept transport Minister and a Premier who belittle our local workforce. The starting point of Labor's NSW Made policy is that there is everything to be gained by investing in local businesses, local workers and local enterprise. We know that New South Wales and Australian workers are diligent, professional and hardworking people. We know that they provide value for money because they produce and deliver the very best. We also know that every dollar paid to a local supplier provides a social and community value by remaining in the local economy and multiplying its impact every time it is spent and re-spent. We know that local businesses deserve the opportunity to bid on government work without being locked out on day one and told not to even bother submitting a tender. That is what this Government did, time and time again, with big projects.

The starting point on day one of the New Intercity Fleet project was "no local content". Ms Berejiklian did not wake up a few weeks ago and accidentally blurt out something offensive about local workers when she said, "New South Wales workers are not good at building trains". It was not a slip of the tongue. This is something that Ms Berejiklian has believed in for many years. That is why when the New Intercity Fleet project began under her watch, the tendering rules were set in stone from the outset. It would be a fully imported train, from an off-the-shelf design. She did not even back in our local designers and engineers. I quote from a Government press release from 4 October 2016, which was issued by former Premier Mike Baird and then transport Minister Berejiklian. She said:

Previously, New South Wales has developed unique and often costly train fleets from scratch, which has taken as long as seven years from start to delivery.

...

We are looking at buying off-the-shelf trains with proven technology and then configuring them to meet our customers' needs, meaning we can ensure the best value, best possible service and also have these new trains on the tracks faster.

Well, I ask: How is that going for the Government and the Premier? Your new trains do not fit. Your new trains are running late because they are unfit for purpose. Your new trains do not meet customer needs, they represent shocking taxpayer value and they cannot possibly provide the best service because at the moment they simply just do not work. That is the record of mismanagement and incompetence that our bill is designed to correct. That is the broken mindset and the negative attitude of Government Ministers that our bill is designed to eliminate from the decision-making process. We want to put a stop to the mindless decision-making processes that see so-called pop-up schools for western Sydney built in Victoria and trucked almost 1,000 kilometres across the border. We want to stop the insanity of buying emergency accommodation pods—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh): Opposition members will come to order.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: —from Western Australian mining companies, built in South Australia, when there are manufacturers of tiny houses right here in New South Wales. We must put a stop to the practice of offshoring every component and every process. I visited a company in Minto a couple of weeks ago with the member for Macquarie Fields. Clyde-Apac makes filters for air-conditioning systems on trains such as the XPT and Tangara. It has made those filters for more than 30 years, but all of a sudden its orders have dried up. Transport for NSW is getting the filters from another supplier.

Mr Paul Scully: Where?

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: An overseas supplier. Not only does this put the jobs of people working for Clyde- Apac at risk but also it affects the supply chain, and I will outline that. Clyde-Apac buys cardboard locally from a nearby printing company. It buys glue from a local manufacturer. It buys pallets and plastic wrap from other local businesses.

Mr Paul Scully: That is a lot of jobs.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I say to the member for Wollongong that with one decision, this Government has put dozens upon dozens of jobs out of business. We must put a stop to this economic madness. It is hurting our community and ruining local businesses that are missing out every step of the way. I am grateful for the assistance and guidance of the unions led by Mark Morey and Vanessa Seagrove. I especially appreciate the advice of Corey Wright from the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, Justin Page from the Electrical Trades Union, Natalie Lang from the Australian Services Union, Nick Kamper from the Australian Workers' Union and all of the other unions that have been so helpful in formulating this great jobs policy for New South Wales. I acknowledge Minister Pavey's interjection that the unions will destroy these jobs. That is a disgrace, Minister. This is a good policy about jobs in regional New South Wales, which is something that the Minister should also be very concerned about and be supportive of.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I ask the member for Swansea to not incite the Minister.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I also acknowledge the helpful and constructive contributions by business and industry representatives, including BlueScope Steel, Business NSW, the Contractors Federation and Australian Industry Group.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: We have bus manufacturing in Oxley.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I note Minister Pavey's interjection again. Why doesn't the Government build them at those bus manufacturers?

Mrs Melinda Pavey: We do!

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: No, you do not!

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The member for Swansea will come to order.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: What about the interjections?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I understand that there was an interjection, but I think the member for Swansea has elevated the level. All members will come to order.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: A team of Labor shadow Ministers also assisted, including Adam Searle, Daniel Mookhey, Walt Secord, Paul Scully, Jihad Dib and Sophie Cotsis, and I thank them. I also thank my advisors Tom Harris-Brassil and Edward Ovadia for their assistance and contributions to this policy. Now that I have made a handful of acknowledgments, I turn to the provisions of the bill. The NSW Jobs First Bill will compel the Minister to develop a Jobs First Policy that will apply to the whole of government. The NSW Jobs First Policy will include strategies to increase employment in our State, and boost manufacturing and social and professional services by incentivising locally manufactured materials and locally delivered services. It will also promote skills development and training by mandating the employment of apprentices and cadets on government projects so that the next generation of workers benefit from the purchasing power of government.

The Minister must ensure that the NSW Jobs First Policy promotes investment in New South Wales by expanding market opportunities for local industry and businesses. We want to see partnerships between local industry and education providers, like TAFE NSW, so that the workforce is strengthened and developed over the medium to long term, and the NSW Jobs First Policy, which the Minister would be compelled to develop, will do just this. The NSW Jobs First Policy would also secure reliable supply chains. The recent COVID-19 crisis has highlighted how dependent upon overseas suppliers we have become in recent decades.

This structural weakness in our supply chain must be addressed so that we are equipped to face any future disaster or crisis head-on. The NSW Jobs First Policy will achieve this. We cannot be so dependent on imported goods to the point where we do not manufacture something simple like a surgical mask or something complex like a hospital ventilator. We have so little diversity in our manufacturing capacity and that has left us as sitting ducks during the COVID-19 pandemic. We must buttress our manufacturing sector against future disruptions to global supply chains with a baseline of capacity and diversity so that we can retool our industries in a crisis. The only way to do this is to ensure that government money is spent on local industry and local businesses so that there is a permanent baseline capacity that we can build up when required.

Writing into law the principles and objectives of the NSW Jobs First Policy will ensure that the Government spends taxpayer funds ethically with good employers who do the right thing by their workers and give back to their communities. A dollar spent overseas is not only a wasted opportunity to employ someone locally but it is also a wasted opportunity to improve our communities. We can use the immense purchasing power of the State Government to promote and encourage businesses which are environmentally sustainable and committed to fair and responsible employment practices that meet Australian standards. We can prioritise social responsibility, disability inclusion, Aboriginal employment and the promotion of long-term stable jobs. A rising tide lifts all boats. If we build a procurement framework for the State Government which incentivises good businesses to do the right thing then others will follow, and they will compete on those positive metrics rather than just on price. That would be refreshing.

We know that after almost 10 years of inaction and neglect by the current Government, there is a lot of work to be done to improve capacity in local industry. The Liberals have actively run down our local workforce capacity. They have actively dismantled our TAFE system. They have stood idly by as jobs have been offshored by the thousand. That is why we will establish a sliding scale of government projects which regulate local content values so that as industry capacity develops and scales up, so too does the

requirement for local content. This will give businesses and industry confidence to invest in the long term. It will also give them the chance to build capacity over time. With the biggest expenditure comes the biggest opportunities and that is why the bill outlines major strategic projects with specific requirements for each.

We have also taken a long-term view, with businesses tendering for significant and strategic projects required to submit local industry development plans. This will incentivise procurement from businesses which can demonstrate the long-term benefit they will deliver for jobs and industry. They will be assisted with their submissions by the NSW Jobs First Advocate. They will be tasked with advising the Minister on the development of the NSW Jobs First Policy and promoting it within government and industry. Crucially, they will also have a strong enforcement role. The importance of a strong enforcement regime was something that came through during Labor's consultation process with industry and business. We invited a number of peak bodies, business representatives and industry stakeholders to Parliament to seek their input on this legislation. They made clear that they wanted an enforcement regime that would ensure that nobody could manipulate those new rules and avoid their responsibilities. They want a level playing field and that means they are willing to be held to a clear set of rules. That willingness comes because they know that a level playing field gives them a fresh opportunity to win government work.

At the moment the deck is stacked against them. Liberal Government Ministers openly boast about sending jobs overseas for the cheapest possible price and Premiers run their mouth at press conferences, telling the world how terrible they think those businesses are. That is not on. Labor cannot accept this state of affairs. That is why we have introduced a bill that will outlaw this kind of stupidity and vindictive bastardry against local workers that has become the norm under the NSW Liberal Party. The bill will regulate the expenditure of taxpayer funds in line with community expectations. It will ensure that every government agency and department abides by those rules and acts in accordance with community expectations. The fact is that Labor, the unions, business and industry are all on the same page as the community. If Government members asked their constituents about this policy, they would find overwhelming and almost unanimous support. Nobody in the real world believes that Australia should export jobs and import everything. Nobody in our electorates believes that we should have an economy solely built on a farm, a mine and a cafe. We are more than just a quarry and a tourism destination.

We used to be a State that made and designed things. We used to be a State that took pride in being and having the best. Now we are a State that is held hostage by world markets and global supply chains. Our capacity to design critical infrastructure and equipment has been eroded. Our TAFE system has been gutted, and apprenticeships and cadetships that once offered young people a bright future in New South Wales have been undermined. It is time to turn this around and to take pride in our expertise. It is time to back local workers and industry. It is time for the Government to give local businesses an opportunity to thrive and to abandon its obsession with offshoring and wasting taxpayer money. Nothing proves how timely this is than the crisis that we are currently living through. I have always believed in this throughout my working life. There is something very wrong when the mentality of members is to legislate away jobs for local businesses. It does not make sense. That is why Labor brings the bill to Parliament today—to bring jobs back home.

We want a bright future for our young people and a sustainable future for residents of regional and rural towns. They should not have to move to the city, spending 20 hours a week on the motorway to get there. Labor wants a resilient, clever and innovative business sector that is given the chance to thrive locally, export globally and provide stable, well-paid jobs for generations of workers. We know that is what the business sector wants too and we know that this can be delivered through the purchasing power of government. The Government has the opportunity not just to talk the talk but also to walk the walk and its members should vote for the bill. It is a good start that will help to save regional jobs throughout New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

I finish my speech by making a few key points. Labor has been working with industry, business, unions and workers to produce a policy that will guarantee real, long-term, stable jobs for workers right here in New South Wales. Long-term, stable and permanent employment underpins families, neighbourhoods and communities at large. As I have said in this place many times before, we cannot be a nation of gig economy workers, fly-in fly-out workers or zero-hour contractors. That is not what we are about. The casualisation of entire industries must stop. People must have a reasonable expectation of a secure, long-term and permanent job. They must be able to plan their lives, raise their families and enjoy retirement after a stable, rewarding and fulfilling career. Moreover, we cannot give up on the ingenuity, the innovation and the expertise of our local engineers and our designers.

Mr Clayton Barr: The best in the world.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: They are the best in the world. The member for Cessnock is 100 per cent right. Let us back them. How about that for a bit of a plan? We must not accept this line that we cannot do things here anymore or that we are suddenly no good at making things here anymore. We cannot accept it, because it is wrong and it needs to stop. We have to stop talking down our great skilled designers, engineers and tradespeople. The Liberals are obsessed with talking down Australian workers and chasing our industries out of town, sending them all offshore. We have to put a stop to that.

We cannot continue to justify the economic nonsense of sending New South Wales taxpayers' money offshore on service sector work that could be done here and should be done here. Those lies are perpetuated by those who wish to drive down wages and want to undermine conditions at work or improve the bottom line for big business. That is not the Labor way, it will never be the Labor way and we will stand up for those industries and those workers every day of the week. NSW Labor believes in local jobs and local communities. NSW Labor believes in local industry and the businesses here that want to make a go of it locally. We want to support good businesses who employ local workers fairly. We want to make sure good businesses thrive, and we believe that the State has a responsibility to offer businesses that opportunity. This is the Labor way. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

**CANTERBURY PARK RACECOURSE (SALE AND REDEVELOPMENT MORATORIUM) BILL
2021****First Reading**

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Sophie Cotsis, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (10:27): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The object of the Canterbury Park Racecourse (Sale and Redevelopment Moratorium) Bill 2021 is to provide for a five-year moratorium on the sale or disposal of infrastructure at Canterbury Park Racecourse and the carrying out of certain redevelopment activities on Canterbury Park Racecourse site. Ultimately, the bill intends to prohibit the sale or disposal of any racing infrastructure within Canterbury racecourse during the moratorium period. Proposed section 4 states:

- 4 Sale or disposal of racing infrastructure of Canterbury Park Racecourse prohibited during moratorium period**
- (2) The Australian Turf Club Limited may not during the moratorium period sell or otherwise dispose of any of the racing infrastructure of Canterbury Park Racecourse. In this section, **racing infrastructure of Canterbury Park Racecourse** means the lands, buildings or other facilities, including racetracks, training grounds, spectator or member stands, stabling areas and car parks, owned by the Australian Turf Club at Canterbury at the time that this Act was enacted.
- (3) The regulations may make provision for or about the kinds of lands, buildings or facilities, other than racetracks, training grounds, spectator or member stands, stabling areas and car parks, that are, or are not, taken to be the racing infrastructure of Canterbury Park Racecourse for the purposes of subsection (1).

Proposed section 5 provides:

- 5 Certain development at Canterbury Park Racecourse prohibited during moratorium period**
- (1) Development for any purpose that would prevent future use of Canterbury Park Racecourse for the conduct of race meetings at the racecourse is prohibited during the moratorium period.
- (2) To avoid doubt, the carrying out of residential development on land that was owned by the Australian Turf Club at Canterbury at the time that this Act was enacted is prohibited during the moratorium period.
- (3) The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, other than Part 3, applies to subsections (1) and (2) as if the provisions were contained in an environmental planning instrument.

Proposed section 6 provides:

- 6 Regulations**
- The Governor may make regulations, not inconsistent with this Act, for or with respect to any matter that by this Act is required or permitted to be prescribed or that is necessary or convenient to be prescribed for carrying out or giving effect to this Act.

Canterbury Park Racecourse has a long and proud history and has been a staple of the local community for decades. Horseracing has been part of the Canterbury community since the 1840s when local publicans would organise race meetings for the entertainment of their patrons. In 1871 Canterbury Park Racecourse was formally established, and horseracing immediately became a popular event in the local community. In 1878, 3,000 people attended a race meeting to celebrate Queen Victoria's birthday. Races continued to be held during World War II, and in 1944 the racecourse was bought by the Australian Turf Club. The racecourse has always been at the forefront of innovation. It was the site of the first photo-finish camera in 1946, the first metropolitan racing success for a woman trainer in 1957 and the first night race meeting in 1999.

In 1955 Canterbury Park Racecourse was—and still is—zoned as a recreational area under the local environmental plan and was listed under the State Heritage Register as an important landscape feature long associated with Canterbury and serving the whole metropolitan area. As such, the Canterbury Park Racecourse has been protected historically as an open space for recreational use by locals and others—from Sydney, throughout New South Wales and across Australia. That most important point is what we are fighting for. I acknowledge my good friend and colleague the member for Summer Hill, Jo Haylen, who has been fighting alongside me, together with the Labor leader, the member for Strathfield, and the Federal member for Watson, Tony Burke, who has raised the issue in the Federal Parliament.

This week the ICAC released its report on the former Canterbury council, the tampering with zonings and the development allowed by the planning department along Canterbury Road and in my electorate. Those involved have played ping-pong with people's lives. The planning department has been infiltrated by people who have given the green light to development at Canterbury Park Racecourse. No matter how long it takes, the Opposition will get to the bottom of how, when and by whom the green light was given for development at the area 6 car park

and for the rezoning. The bill ensures that the moratorium is extended. The proposed moratorium extension follows an initial moratorium that was imposed on the Sydney Turf Club in 1997 and legislated in section 23 of the Australian Jockey and Sydney Turf Clubs Merger Act 2010. The moratorium protected the racecourse's land, buildings and other facilities from being sold or disposed of, meaning the community could retain the recreational use of its beloved park.

In 1997 a development application was proposed for a portion of the property presently known as area 6 to be utilised for night-time race meetings and included the associated installation of lighting structures. At a number of branch meetings at Kingsgrove, which I attended, that application was raised as a major community issue of contention. The resulting resolution of the council's approval of the development application on 18 December 1997 was that the application was subject to the provision of traffic management and parking in area 6. That area is currently used by people who attend Canterbury races, particularly the phenomenal and family-friendly night races. I urge all members in this place and their communities to get down to Canterbury Park races. The night racing is no longer on; it is usually run over summer. That was the intention back in 1997-98 when the development application was approved.

Debate interrupted.

LIQUOR AMENDMENT (RIGHT TO PLAY MUSIC) BILL 2020

Discharge of Order of the Day and Withdrawal of Bill

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (10:37): I move:

That general business order of the day (for bills) No. 1 [Liquor Amendment (Right to Play Music) Bill 2020] be discharged and the bill withdrawn. By leave and with the indulgence of the House I will say a few words of acknowledgement in relation to this bill and a similar bill. I acknowledge my colleague the Hon. John Graham, the shadow Minister for Music and the Night Time Economy, who introduced the Liquor Amendment (Right to Play Music) Bill 2020 in the upper House. I introduced the bill into this House. A few months ago the Government introduced the Liquor Amendment (24-hour Economy) Bill 2020. As the Hon. John Graham said, that bill was a "renovator's delight". The resulting legislation is fantastic and was achieved with the collaboration and cooperation of the Government. I acknowledge Minister Ayres, Minister Dominello and Treasurer Perrottet, who is in the Chamber, and the Hon. John Graham, who led for the Opposition. I acknowledge the many artists and entertainment industry members who gave their input. This week the Parliamentary Friends of Australian Music briefed MPs about the current crisis in New South Wales live music venues. I am glad the Treasurer is listening and we urge him to create a package. We must value our arts and culture. This is who we are.

Mr Dominic Perrottet: Read the paper. Look at the papers today. How good was it? They love it! They are loving it!

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: I urge more to be done. This State loves its arts and culture. This is who we are. As a community we need to value our artists. I acknowledge MusicNSW; Gabriele Metcalfe, Michael Rose and James Hulme from the Committee for Sydney; Katherine O'Regan from the Sydney Business Chamber; Karl Scholthauer from the Independent Bars Association of NSW; John Wardle from the Live Music Office; CEO of Solotel Justine Baker; Dean Ormstrom and Nick Pickard from APRA AMCOS; Kerri Glasscock from the Sydney Fringe Festival; Evelyn Richardson from Live Performance Australia; Tyson Koh from Keep Sydney Open; and the Health Services Union. I also congratulate Mike Rodrigues from *Time Out* on his recent appointment as the State's 24-hour Economy Commissioner.

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

Motion agreed to.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I order that a message be sent to the Legislative Council advising it of the resolution.

STATE INSURANCE AND CARE GOVERNANCE AMENDMENT (EMPLOYEES) BILL 2020

Second Reading Speech

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (10:41): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The State Insurance and Care Governance Amendment (Employees) Bill introduced by Labor will abolish the outrageous practice of paying Insurance and Care NSW [icare] executives bonuses. The bill is necessary because in the past two years eight executives at icare were paid \$8 million in salaries and bonuses. Another \$6 million was paid in bonuses to 200 of the 1,200 staff members at icare. In total, in the past three years at least \$14 million intended to help sick and injured workers and paid for by the New South Wales employers has instead been paid in bonuses to icare's executives and 200 staff members at that organisation. There is no ambiguity about what Labor thinks about that practice.

Let me be abundantly clear: icare's top executives are not worth the money they are paid. I acknowledge the shadow Minister for Finance and Small Business for the stellar job he has done of holding the Government to account with respect to what has been going on at icare under the administration of the Treasurer. Icare's board was wrong to pay those bonuses. The Treasurer should have stepped in to stop them well before Labor exposed their litany of wrongdoing. I acknowledge the presence of shadow Minister the Hon. Daniel Mookhey in the Speaker's gallery. I congratulate him on the work he has done to hold the Government accountable.

Today it was learned that icare is seeking permission for a massive 6 per cent increase to employer premiums. This will affect the small businesses in this State that are doing it tough. "For lease" signs are seen in every suburb because small businesses are doing it tough without support from the Government, while icare executives are ripping off injured workers—who are suffering, have not been paid or have been underpaid—and using their premiums to pay themselves big bonuses. How can the Treasurer justify massive premium increases for New South Wales businesses while defending the huge bonuses for icare's top executives? The massive employer premium increase will destroy businesses already doing it tough and cost jobs. I know that from speaking to small businesses around the electorate of Canterbury. Last night in Earlwood I spoke to small business owners and they said they are doing it tough not only because of the premium increase but also because of the Government's massive rate rise.

If any member thinks there is just cause to pay icare's executive bonuses, they should consider the facts. This is a summary of its record: The scheme's finances are in ruin, the core mission of icare to return workers to work as speedily as possible at the lowest cost to employers has collapsed, and the organisation is mired in governance scandal after governance scandal. The board is responsible for that disaster, and its response is to pay the executives responsible \$8 million in salaries and bonuses. That practice must come to an end. The extraordinary privilege to set executives' pay and conditions, which only icare has, must come to an end. The board can no longer be trusted with that extraordinary legal power. The Treasurer can no longer be trusted to oversee the way in which the board discharges its responsibility.

The facts that I will put before the House should lead all members to conclude that there is no reason that icare's executives should be paid those salaries and bonuses. If ever an emblem was needed for the warped logic that still prevails in icare's board, the House should consider the case of Mr John Nagle, icare's former CEO. I present the facts about the person who led the organisation for three years—the person to whom the board chose, with the backing of the Treasurer, to entrust the extraordinary responsibility of running the scheme that is meant to get injured workers back to work. Mr Nagle's base salary was \$700,000, which is more than the salary of any other public servant in New South Wales. Even the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet is not paid that much. That was his base salary.

In 2017-18 Mr Nagle was paid an additional \$220,000 above his \$700,000 salary. He took home nearly \$1 million, which is more than any other person working for the New South Wales Government. It was even more than the then CEO of WestConnex, who at the time we thought was the most highly paid official working for the New South Wales Government. In 2018-19 Mr Nagle was paid his \$700,000 base salary and an additional \$220,000 incentive payment—two bonus payments worth \$440,000 over two financial years. It emerges that in the same year that Mr Nagle was collecting his \$700,000 base salary and his \$200,000 in bonuses, icare contracted to pay Mr Nagle's wife a cumulative total of \$800,000 while he was the group executive supervising the work that his wife was performing.

Ms Kate Washington: What a shocker!

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: Talk about nepotism. His household earned close to \$2 million off the back of hardworking small business owners and injured workers, who are still being underpaid. Why were they paid so much? What do they owe this Government? I find that interesting. My colleague the Hon. Daniel Mookhey has done an exemplary job of holding the Government's feet to the fire and of scrutinising how it could pay one of its executives such a high base salary with bonuses and give his wife a contract without going to tender. When those details were reported to the board, it sanctioned him by not paying him a short-term bonus. Losing his short-term bonus was his punishment but, just in case that was a bit too onerous, he was still paid his long-term incentive bonus.

Ms Kate Washington: Awesome!

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: Even though he did not get the short-term bonus, he still got the incentive bonus. Icare said, "Don't worry, you are in trouble but we will still give you the incentive bonus." That is how this Government runs the show for injured workers and hardworking employers who are struggling. I thought the Liberal Party claimed to be the party of small business—absolutely not. Labor is the party of small business and sole traders. The Labour Party supports small businesses. Last night in Earlwood I spoke to local small business owners and they said that because of high taxes, high premiums and high rates, the NSW Liberal Party is not the

party of small business. The Labor Party is the party for small business because we are in this place advocating for what is fair to small businesses at this point in time and going forward.

At the same time as the board was saying that Mr Nagle did the wrong thing by paying \$800,000 to his wife and not declaring it, he was paid \$200,000 as a long-term incentive bonus. In response, Mr Nagle complained to the board about being sanctioned. There was no sense of accountability or culpability, and no admission whatsoever that perhaps the decision was wrong and certainly created the perception of wrongdoing. Instead, Mr Nagle said to the chair of the board that he would resign in protest of the decision of his short-term bonus being taken away. We learnt from Mr Nagle that the then chair of icare, Mr Carapiet, persuaded him not to resign. The Standing Committee on Law and Justice heard evidence that when Mr Nagle offered his resignation in protest against the board's decision to take away his short-term bonus, the icare chair said, "No, please keep your job." All that happened in secret and none of it was disclosed to the public or to the Parliament. That evidence was only brought to light because of the questions asked by Labor members during the committee's inquiry.

Those are the people we are trusting to decide whether icare executives should be paid extraordinary bonuses—and that is just the story of Mr Nagle. To top it all off, after the saga with Mr Nagle, the icare board turned around and decided to increase the salary of the new CEO to \$820,000 a year. Without factoring in any bonuses, the new CEO becomes the highest-paid public servant in our State's history. That decision is a slap in the face for every employer, small business and sick and injured worker begging for a cultural reset at icare. I remind the House of the litany of other wrongdoings taking place at icare, all while its top executives were being paid \$8 million in bonuses. Icare underpaid 52,000 workers a total of up to \$80 million. We recently learnt that just 24 of those 52,000 workers have been repaid. That is extraordinary and shows that the Government has no compassion. Icare was meant to be an organisation that helped people return to work. To this day we have no idea when icare will have repaid every underpaid injured worker. At the rate it is going, it will take more than 2,000 years.

At the same time that the executive class at icare were being paid bonuses, workers were being underpaid. Those sick and injured workers who were denied their legal entitlements still do not know when they will receive the money they are legally entitled to. Icare overpaid dodgy doctors hundreds of millions of dollars in duplicate and fraudulent payments. The committee heard one celebrated case of icare paying for caesarean anaesthesia for a man. Icare funded two secret advisors to work in the Treasurer's personal office, which Treasury found to be an unlawful arrangement. That cost icare at least \$900,000. This time last year, in the middle of a global pandemic, the Labor Opposition caught icare attempting to eject an additional 17,500 workers from the scheme to make its balance sheet look better. At the same time, icare applied to hike up employer premiums by 4 per cent and introduce a gap fee for any injured worker who wanted to see a doctor.

Now the Treasurer wants to slug 326,000 businesses even more. It is outrageous for a small business in New South Wales battling to survive through the COVID pandemic and the worst economic downturn in generations to pay a 6 per cent premium increase because icare's executives tanked the system while collecting bonuses. Many small businesses have already experienced a variety of premium shocks under the watch of those icare executives. How must they feel to know that the money they are handing over to icare is, instead, being used to line the pockets of a bunch of failed executives? The list goes on: icare handed three failed senior executives golden parachutes worth \$1.2 million after terminating their contracts; it is under investigation for paying \$22 million to insurance brokers in breach of the law; icare's former CEO and another top executive took an undisclosed sponsored trip to Las Vegas paid for by a multimillion-dollar organisation contracted to the agency; and icare's top executives took 36 foreign trips in four years, which is 10 times more than the regulator, the State Insurance Regulatory Authority, and more than any government agency in New South Wales.

Icare faces a referral to the Independent Commission Against Corruption for handing an \$11 million marketing contract to a company secretly owned by a top icare executive. That same \$11 million contract was for a net promoter score—that is, a rating of the likelihood that an employer or injured worker would recommend icare. Icare's executives' remuneration is tied to those net promoter scores and 10 per cent of the decisions to award bonuses to icare executives turns on those net promoter scores. The company that was collecting those net promoter scores and that the icare board was relying on to tell it whether icare executives should be paid bonuses was secretly owned by an icare top executive. In September 2019, after a complaint from Mr Nagle, Treasury secretly cancelled an external investigation into probity and governance at icare. The State Insurance Regulatory Authority said it holds grave concerns about icare and that it had referred icare to the ICAC.

A damning independent review found that icare failed to follow the law in 46 per cent of the claims it handled. Icare organised with Treasury a secret \$4 billion bailout of the workers compensation fund for police, nurses, prison guards and teachers to prevent the fund's collapse. In May last year the Treasurer was warned that icare was set to lose another \$850 million before COVID hit the scheme even harder. Icare racked up underwriting losses totalling \$4.5 billion in the three years leading up to 2019. We learnt that last year icare racked up another

\$1.8 billion net loss, meaning that over the past three years alone the organisation has made a net loss of \$4 billion. The \$3.9 billion surplus that technically existed prior to icare's formation is all gone. That is an extraordinary level of maladministration.

People should be sacked. All of that behaviour—maladministration, incompetence and corruption—was sanctioned by the board yet the people responsible were paid bonuses by the board. It invites the rather obvious question: With a record this bad, what does someone have to do wrong at icare to be denied a bonus? It is extraordinary that behaviour that bad is being rewarded with bonuses. That is what this Government represents: doing bad will get you a bonus. It sends not only a financial message that this behaviour should be rewarded but also an equally important cultural message that that is the behaviour we expect in the New South Wales public service and from the New South Wales Government.

Imagine how that must feel for all the heroes responding to the pandemic right now. Bear in mind that neither the Chief Medical Officer, Kerry Chant, nor any of the first responders battling COVID-19 received a bonus payment for their work—not one of them. Not a single person who spent last summer battling bushfires and is now rescuing people in floods is paid a bonus. Many of them were not even paid a salary or an honorarium to cover their costs. How must they feel knowing that the people who technically insure them are paid bonuses while they battle fires and floods? Indeed, all of us are grateful to our volunteers in SES and Fire and Rescue for their work over the past 84 hours. I visited my local SES unit and I am eternally grateful to people who put in their own time to save lives, property and animals.

Icare executives are living in a parallel universe, in la-la land, being paid bonuses even though they are ripping off the system. That is what the Government represents. Right now a cleaner on a train, in a hospital or at a school is far more essential to this State than any icare executive. Will they be given a pay rise or a bonus? They are receiving a 0.00008 per cent pay rise—20c. No-one could catch a train, go to school or go to hospital without any of those cleaners, yet the New South Wales Government sees fit to cut their pay during a pandemic at the same time that it is justifying the right of icare's executives to receive bonuses. That is simply outrageous.

I know that members on the opposite side of the House feel the same but they are too scared to say anything. Every one of those workers, be they our wonderful Dr Kerry Chant and her team at NSW Health, the bushfire volunteers at Fire and Rescue NSW and every other public servant and private sector worker who has kept our economy alive and our Government functioning, deserves bonus payments far more than icare executives. How is it possible for icare to get away with it? How is it possible that icare has so much power? The power of those icare executives to fritter away, without a tender, Government contracts to anyone—to their wives and their family and their mates—and give themselves incentive bonuses, even though they have done the wrong thing, is outrageous. In truth, when it comes to this law, the board is responsible. In fact, it is effectively the sorcerer's apprentice to the Treasurer.

Who is the sorcerer? The Treasurer wrote the law that gave icare's board that extraordinary power. The Treasurer created icare. The Treasurer wrote the State Insurance and Care Governance Act and he gave icare the unique privilege that is not available to any other government agency: the ability to set its own pay and conditions without recourse to any external tribunal or the requirement or permission of the Minister. Icare has its own power. It is not accountable to anyone—no tribunal, no-one, absolutely no-one. To understand just how novel it is, not even Sydney Water or Essential Energy have that power. WestConnex never had that power. No other State-owned corporation or organisation akin to icare has the legal power to set its own pay and conditions without the permission of the Minister. Icare got away with paying millions in bonuses to its top executives because the Treasurer gave it that power. The Treasurer is responsible because he gave this organisation extraordinary power that we have never seen in the State of New South Wales ever—and, hopefully, never will again.

The bill that the Opposition has brought before the House today is designed to unpick that work. When it comes to icare's executives' pay and remuneration, it is time to start treating them like every other State agency and State-owned corporation, which brings me to the bill. The bill amends the State Insurance and Care Governance Act to provide that members of staff of Insurance and Care NSW and the chief executive of icare NSW are not entitled to the payment of a performance-related bonus or incentive payment; and to limit icare NSW's responsibility in relation to matters about the employment of staff of icare NSW and the chief executive of icare NSW. In effect, the bill treats icare like any other State-owned corporation. If Sydney Water and Essential Energy can follow those rules then so can icare. To take members through the bill in some element of detail, I clearly outline the provisions. Clause 1 sets out the name, which is also called the short title of the proposed Act. Clause 2 provides for the commencement of the proposed Act.

The bill expressly prohibits the payment of a performance-related bonus or incentive payment from the date of assent for the CEO and all staff of icare, which will immediately remove the privilege that icare has to pay bonuses. From July 2021 the bill applies the current provisions of the State Owned Corporations Act to icare. This provides the Treasurer with the opportunity to set the regulations to rein in icare's lax governance standards. The

bill has a grandfathering arrangement for existing icare staff. We make it clear that no contract that is currently in place at icare needs to be disturbed, except for the payment of any incentive payments. All other base conditions of icare staff are preserved for as long as the existing staff member holds that role. That is what the bill does. The intention of the bill is clear: To restore the rule of law and the application of standard public sector and State-owned corporations employment practices to this extraordinary organisation. There is absolutely no reason why anyone should be opposing the bill. If the Treasurer and the Government vote against the bill, they are voting to pay icare executives more bonuses.

Any attempt to resist the bill is an endorsement of icare's bonuses and the executive board's prerogative to pay them bonuses. To the extent to which we have heard any arguments against the bill, Labor has heard some people say that icare is competing with the private sector for talent. Firstly, no private sector organisation would let the management team get away with such activities. If any ASX 50 company had engaged in the same behaviour as has icare, their management team would be sacked, gone, finished. If any management team of an ASX 50 company had lost \$4.5 billion in just three years, those people would be out of their jobs. How do we know that? That is because those people are out of their jobs. Look at what happened at the Australian Mutual Provident, the National Australia Bank and other organisations in which there were financial losses and governance scandals in the finance industry. Those boards got rid of their management teams and, when they failed, their shareholders got rid of the boards. If it is good enough for private sector organisations to have proper governance, to follow the rules and to follow the rule of law, then employers and injured workers deserve no less.

Secondly, to the extent to which the Government says that it is in competition with the private sector, I point out that in Queensland there is a stable workers compensation system supported by both employers and unions, which has the same dynamic as New South Wales. Somehow the Queensland Government does not have to pay its leadership extraordinary bonuses to deliver a superior result. In South Australia, which has a much harsher workers compensation scheme than Queensland, a Liberal Government-controlled scheme does not pay its executive anywhere near the level of bonuses that icare does. In Western Australia the same practices do not apply. The only State that we are aware of that pays the leaders of its workers compensation scheme \$8 million in salaries and bonuses to just eight people is in New South Wales under the Berejiklian Government. The only reason it happens in New South Wales is that the Liberal Party and the Treasurer said that it was moral, just, appropriate and necessary. That is wrong on all counts. It is time for the Parliament to send the message to the icare executives that the party is over, that the snouts in the trough is over, that the drink is over. It is over.

I close with the following observation. Throughout the course of the icare saga, many members of the House and of the Labor Party have heard from sick and injured workers across the State. It has been led by, as I mentioned, the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, the Hon. Walt Secord and all Labor members on the Opposition side of the House. I know that Government members across the aisle and members of the crossbench have heard members of the public, injured workers, who visited their electorate offices, who talked to them over the phone or contacted them through email or Zoom last year to tell this stories, about their injuries and about how difficult it is. It is tough. I know that members opposite have compassion for injured workers but they should find the angels in their heart and they must recognise that what has happened at icare is so wrong.

I know that deep down the Treasurer knows that this is so wrong. Poor people from a very low socio-economic status, who cannot speak English and people from many minorities see that icare executives are basically stealing their money while they are trying to feed their four or five kids and send them to school, while they cannot even get second-hand uniforms, while they cannot pay for the bus trip for their kids to go to school, while they cannot pay for petrol and cannot pay for insurance. I ask Liberal Party members to look into their hearts and know that this is so wrong. I know that there is compassion in members opposite, but they have to come out and take responsibility for this. This is absolutely wrong. This is not the Liberal Party that we know. This is not the Liberal Party of Greiner or Fahey. This is not the Liberal Party because I know that the Liberal Party believes in the rule of law. In terms of business and the way these organisations work, they work with appropriate governance and abide by the rule of law. The icare people have been allowed to ride roughshod. The party is over. It has to be over now—today.

I tell the story of one lady, Annette, who is a school librarian who lives in Orange. When she climbed a ladder to reach some books for the children—for young children so they can read a book—she fell. As a result, she cracked her spine and was incapable of work and in incredible pain. Here is the story of how deeply depressing it is when people suffer an injury at work and all they want to do is get back to work while making sure that they are compensated and properly remunerated. This is the downward spiral that injured workers have had to suffer. When they are in that mental suffering and they hear that the eight icare executives are getting \$8 million in bonuses as well as their salaries, they want to stand on the edge of a cliff. What point is there to live? These people are being underpaid. It is just so distressing.

On Boxing Day in 2017, Annette was one of the first people to lose access to income support. She was cut off from the scheme altogether and is now fending for herself. What happens to Annette? Annette is one example. We have Annettes across our electorates. The Epping electorate, the Ryde electorate, all the Liberal electorates have Annettes across their electorates. They have to look Annette in the eye and tell her why they are paying their executives bonuses while Annette is fending for herself. This is absolutely wrong and the Treasurer must make a statement about this.

Two years later, at Christmas 2019, Annette—who cannot walk more than five metres from her front door without needing to sit down because she suffers from incredible pain—lost her medical benefits. That means the scheme no longer pays for her pain medication. She is now trying to get a disability support pension. The support of her family is the only reason she is not homeless and in poverty. She is just one of the people who contacted the Hon. Daniel Mookhey's office and the Leader of the Opposition to tell their story. She is one of the many courageous workers who have lost benefits and pain medication in the name of financial soundness. She made it clear what she thought of icare's executives. She is only one of 7,000 people already affected by the changes that this Government introduced in 2012. All 7,000 are battling in various forms of poverty, pain, distress and depression because they no longer have the support that they were once entitled to.

Annette and all the others deserve a lot better. The 7,000 workers removed from this scheme in the name of financial soundness deserve a lot better than what they have been given. It is very distressing. Annette was a librarian doing her job, picking up books and reading to children. This is her life now. I talk to people in my electorate all the time. People are living in poverty in my electorate, in city electorates and in regional electorates, where it is even harder to get assistance. It is not their fault and they are distressed. I see those people all the time in my electorate. They cannot speak English, they are distressed, they are about to commit suicide—they are on the cliff. They want the Government to assist them. They are good people, they are good citizens who are trying to do the right thing. They were following the rule of law but, through no fault of their own, this has happened to them. The 52,000 underpaid injured workers in New South Wales deserve a lot better than the way they have been treated, as do the 300,000 businesses that have paid premiums to icare.

This Parliament needs to do much more to repair this damage and I urge the Treasurer and the Coalition to fix this mess. We have to start somewhere and that is why we are bringing the bill forward. It is important that we start by sending a clear message, at least about the executive remuneration practices. How is it possible that we can look people like Annette in the eye and say, "You should be suffering poverty, but the people who buggered up the scheme should be paid bonuses"? Right now that practice prevails, and it needs to be stamped out. We have got to start again and restore the rule of law, proper governance and probity standards to icare. We have to stabilise it and make sure that employers and sick and injured workers never have any cause to doubt whether their workers compensation scheme is functioning as intended. In fidelity, with all those people who are campaigning for change, with the support of all the employers and sick and injured workers who have contacted the Labor Opposition, we bring this bill to the House. On their behalf, we commend it to the House. It is time to stop paying icare's executives exorbitant bonuses.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (11:13): I lead for the Government to speak against the State Insurance and Care Governance Amendment (Employees) Bill 2020. It was interesting to note that the member for Canterbury spoke about Labor being the party for small business. That is the first time I have heard that. Past performance is the best indicator of future performance and, as we saw, Labor showed its true colours in the election campaign when it decided to cancel the increase in the payroll tax threshold. Labor would have put taxes on every mum-and-dad business that was liable for payroll tax in this State, and the compliance costs that go along with that. The member for Keira thought it was an appropriate policy to put a tax on farmers in the middle of a drought, of all times.

The member for Canterbury stands in this place and talks about the management of the workers compensation scheme. Let us go back to when Labor was managing the scheme. The member for Canterbury talks about the current premiums. Premiums are at their lowest levels, on average, since the 1980s. Under Labor, the Treasury Managed Fund [TMF] had a funding ratio of around 86 per cent; under this Government it is 98 per cent. That is the context in which the bill should be considered. Under Labor, the Nominal Insurer was down to 65 per cent; under the current arrangements it is at 98 per cent, and I think the TMF is at 105 per cent. The scheme was left in disarray by the Labor Government, with a deficit of \$4.1 billion and businesses across the State were facing premium increases of up to 28 per cent. That is diabolical financial management; it puts pressure on small businesses right across the State.

That is why we made substantive changes to the scheme when we came to office, and we made further changes following that. We separated the regulator from the commercial provider and turned the commercial provider, icare, into a commercial entity as a statutory corporation and public financial corporation with an independent governing board and gave it the ability to employ staff. This is similar to other State-owned

corporations with limited ministerial control relative to other government agencies. As a public financial corporation icare is involved in financial services and generally operates under the commercial policy framework. Icare has special staffing arrangements, including the following arrangements under section 14 of the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015:

The provisions of the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 relating to the employment of Public Service employees do not apply to the staff employed by ICNSW.

That provision ensures that icare can attract and retain specialised industry expertise and skills. That was considered necessary by the New South Wales Parliament when establishing icare in light of the size of icare's assets and liabilities. It is important to acknowledge community concerns raised following the media reports about icare and the New South Wales workers compensation scheme. That is why the Government brought forward the statutory review of the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015 and extended it to include a root and branch examination of icare, as well as a review of the State Insurance Regulatory Authority and SafeWork NSW.

To ensure its independence, the review is headed by retired Supreme Court judge the Hon. Robert McDougall, QC, with assistance from NSW Treasury and the Department of Customer Service. Importantly, I have already appointed a new chair of icare, Mr John Robertson—who may be known to those opposite—and have provided him with eight key priorities. One of those priorities is to undertake an immediate review of icare's bonus and remuneration framework. The other priorities Mr Robertson has been tasked with comprise leading the recruitment of a new CEO and managing director and a refresh of the icare board—underway and completed, ensuring full cooperation with Mr McDougall to allow the independent review of icare and the scheme to be delivered by 30 April 2021, improving return-to-work rates for the Nominal Insurer, providing monthly updates to the Treasurer on the pre-injury average weekly earnings remediation program, ensuring no overseas travel by icare staff unless approved by the board, overseeing the independent cultural review of icare, and monthly updates to the Treasurer on meetings with SIRA to address any issues.

Mr Robertson has begun delivering on his first priority through the appointment of Mr John Walsh, AM, and Mr Michael Cameron as icare board members in December 2020, and Mr Richard Harding as icare's new CEO and managing director on 18 January 2021. Recruitment for the remaining icare board members is currently underway. In addition, the report from the independent governance, accountability and culture review has been released. The independent review was commissioned by the icare board to help drive improvement of the organisation and to bring it back to its core priorities. Key input into this review included the board effectiveness review, completed in early 2020; the strategic risk review, completed by KPMG in mid-2019; the NSW Treasury review of the outcomes of the Hayne royal commission, which icare contributed to and has provided a paper on icare's response; the employee Net Promoter Score survey results; and the People Matter Employee Survey.

The report has been welcomed by icare's newly appointed CEO, Mr Richard Harding, and work has already commenced in light of the recommendations. A number of preliminary steps in response to the review have already been undertaken, including new employee policies, tighter rules and guidelines, more stringent reporting, and new avenues to speak up when there is an issue. The report has also been provided to the Hon. Robert McDougall for consideration in the McDougall review and also to the regulator SIRA as part of the response to its 21-point action plan. The report provides a road map towards change to lift icare's processes, behaviours and culture to meet community expectations, and icare's chair and CEO have committed to taking action.

The terms of reference of the McDougall review specifically require consideration of remuneration arrangements as part of the comprehensive organisational review of icare. It would be premature to make any changes until those reviews have been completed. The review should be unfettered in its ability to make recommendations about this and other aspects of the Act, given this is specifically within its terms of reference. It is now over to the Hon. Daniel Mookhey in the other place, who has somehow found his way to this Chamber; he is very excited this morning. Rather than play politics with this issue, we have set up a review. The review is looking specifically at the issues and that is why the bill is premature. The Government will not be supporting the bill.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (11:19): I join the Treasurer in speaking in opposition to the State Insurance and Care Governance Amendment (Employees) Bill 2020. I recognise the Treasurer's previous speech and his tremendous work during COVID-19 in ensuring that our economy was strong and in a position to guide us in the right direction in the years to come. I will be talking about icare's employment arrangements. Icare was created as a commercial entity and a statutory corporation—a public financial corporation—with an independent governing board and the ability to employ staff. That is similar to other State-owned corporations, with limited ministerial control relative to other government agencies. As a public financial corporation, icare is involved in financial services and generally operates under the commercial policy framework. Under section 14 of the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015, icare has a special staffing arrangement, including:

The provisions of the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 relating to the employment of Public Service employees do not apply to the staff employed by ICNSW.

That provision ensures that icare can attract and retain specialised industry expertise and skills. That was considered necessary by the New South Wales Parliament in establishing icare in light of the size of icare's assets and liabilities. Icare operates some of the largest insurance schemes in Australia, which carries significant risk and responsibility for group executive leaders. To be competitive in the open market and attract appropriate talent, it needed to offer appropriate remuneration packages. Approximately 66 per cent of icare's group executive and general managers have come from the insurance sector right across the country. A significant number have also come from the financial services sector. To compete with employers in this sector, icare offers what it can within its budget and remuneration policy, which is significantly below the remuneration level of the sector. While icare staff are employed directly by icare's board based on market rates, it closely aligns with the government sector employee protocols and guidelines.

PricewaterhouseCoopers undertook a study entitled *Making executive pay work: The psychology of incentives*. It surveyed 1,106 executives from 43 countries. Primary to the study was that a clear and immediate reward for successes motivates people. There has been intense scrutiny over pay for top executives since the revelations of the Hayne royal commission. The key lies in ensuring that executive pay is tied to targets that will encourage good practice and instil good culture. The performance of icare individuals meets that criteria and is determined on a number of metrics in line with icare's overall performance, which are available on icare's website and in its annual reports. Notwithstanding recent issues, icare has also built governance structures that we would expect for a large public financial corporation.

Icare's strong governance model was acknowledged in MinterEllison's post-Hayne royal commission review of the State's financial services businesses. The review found that strong governance is evidenced by appropriate governance structures, a strong and unambiguous tone from the top, ethical decision-making and awareness of good practice models; that customer focus is evidenced by the development of values and business practices focused on customer, member and client approaches; and that the focus on culture happens via refreshed culture programs with emphasis on leadership, values and behaviours. More recently, icare concluded an independent review in line with the recommendations of the State Insurance Regulatory Authority's 21-point plan into the culture, governance and accountability in icare and the agents managing the Nominal Insurer.

The key inputs to that review included the board effectiveness review completed in early 2020; the strategic risk review completed by KPMG in mid-2019; the NSW Treasury review of the outcomes of the Hayne royal commission, which icare contributed to and has provided a paper on icare's response; the employee net promoter score survey results; and the People Matter Employee Survey. Icare's CEO has welcomed the independent review report, which was released recently, and is using its recommendations to immediately refocus the organisation and bring it back to its core priorities. Actions already taken in response to the report include new employee policies, tighter rules and guidelines, more stringent reporting and new avenues to speak up when there is an issue in the organisation.

The amendments proposed in the non-government State Insurance and Care Governance Amendment (Employees) Bill 2020 would amend the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015 to immediately remove the entitlement to performance payments from the employees of Insurance and Care NSW. From 1 July 2021 it will make the appointment of the chief executive officer of icare subject to the Governor's approval on the recommendation of the Treasurer; require the remuneration of the CEO of icare to be approved by the Treasurer; give power to the Governor to remove the CEO of icare on the recommendation of the Treasurer; and limit the powers of icare in relation to the employment of staff, making its staffing arrangements similar to those of a State-owned corporation.

On 4 August 2020 the New South Wales Government announced an independent review of icare to be led by retired Supreme Court judge, Mr Robert McDougall, QC. As part of the review, the State Insurance and Care Governance Act is to be reviewed along with other parts of the legislative framework relevant to the workers compensation system. The terms of reference specifically require consideration of remuneration arrangements as part of the comprehensive organisational review of icare. The review will make recommendations to improve the workings of icare and the workers compensation schemes. The report from the independent governance, culture and accountability review has also been provided to the Hon. Robert McDougall, QC, for consideration in his review. The bill would pre-empt the outcome of the independent review by the Hon. Robert McDougall, QC, which will consider icare's remuneration arrangements.

Without proper examination of all aspects of icare and its legislative framework, there is a risk that enactment of the bill will result in adverse outcomes. It is preferable that the review be unfettered in its ability to make recommendations about this and other aspects of the Act, given this is specifically within the terms of reference. The introduction of the bill would also pre-empt the review of icare's bonus and remuneration

framework that is being led by the new chair of the ICAC board, Mr John Robertson, who was appointed to that role on 25 September 2020. The Treasurer spoke about that appointment at greater length earlier. In announcing the appointment, the Treasurer advised that Mr Robertson had been given eight key priorities, including undertaking an immediate review of icare's bonus and remuneration framework.

The other priorities Mr Robertson has been tasked with include leading the recruitment of a new CEO and managing director and a refresh of the icare board; ensuring full cooperation with Mr McDougall to allow the independent review of icare and the scheme to be delivered this year; improving return-to-work rates for the Nominal Insurer; and providing monthly updates to the Treasurer on the pre-injury average weekly earnings remediation program. [*Extension of time*]

Mr Robertson's priorities also include ensuring there is no overseas travel by icare staff unless it is approved by the board, overseeing the independent cultural review of icare and monthly updates to the Treasurer on meetings with SIRA to address any issues that have arisen. Mr Robertson has begun delivering on his first priority through the appointment of Mr John Walsh, AM, and Mr Michael Cameron as icare board members in December 2020, and Mr Richard Harding as icare's new CEO and managing director as of 18 January 2021. Recruitment for the remaining icare board members is currently under way.

The bill would unreasonably constrain Mr Robertson's ability to review and improve icare's remuneration framework in addition to delivering on the remaining priorities. He should be given the time to carry out that work properly and identify improvements that suit the needs of the organisation and, importantly, align with public expectations. Since Mr Harding's appointment, departmental changes have also begun. To align his priorities as CEO and managing director in lifting performance, creating clear lines of accountability, resetting the organisation's culture and responding to the recommendations of the impending independent reviews expected in the coming months, Mr Harding announced major leadership changes at icare.

A raft of changes will be implemented to establish a new strategic direction and reorganise the accountabilities for icare's group leadership team, with the clear purpose of creating end-to-end accountability for schemes, to drive greater focus on scheme performance and customer outcomes. Communities of Practice will be introduced for roles like underwriting, customer experience and insights, medical support, prevention and first line assurance. Those capabilities will be embedded to support the schemes but with a lead to ensuring consistency and assurance in the ways of working. There will be streamlining to enable functions in the core areas of finance and assurance, risk governance, people and communications, digital and technology, and office of CEO, including the enterprise strategy, thereby impacting existing roles.

In addition, an interim role of Group Executive Review and Reform will be established. With the exception of this interim role, direct reports to the CEO and managing director will be reduced from 13 to eight. That demonstrates that governance and risk issues are critical functions to the organisation and will set a strong tone from the top down in response to icare's governance review. The Government also has other means to make short-term changes to remuneration when appropriate. It has informal means through engagement with the board and formal means through the issuing of a direction to make changes to remuneration in exceptional circumstances. For 2019-20 it has been agreed that no icare staff will receive performance payments, given the issues within the organisation and the schemes it manages.

Ministerial approval is currently needed for the appointment and remuneration arrangements for CEOs of all State Owned Corporations and for the appointment of the CEO of NSW Treasury Corporation. Other entities give this power to the board, such as in the case of State Super and Sydney Metro. Given the current environment and the numerous reviews of icare, including the McDougall review and the Standing Committee on Law and Justice review, it is preferable that the review be unfettered in its ability to make recommendations about this and other aspects of the Act, given that it is specifically within its terms of reference. I support the Treasurer's opposition to the bill.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (11:33): I speak in debate on the State Insurance and Care Governance Amendment (Employees) Bill 2020. I note the shadow Minister and member for Canterbury has carriage of the bill in this place. Currently, Insurance and Care NSW, or icare, is exempt from the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 which means that icare's board decides what its staff is paid. Labor's recent call for icare to release pay information regarding two top icare executives raises concerns about the viability of allowing this exemption to continue. The salaries and bonuses for eight icare executives in the past two financial years alone added up to more than \$8 million, with the former CEO entitled to more than \$1 million, nearly double the pay of Dr Kerry Chant, the Chief Medical Officer handling the COVID-19 pandemic. Two hundred of the 1,200 staff members at icare were also paid bonuses.

Essentially, that means that over the past three years at least \$12 million has been used to pay for bonuses to icare's top executives and 200 staff members. That is \$12 million that was paid by New South Wales employers.

That is \$12 million that was meant to go towards assisting sick and injured workers. Let us not consider what police officers, paramedics, nurses, hospital cleaners, teachers and emergency workers currently earn compared with icare's executives. We would find a huge discrepancy, particularly now that their wages have been slashed by a Government that clearly does not value their work as much as it says it does. Where is their reward for what they did during the COVID-19 quarantine period and, indeed, what they continue to do on a daily basis?

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order: It is really misleading the House to say that wages that were increased by 0.3 per cent by the Industrial Relations Commission have been slashed. It is quite clear that it is misleading the House and it ought not to be allowed.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh): I uphold the point of order. "Slashing" implies a reduction. I ask the member for Fairfield to choose his words carefully.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: To the point of order: Temporary Speaker, I know that you are in the chair and far be it from me to demean the value of the Chair, but I will say to my learned friend across the Chamber that it is a slash. When you compare the 2.5 per cent that was mandated to be increased every year with .0003 per cent or whatever it is, that is a slash.

Mr Alister Henskens: Further to the point of order: The member for Fairfield has now misled the House a second time by saying that the pay rise was mandated to 2.5 per cent. The unions lost that argument in the Industrial Relations Commission. They were in the Court of Appeal yesterday, and I can tell you they are going to lose it there, too. The member should not mislead the House by saying that something was mandated when it was not.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: Clearly the time has come to address the yawning chasm between what icare executives think they are worth and what they are really worth. In 2015 the Treasurer created icare to provide workers compensation insurance to more than 326,000 businesses, insuring 3.6 million employees. From that time until the present day, icare's flaws have been innumerable and its mismanagement has become the stuff of legend. Fast-forward to 2020 and not only have icare executives received a bonus at the expense of underpaid workers but it has now emerged that icare has also overpaid questionable doctors millions of dollars in duplicate and fraudulent payments. In fact, many shady operations have emerged since its creation. I will go through them.

I am not misleading the House; these are the facts. Icare underpaid 52,000 workers up to \$80 million. It secretly tried to cut off payments to injured workers. It tried to increase employer premiums by 4 per cent and to introduce a gap fee for injured workers who needed to see a doctor. Icare has been referred to ICAC by the State Insurance Regulatory Authority. An independent review found that icare acted outside the relevant law in 46 per cent of claims. Icare's \$3.9 billion surplus has disappeared, to be replaced by \$4.5 billion in losses. To bring the debate closer to home, many constituents in the electorate of Fairfield have been affected by icare's failures. They deserve more. As far back as 2013, a precursor of what was to come was experienced by constituents in my electorate. I stand here as the member for Fairfield, along with my parliamentary colleagues in the New South Wales Labor Opposition. We support the bill that we have brought to the House.

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (11:39): I speak in debate on the State Insurance and Care Governance Amendment (Employees) Bill 2020. Icare was created as a commercial entity and a statutory corporation with an independent governing board and the ability to employ staff. That is similar to other State-owned corporations, with limited ministerial control relative to other government agencies. Icare has special staffing arrangements, including that the provisions of the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 relating to the employment of public service employees do not apply to the staff employed by icare. That provision is contained in section 14 of the State Insurance and Care (Governance) Act 2014 and ensures that icare can attract and retain specialised industry expertise and skills. It was considered necessary by the New South Wales Parliament when establishing icare, in light of the size of icare's assets and liabilities. Icare operates some of the largest insurance schemes in Australia, which carry significant risk and responsibility for its group executive leader.

Icare recognises that to be competitive in the open market and attract appropriate talent, it needs to offer appropriate remuneration packages. Approximately 66 per cent of icare's group executive and general managers have come from the insurance sector, and a significant number have come from the financial services sector. To compete with employers in those sectors, icare offers what it can within its budget and remuneration policy. This is significantly below the remuneration level of the sector; however, icare's social purpose is a key factor in attracting talent. The size of icare's capital under management is equivalent to that of an Australian Stock Exchange [ASX] top 50 company. However, employee costs are significantly lower than those of similar entities. Performance of individuals is determined on a number of metrics in line with icare's overall performance. These are available on icare's website and in its annual reports.

The Treasurer set eight priorities for the new chair of the icare board, Mr John Robertson, upon his appointment. They included leading the recruitment of a new CEO and a refresh of the icare board; ensuring full cooperation with retired Supreme Court judge the Hon. Robert McDougall, QC, to allow the independent review of icare and the scheme to be delivered by 30 April 2021; improving return to work rates for the Nominal Insurer; providing monthly updates on the pre-injury average weekly earnings remediation program; undertaking an immediate review of icare's bonus and remuneration framework; ensuring no overseas travel by icare staff unless approved by the board; overseeing the independent cultural review of icare; and providing monthly updates on meetings with the State Insurance Regulatory Authority to address any issues.

Many changes need to occur at icare to meet community expectations. The new icare CEO and managing director, Richard Harding, has announced leadership changes to refocus the organisation on its core priorities of caring for injured workers and road users and supporting New South Wales businesses, home owners and the Government. Mr Harding is introducing a smaller and more accountable leadership team to bring in new thinking and to focus the organisation on what it was set up to do. These changes aim to reduce complexity and duplication, and to simplify the business. The new leadership team will have three key focuses: improving risk and governance to meet community and regulatory expectations; improving performance, particularly in getting injured workers back to work sooner and reducing internal costs; and driving an accountable culture, particularly for icare leaders.

Icare works with Public Sector Industrial Relations and the Public Service Commission to ensure that decisions on remuneration or conditions of employment are consistent with the government sector legislative framework. The icare board and People and Remuneration Committee [PRC] set a remuneration policy which establishes how icare leaders are paid. The remuneration policy is reviewed every two years by the PRC and an external independent consultant who specialises in executive remuneration. It was reviewed by the PRC and consulting firm EY in August 2019. The review ensured the remuneration policy and annual and long-term incentive plans met best practice ASX-listed market standards and legislative and governance requirements. The board sets the remuneration of the chief executive officer and the PRC sets the remuneration of the group executive team. The board delegates to the chief executive officer the remuneration of all icare leaders. Remuneration decisions are made in accordance with staff delegations.

All remuneration considerations are made in line with icare's remuneration policy. The remuneration policy targets fixed remuneration to market median and allows a 15 per cent adjustment to allow for skills, experience and, where appropriate, relativities. In very limited cases, an executive role may be in high demand in the market due to external factors, which leads to a role being paid outside of this range. For example, following the banking royal commission there was a significant increase in demand for certain risk and compliance roles. Icare provides an opportunity to earn an annual performance payment to a number of levels of leadership roles. Icare's performance payment opportunities are substantially below the private sector and people coming from that sector usually join icare at substantially lower variable remuneration compared to the market. Icare generally sources market remuneration data from Aon Hewitt's *General Insurance Industry Remuneration Report (Australia)*. From time to time, icare will source other remuneration benchmarking for specialist roles and will use it as the source data.

Icare makes a submission to the Wages Policy Taskforce established by the NSW Public Sector Wages Policy and convened by the Department of Premier and Cabinet each year in respect to any variation to the icare award or average remuneration adjustments for leaders or non-award employees. Approval of the average increase for leaders is conditional on the annual determination by the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Tribunal for public service senior executives' remuneration in terms of the percentage adjustment and the effective date. The PRC considers the outcome of that annual determination and how to apply it to annual remuneration increases for leaders. Any remuneration increase for the chief executive officer is determined by the board.

It is important to acknowledge community concerns that were raised following media reports about icare and the New South Wales workers compensation scheme. That is why the Government brought forward the statutory review of the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015, which incorporates a root-and-branch review of icare, the State Insurance Regulatory Authority and SafeWork NSW. The review is headed by retired Supreme Court judge the Hon. Robert McDougall, QC, with assistance from NSW Treasury and the Department of Customer Service. An independent governance, culture and accountability review of icare has been undertaken. New icare chairman John Robertson and new CEO Richard Harding have welcomed the independent governance, accountability and culture report and confirmed that further action would be taken immediately to refocus the organisation on core priorities of caring for injured workers and road users and supporting New South Wales businesses, home owners and the Government.

The report was commissioned by the icare board to help drive the improvement of the organisation. It has already been provided to Robert McDougall for consideration in the McDougall review and to the regulator as part of the response to its 21-point action plan. The report provides a road map towards change to lift icare's

processes, behaviours and culture to meet community expectations. Icare's chair and CEO have committed to taking action. The CEO has acknowledged the significant task ahead for icare, noting that the report highlights that the organisation's risk and governance systems and culture needs to change. Action has already been taken on many of the issues highlighted, including development of new employee policies, tighter rules and guidelines, more stringent reporting and new avenues to speak up when there is an issue. Key to the changes currently underway is the new and more accountable leadership team, which will bring in new thinking, reduce complexity and evolve the organisation. Aligning the leadership team to the different schemes icare manages will ensure end-to-end accountability so that injured workers and road users, businesses and the New South Wales Government receive services from those who understand them best.

The new team includes the newly announced group executive for the Nominal Insurer, who commenced with icare on 24 March 2021. She is tasked with improving return to work, including paving a pathway for more competition in case management services. This will involve seeking industry and community input to ensure icare gets it right. A new group executive for risk and governance will be charged with lifting icare's risk, compliance and governance performance and will have a dual reporting line to the CEO and to the board. This position will be advertised shortly. As mentioned, icare's new CEO has an immediate focus on lifting performance to meet community expectations, creating clarity of accountability and identifying ways to reduce complexity and simplify the business. Mr Harding is already meeting with stakeholders, listening to their concerns and formulating strategies to effect immediate and positive change.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (11:48): The Greens support the State Insurance and Care Governance Amendment (Employees) Bill 2020. In fact, we were critical of Labor because the bill is so weak and so basic. It is a very simple and straightforward amendment that deserves support from this House. It does a necessary thing: It ensures that the money that has been paid by employers and set aside in the nominal fund for the benefit of injured workers can no longer be used to provide millions of dollars in bonuses to employees of Insurance and Care NSW, or icare. It is very simple. The Greens think there needs to be significant reform, but this bill from Labor is straightforward and easy to support. All it does is state that the money paid by employers should not be used to shovel millions of dollars into bonuses for the employees of icare.

Across-the-board remuneration arrangements are problematic. Members opposite, the media and inquiries have all spoken about the problematic way that remuneration has been handled. This bill does not solve icare's problems. It deals with one small, confined area. The community will support this bill 100 per cent. They do not support millions of dollars being paid to executives through over-inflated salaries. I have been critical of my own local council, where the general manager is paid more than our Premier. Salaries are out of control for these people. There must be balance. As representatives of our communities, we are responsible for that. I acknowledge the Hon. Daniel Mookhey and Mr David Shoebridge from the upper House and all those who have worked so hard on this issue. Of the 200 executives at icare, eight of them collectively received \$8 million in salaries and bonuses over two years. That is unacceptable. The bill goes a long way to resolving that issue. The Greens will support the bill. The Greens endorse the bill. We hope that all members will back the proposal.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (11:50): I make a contribution to debate on the State Insurance and Care Governance Amendment (Employees) Bill. At times I become concerned about the audacity of the Labor Opposition in pretending that things were perfect prior to the commencement of icare and this Government's tenure in 2011. I sat in opposition for four years. I can confirm and advise the House that the previous workers compensation scheme run by the Labor Government prior to 2011 was an absolute basket case. It was in debt for billions and billions of dollars. Leading up to the 2011 election, I heard constantly about the problems that businesses faced. Many businesses were not just concerned but petrified about the viability of their businesses as premiums were expected to rise by 28 per cent. I will say it again: Workers compensation scheme insurance premiums were expected to rise by 28 per cent.

That had the capacity to destroy businesses. It was an enormous disincentive to those employers. The scheme was reformed as it could not continue to run in the red. Something needed to be done. Is the current scheme perfect? I would not say that anything is perfect. Does it need to continue to adapt and address gaps? It certainly does. That is what this Government continues to do. Icare was created to bring fairness, financial sustainability and customer centricity to workers compensation and across all the State's statutory insurance schemes. The Government has charged the former Labor leader and new chair, John Robertson, and new chief executive officer, Richard Harding, with recognising the gaps within the scheme and remediating the operations. It must return to the initial goals of fairness, financial sustainability and customer centricity.

It is worth remembering that since its creation icare's goal has been to build a more effective and efficient operating model. That was severely lacking prior to 2011 under the former Labor Government. The present operating model leverages similarities in insurance and care schemes that it provides services to in order to realise benefits more broadly across the State. When icare was established there was a lack of consistency in service

delivery, processes, systems and training across the five scheme agents in workers compensation. Since its creation, icare has built an operating model that leverages the similarities in the insurance and care schemes it provides services to ultimately to provide benefits for the people and injured workers of New South Wales. Prior to icare, the workers compensation in this State was often criticised for a lack of consistency in service delivery. Surprise, surprise.

There was a lack of consistency in terms of processes, systems and training that was run by the five scheme insurance agents. The duplication resulted in inflated costs and inconsistent support for employers and injured workers. Once the icare transformation began, the level of accessibility and choice for injured workers has materially increased, enabling them to make better-informed decisions. The previous support model was a one-size-fits-all approach. That is typical of the previous Labor Government: It failed to adapt and reform and essentially ran things into the ground while clocking up enormous amounts of debt. There were billions of dollars of debt in the workers compensation scheme prior to this Government being elected in 2011. Today the injured worker's situation is the key determinant of targeted interventions using evidence-based best-practice treatment and recommendations.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the creation of the Workers Care Program, which ensures that those severely injured in the workplace are provided with the same level of care and support as those injured on New South Wales roads. That is an important change. Changes made to the scheme and a new claims service model under icare require and permit managing insurance agents to make fair decisions. The recovery approach is work-led for access to treatment. Before icare, an injured worker's treatment was often delayed by long liability assessments or referrals to independent medical examiners [IME] and the average treatment approval time was six weeks. As members of Parliament, we continue to hear about those delays in the scheme, with a conga line of people outside our offices. That has been a great reform under the current scheme.

Following the introduction of the medical support panel, cases are reviewed and, if appropriate, approved without an IME referral within an average of five days. That is vastly different from the previous scheme. There is now a focus on open communication, including proactive stakeholder contact to implement scheme reforms, operational oversight and service metrics. There are approximately 9,000 outbound—

Mr RYAN PARK: I move:

That the question be now put.

The House divided.

Ayes39
Noes43
Majority.....4

AYES

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

NOES

Anderson, K	Gulaptis, C	Provest, G
Ayres, S	Hancock, S	Roberts, A
Barilaro, J	Hazzard, B	Saunders, D
Berejiklian, G	Henskens, A	Sidgreaves, P
Clancy, J	Kean, M	Smith, N
Conolly, K	Lee, G	Speakman, M
Cooke, S (teller)	Lindsay, W	Stokes, R

NOES

Coure, M
Crouch, A (teller)
Davies, T
Dominello, V
Elliott, D
Gibbons, M
Greenwich, A
Griffin, J

Marshall, A
O'Dea, J
Pavey, M
Perrottet, D
Petinos, E
Piper, G
Preston, R

Taylor, M
Toole, P
Tuckerman, W
Upton, G
Ward, G
Williams, R
Wilson, F

PAIRS

Aitchison, J
Hornery, S
Saffin, J
Watson, A

Constance, A
Evans, L
Bromhead, S
Williams, L

Motion negatived.

Debate interrupted.

*Motions***GREEK INDEPENDENCE 200TH ANNIVERSARY**

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (12:08): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes 25 March 2021 is the 200th anniversary of Greek Independence.
- (2) Acknowledges the sacrifice of the Greek people who stood in defiance of the oppressive Ottoman Empire, and fought for freedom and democracy.
- (3) Recognises the enduring legacy of the Greek state and contributions of the Greek community within New South Wales.
- (4) Acknowledges the efforts of community groups delivering commemorative events throughout New South Wales.
- (5) Wishes the Greek community a joyous celebration of 200 years.

I start by saying "Χρόνια Πολλά!". On 25 March 1821 the Greek War of Independence was born when Bishop Germanos of Patras raised the Greek flag over the Monastery of Agia Lavra in the Peloponnese. The call to arms was simple: ελευθερία ή θάνατος, which means "freedom or death". This was a revolution to demand liberty and bring democracy back to the Greek people after 400 years of slavery under the Ottoman Empire. Initially, small sporadic revolts against the Turkish broke out in the Peloponnese and the Aegean Islands led by some determined guerrilla fighters. A year later the rebels had set the Peloponnese free and the independence of Greece was declared in January 1822 by the National Assembly of the Greeks as what was becoming a long fight continued. Two hundred years on from the independence war waged against the Ottoman Empire, we continue to celebrate Greece's defiance of oppression and battle for the values of freedom and democracy that unite us all.

That is why I am so incredibly proud that we are considering this motion today in the oldest Parliament in Australia. I move this motion not only as an Australian-Greek member of Parliament and a member of the World Hellenic Inter-parliamentary Association but also, very proudly, with the support of my colleagues and friends on the other side who are also of Greek ancestry: the member for Rockdale, Steve Kamper, and the member for Canterbury, Sophie Cotsis. Today is a special day for the Greek community, and indeed all philhellenes. The New South Wales Government and all members in this Chamber are incredibly proud to support this bicentenary by adorning in blue and white the sails of the Sydney Opera House this evening. It will be a spectacular sight to behold. While many will marvel at the beauty of our decorated landmark, the significance of this bicentenary should not be dismissed as a celebration of a land far away.

History shows us that the Greek people were the first of the Ottoman Empire's subjects to secure recognition as an independent sovereign power. Today we celebrate the message that the liberation of Greece sent to all other oppressed people in the nineteenth century: Freedom and democracy is indeed possible for everyone. Those Hellenic ideals have spread throughout the world and Australia is proud to carry on the traditions pioneered by our Greek forefathers. In addition, this special bicentenary is an opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the unique bonds between Australia and Greece both as allies in battle and great friends in times of peace. The enduring legacy from World War I is only one example of the enduring ties that bind our two nations. On 4 March

1915 over 3,000 Australian troops, nurses and medical staff landed on the tiny Greek island of Lemnos, which provided a base for Australian and New Zealand forces for hospitals, supplies and refuge.

Lemnos was the main staging area for supporting Allied troops throughout World War I in Gallipoli. You do not need to look too hard to see the pride the Lemnians have in their Anzac heritage. I should know, as I am one of them. There is an Anzac Trail along Anzac Street, an Anzac Pier, an Anzac display at the History and Maritime Tradition of Mudros Museum, and numerous commemorative stones across the island. I also eagerly await the investment by the Australian Government in an open-air museum to capture our shared history and the contribution that Australian nurses made. Lemnos is also home to two military cemeteries, one at East Mudros and the other at Portianos, which I had the absolute privilege of visiting with the member for Rockdale when we took six Australian high school students there.

The cemetery at East Mudros is the final resting place for nearly 900 souls, including 98 Australians, while Portianos Military Cemetery contains around 350 further resting places, including for 50 Australians. This year also marks the eightieth anniversary of the Battle of Crete, in which Anzac and British forces fought alongside the Greeks in one of the turning points of World War II. The Greek fighting spirit was called on in 1941 at the Battle of Crete when the Greeks did what many would not and fought back against the might of then Nazi Germany. Crete had been used as an evacuation point for nearly 50,000 Commonwealth and Greek soldiers evacuated from Greece, including 6,500 Australian soldiers. On 20 May German forces launched Operation Mercury, which saw German paratroopers descend on the airfields of Maleme, Retimo, Heraklion and the naval base at Suda Bay, but within the first day they had not captured their objectives.

Australian and British forces joined their Greek allies in defending the island against the evils of fascism and Nazi oppression. The courage and gallantry of those servicemen and servicewomen will never be forgotten as they united against the forces of division and hate. The connections our people forged during that campaign are still honoured today. Throughout our shared history the ethos of the Greek people of "freedom or death" is evident. Today is a celebration for our community and an opportunity to celebrate not only in Australia but also in the entire world the contribution that the Greek people have made to democracy and freedom. It is a reminder of what the women, men and children who rose up against the Ottoman Empire in 1821 achieved when they stood by that simple motto of "ελευθερία ή θάνατος". We should never forget the cost that our freedom comes at and where it has come from. So today I say to the Chamber: Ζήτω η Ελλάδα! Ζήτω η ελευθερία! Ζήτω η δημοκρατία!

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (12:15): I wholeheartedly support the New South Wales Legislative Assembly placing on record its recognition of 200 years of Greek independence. I also say, "Eleftheria i thanatos!" Those words—"freedom or death"—served as the rallying call of the Greek revolutionaries 200 years ago. They were so important to the Greek people that they continue to serve as Greece's national motto today. To understand those words, it is important to remember that Greek Independence Day is not a celebration of when the Hellenic people achieved freedom from Ottoman rule in 1829. We are celebrating the day the resistance truly began, when Bishop Germanos of Patras raised the flag of revolution over the Monastery of Agia Lavra in the Peloponnese in 1821. It goes without saying that Greeks are exceptionally proud of their history and, in particular, their contributions to the world. Hellenic people have given us some of the greatest thinkers ever known, including philosophers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, who still define the way we think; and mathematicians like Archimedes, Euclid and Pythagoras, whose contributions are still taught to every child in primary school.

Hippocrates, the father of medicine, lived nearly 2½ thousand years ago but his values still define the modern practice of medicine. Hellenes gave the world the Olympics, astronomy and the very concept of democracy. They taught the world that humanity could raise itself up to a higher ideal and reach beyond ourselves to something greater. The Greeks built five of the seven wonders of the ancient world, the last of which was destroyed half a millennia ago. But what the Hellenes valued and what their descendants still know to this day is that a building might crumble but an idea can live forever. Greece today has a population of just over 11 million—less than one-fifth of 1 per cent of the people in the world. It goes without saying that Greeks have punched well above their weight.

I list these people and contributions not to brag but to give the context to how these people remained a people after the fall of Constantinople, when Hellenes lived as second-class citizens within the Ottoman Empire for more than 400 years. In that period Greece was not controlled by Greeks, Greek culture and religion was shunned and oppressed, generation after generation lived and died under foreign rule, embracing your people's own collective identity was dangerous and to be Greek Orthodox was to be lesser. In spite of all this, Hellenic culture and the Greek Orthodox Church endured. Despite 400 years passing and generations only knowing of Greece as a strong, independent nation from stories passed down from their forebears, Hellenic culture was such a powerful influence and the Greek Orthodox Church was such a uniting institution that the revolutionaries still knew that there was something incredible worth fighting for even after all that time had passed.

For hundreds of years Hellenes across the Ottoman Empire conducted the education of their children in secret. They practised their religion, knowing what it would cost them. Four hundred years was not enough to make people forget thousands of years of history. So it was in the early months of 1821 that disparate groups of revolutionaries, who had lived in separately administered parts of the Ottoman Empire for hundreds of years, rose up all at once. They were divided by space and time but united by an idea that they were once, and would again be, a free people. They demanded freedom and they knew that freedom was worth the ultimate price.

Despite all of this struggle and sacrifice built on a sense of shared identity, Greek Independence Day is not only about national pride—it is not even primarily about national pride. It is about a sense of collective duty, about living not just for yourself but giving back to others. It is about rising above pettiness and committing to a higher ideal. It is about respect, humility and remembering those who came before us and all that we owe them. For Bishop Germanos, for the Filiki Eteria, for every other Hellene who thought their culture was worth remembering, worth fighting for, worth dying for in spite of nearly 400 years of foreign rule, the Greek War of Independence was their expression of Hellenism. They knew what the cost could be—*eleftheria i thanatos*. They repeated that cost to themselves every day, but they paid it gladly because they knew what they were doing was important.

Since then the spirit of Greek Independence Day has continued to guide Greece as a nation. I have no doubt that Greece's other major secular holiday, Oxi Day—No Day—was inspired by the same spirit. Oxi Day celebrates the day that the Greek Prime Minister, Ioannis Metaxas, rejected Benito Mussolini's ultimatum to use Greece as a staging ground for the Axis powers. He refused this ultimatum despite knowing what it would cost Greece. Just a few hours later Italian forces attacked the Greek border, and with that Greece entered the Second World War. Later that morning, thousands of Greeks flooded the streets, chanting "Oxi". Greek Independence Day is not just about freedom for Hellenes but freedom for all peoples against tyrants, and Oxi Day carries forward that spirit.

Today the Greek diaspora has spread around the world. New South Wales and Australia are home to hundreds of thousands of people of Hellenic descent. Greek-Australians like me are incredibly proud of being Australian but they also continue to celebrate our Hellenic identity. We are hardworking, enterprising people who embrace modern Australia but remember the thousands of years of shared history and achievement in our DNA. I would say that this place is a perfect example of how Hellenes still punch above their weight, with three members of this House—me and my great friends the member for Canterbury and the member for Miranda—proudly sharing Greek heritage. I note that today His Royal Highness is visiting Greece to celebrate this important anniversary. I hope he has taken the Parthenon Marbles with him as they should have been returned decades ago! I feel very blessed to give my support to this motion acknowledging the 200th anniversary of Greek Independence Day. I thank every member of this House for their support.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, and Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (12:22): I thank the member for Miranda for moving this important motion acknowledging Greek Independence Day and recognising 200 years of Greek independence. As the multiculturalism Minister it is my pleasure to recognise the importance of the bicentenary of Greek independence. I recognise not only this great motion but also the Greek heritage of the member for Miranda, the member for Rockdale and the member for Canterbury. Despite sometimes having a difference of opinion, I know they are proud to be Australian as well as being proud of their Greek heritage. We should all be proud of being Australian and equally proud of our heritage. We should celebrate the differences that bring us together in one of the best, if not the best, nation in the world. Our multiculturalism shows how we can combine different heritages from hundreds of different countries around the world to become a country known for its wealth of people who are proud of their heritage.

At the heart of Greece's battle for independence was a battle for freedom and democracy, which are values we uphold in this place today. I recognise the gift of democracy that Greece has given the world. Under the Westminster system this Parliament places high emphasis on that ultimate gift of democracy that makes Australia and many other countries around the world welcoming, stable and successful nations. Many of our traditions have come from Greece, and its people have contributed to our knowledge and intellectual pursuits. Australia would not be the same country without the gifts given by the forebears of the Greek community.

Greek immigrants began arriving in Australia in the mid-eighteenth century. Towards the end of the nineteenth century Greek organisations were established in Sydney, with the Greek Orthodox Church being the central focus of the community. Between 1947 and 1982, almost 250,000 Greek immigrants arrived in Australia. More than 132,000 people in New South Wales who have Greek ancestry have helped make our State the thriving place it is today. I celebrate and thank them for their contributions to making New South Wales such a wonderful place. As the multiculturalism Minister, I acknowledge the contributions and achievements of the Greek community, which has excelled in business, sport, entertainment and public life. New South Wales is all the better for its contributions and achievements.

I also thank the Australian-Greek community of New South Wales for their support and cooperation throughout the pandemic. This Government has worked closely with community leaders to keep them informed and we have translated NSW Health information into 52 community languages, including Greek. I especially thank the Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church of Australia for his leadership and invaluable support in recent months. Archbishop Makarios played an instrumental role in sharing COVID-19 messaging with his congregations and adapting church services to conform with COVID-safe practices over the past year. At one point we asked our communities to close their places of worship. That was not an easy action for any community leader to take. [*Extension of time*]

I thank the Opposition for its bipartisan support in celebrating 200 years of Greek independence. For the Greek Orthodox faithful, closing places of worship meant that for the first time in their lifetime they were unable to go to church during Great Lent and Holy Week. Thankfully, this year things will be different. Tonight the New South Wales Government, under the leadership of Premier Berejiklian, will project the colours of the Greek flag onto the Sydney Opera House. This will be a special moment of recognition for the contribution of the Australian-Greek community in New South Wales in celebrating 200 years of Greek independence. This event will be beamed right across the world. It is a fantastic opportunity to show that New South Wales is leading the world in recognition of the contribution of the Australian-Greek community to modern day life. I extend my best wishes to the Australian-Greek community across the State, in my electorate of Parramatta and in this place for a happy Greek Independence Day.

It would be remiss of me if I did not recognise St Johns Church in Parramatta, under the stewardship and leadership of Father Dimitri, and the annual Let's Go Greek Festival, which typically attracts between 10,000 and 15,000 people a year. Let's Go Greek Festival includes not only cultural events but also dancing, entertainment and food. Unfortunately, during COVID-19 that event had to be cancelled but it was modified with online cooking classes, and the wonderful food was delivered to different senior parishioners who needed a hand and were socially isolated because of the pandemic. I take my hat off to St Johns, its volunteers and the congregation led by father Dimitri. I wish St Johns all the best. Recently it has moved from Hassall Street to near the river and the establishment of the school will be a beacon for everybody in the Parramatta community. I look forward to the opening of their new school and new church. I know that there are difficulties in terms of such a big and audacious project. It was a big move because everyone was used to their church in Hassall Street. The problem was that there was no parking and no room for expansion.

On reflection, the brave decisions that were made a number of years back to sell that site and buy another site are particularly advantageous now. They now have a bigger site and the opportunity to make a community centre with the establishment of a Greek school and a new church, all anchored along the riverside and right near the light rail station. The risk-taking ability and the foresight of the elders in making those decisions have paid off in spades. This project has brought together all the Australian-Greeks in Parramatta and united them under the common cause of establishing the new St Johns church and school. It will be another 25 years of strong commitment by the local community. I look forward to working with the parishioners and all the volunteers. I thank them for all their support. Once again I wish everybody of Australian-Greek heritage happy Greek Independence Day. Ζίτο i Elláda.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (12:30): It is with great pride and honour I speak in the oldest parliament of Australia, the New South Wales Parliament, to the motion on the 200th anniversary of Greek independence. I acknowledge my very good friend the member for Miranda, Eleni Petinos, for bringing this motion forward. I also acknowledge the member for Rockdale, Stephen Kamper, for his fantastic contribution, and the Philhellenes, who are visiting this wonderful Chamber. I thank the members of this place for supporting this motion. I acknowledge the important contribution Hellenic women made for over 400 years in the struggle for Greek liberation. Before I begin, I draw the attention of the Parliament to the dispatches between 1803 and 1842 of the New South Wales Parliament through the *Sydney Gazette* and the *New South Wales Advertiser*, where there was mention of the independence of Greece. The dispatch states:

According to news from Greece, so late as the 16th of March last, the Congress of the Peloponnesos resolved that representatives should be sent to the different Courts of Europe to obtain a recognition of the independence of Greece.

That is one of the dispatches from the New South Wales Parliament. The Greek Hellenic women have made a huge contribution, particularly during those 400 years. Many of them, particularly in the early 1800s, joined the underground resistance movement Filiki Eteria. For many people of Greek heritage, including myself, the Greek War of Independence was traditionally depicted to us with few known women at the helm of the campaign. However, we owe a huge debt to those women—mothers, daughters and sisters—who died, who preferred to be killed than to be enslaved, and who fought, struggled and suffered for 400 years. These women were part of ensuring that the Hellenic language stayed alive for 400 years, as well as the traditions and customs. For 400 years those women had a passion for liberation and, of course, for the Christian religion. Today we also celebrate the

Annunciation of the theotokos, one of the great feats of the Greek Orthodox Church. Xronia Polla, to all those who are celebrating.

While the women from the revolutionary period are represented in artwork, folk music, poems and travel journals of Philhellenes, such as by Lord Byron, their contribution to Greek independence has been underplayed in the official books. I acknowledge the women who have researched this area, particularly those in Greece but also people such as my very good friend Dr Panayota Nazou from the University of Sydney. She recently held a lecture titled "Women of '21", where she discussed a number of primary sources that documented the illustration of the important role that women played in the struggle for independence. Interestingly, one important source were the periodicals and newspapers that were distributed by women in the second half of the nineteenth century. Dr Nazou's research has helped shed more light on the Souliotisses, the Spartan-like female warriors, who helped inspire the Greek resistance. The Souliotisses were taught from very young girls about weaponry and strategy and how to fight like Spartans. They took on many battles and they won. The 400 years of oppression, the stealing of children—this period cannot be covered in this debate. [*Extension of time*]

The first of the known heroines was in 1478, H Maroula of Lemnos, who at 18 showed immense courage. I note that the member for Miranda is also from Lemnos. Maroula of Lemnos is acknowledged and praised for what she was able to do, particularly as many women did not want to be captured, they did not want to be tortured and they did not want their children stolen or enslaved. For them, there was no choice. As has been stated, it was death rather than being enslaved. In 1570 there was Maria Sigglitiki, the heroine of Cyprus. She not only was a heroine but also did amazing things for her people of Cyprus. The Souliotisses, Moscho Tzavela and Haido Giannaki Sehou played a pivotal role in some of these battles. This defiance was again illustrated in 1803 when dozens of Souliotisses and their children threw themselves off Mount Zalongoto to avoid being enslaved.

There are two similar documented incidents, the Dance of Zalongo at Riniasa and the Falls of Arapitsa, where women and girls made the ultimate sacrifice in the fight for the independence of Greece. There is the story of shipowner Laskarina Bouboulina in her warship, the *Agamemnon*, and with her small fleet of ships, who helped liberate several coastal cities in the early stages of the Greek War of Independence. It was not until 2018 that Bouboulina was posthumously awarded the rank of vice admiral by the Greek ministry of defence.

Another Greek woman in the underground who spent her fortune on the independence struggle was Manto Mavrogenous. She funded and led several battles against the Ottomans and was awarded the rank of lieutenant general after independence. We also hear the name of Domna Visvis, another important person during the fight for independence. More light has been shed on Panoria Xatzikonstantithe, whose husband was killed and children abducted. She lived a very poor life because all her money was given to the war effort. The women who were part of the Filiki Eteria raised money and sought assistance from the diaspora across the world. Elizabeth Ypsilantis and Magiro Zarafopoula relayed and transferred information about the preparations for the War of Independence.

There are many women who played a part. I would not be in this place, and I know that my colleagues Eleni Petinos and Stephen Kamper would not be in this place, if it were not for the efforts of those Hellenic women who suffered and who were enslaved. We owe them a debt of gratitude. I say to the many community leaders, the Government and Opposition and many others, regardless of their background, today we are free, we are liberated and we have the ability to speak. We owe a great deal of gratitude to all those who contributed and for their sacrifice and heroism. May I say Zito i Australia, Zito i Elláda.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (12:39): I express my wholehearted support of this motion and acknowledge a special day for one of the most valuable communities across New South Wales. It is fitting that the motion is moved by the member for Miranda. Having known her for some time, I have witnessed firsthand the immense pride she has in the Greek culture right across New South Wales. In fact, that is true of Greek people not just in this Chamber but right across our country. No-one has more passion, love and pride for their heritage. Today those of Greek heritage have even more reason to be proud because 25 March 2021 marks the 200th anniversary of Greek independence, commemorating all those who stood in defiance of the oppressive Ottoman Empire and fought for freedom and democracy.

The War of Greek Independence is a story of fighting for the values that we in this House value so strongly: representation, freedom of opinion and democracy. In fact, the cry "freedom or death" became the motto of the revolution, showing just how important those values were to the Greek people. Today is not only a day to recall the history of Greek independence but also an opportunity to recognise the enduring legacy of the Greek state and the contributions of the Hellenic community in New South Wales. I acknowledge some of the Greek community groups in my electorate, such as AHEPA, the Greek Orthodox Community of NSW, the Estia Foundation at Kyle Bay and surrounding New South Wales and the Greek Festival of Sydney.

A number of Greek people, good Greek people, live in the St George area. They are valued members of our community who bring so much to it even beyond the beautiful Greek food at Souvla & Co in Mortdale,

Eat GRK at Beverly Hills or Meet the Greek in Brighton-Le-Sands, which is one of my favourites. I have been lucky enough to be involved with numerous community groups, including the Greek Orthodox Parish and Community of Kogarah. Those communities are tight-knit, where everyone knows everyone. They place high value on community and, in particular, contributing to the community. In my experience, Hellenes are hardworking and make a huge contribution to our local community. It should come as no surprise that the Greek community has also made a valuable contribution to New South Wales and indeed Australia.

Coming from a migrant community, I know the Greek community go above and beyond. Many migrants, wherever they are from, share a similar story. It is not easy to leave your home, and in some cases leave behind loved ones, in search of a better life. However, the beauty of New South Wales is that it rewards ambition and hard work. No matter what walk of life we are from, what education we have or what industry we are in, this is the land of opportunity and enterprise. The Hellenic community has certainly made the most of those opportunities. Greece fought for those opportunities 200 years ago. Its people fought for freedom and, ultimately, they won. I thank the member for Miranda for bringing the motion to the attention of the House. I acknowledge the consistent contribution of the Greek community to our great State. Most importantly, I wish the Greek community a joyous celebration of 200 years of independence as tonight we light up the Opera House with the colours blue and white.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (12:42): I speak on the motion moved by the member for Miranda about Greek Independence Day and celebrating the bicentenary of the most significant event for Greek people—the independence of Greece. As has been said in this debate, the people of Greece called for independence on 25 March 1821 after 400 years of Ottoman occupation. This day is celebrated every year and commemorates the fight for independence. It is the day when Bishop Germanos of Patras raised the flag over the monastery of Agia Lavra in the Peloponnese and led the people into a revolution. With the assistance of Britain, France and others, Greece prevailed and a new way of life for Greek citizens began. The Greek identity we recognise was reborn on this day and citizens were finally able to worship the Greek Orthodox religion and traditions. It was indeed a true fight for freedom and recognition.

In Greece, this day is celebrated by parades where children wear traditional Greek costume and carry the Greek flag. Athens also holds an armed forces parade to celebrate the military win. In Australia we recognise Greek Independence Day with various events and activities. The Greek Orthodox religion is the epicentre of the lives of Greek people all around the world. It does not matter where they live, faith is central to people of Greek heritage. This day holds a double meaning for the Greek community because they also celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation, which is when the angel Gabriel appeared before the Virgin Mary and revealed to her that she would be the mother of Jesus. The Greek community hold this day as a special holy day and many of us share the same belief.

The celebrations in Australia for this important day in the history of Greece also hold a special meaning. They evoke the spirit of multiculturalism that is never far from us, given that many diverse cultures call Australia home. It is a time for us all to celebrate with the Greek community in Australia, who have contributed so much to the Australian fabric of life. I pay particular mention to the members in this Chamber who are sons and daughters with Greek heritage. It is incredible to think that their forefathers have representatives in this Chamber. Having members in this Chamber with Greek heritage such as Steve Kamper, Sophie Cotsis and Eleni Petinos, who proudly espouse their Australianness and their Hellenic pride, is testament to who we are as a country and as a State. As someone with a Mediterranean background, I understand what that is all about.

I take this opportunity to thank my Greek constituents and friends and wish them a happy Greek Independence Day. We all share some intrinsic nature of Greece in us. Whether that is in astrology, maths, science or in democracy in this Chamber, we have the Greeks to thank. On behalf of the people I represent, the relatives who have married into our family and vice versa, the mates who we went to school with who were taught all the beautiful words of the Greek language—all the right ones—I say to them: Happy Greek Independence Day.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (12:47): By leave: It gives me great pleasure to contribute to this motion. I acknowledge the members speaking to the motion and I commend the member for Miranda for bringing the motion to the attention of the House. Most importantly, I congratulate every person of Greek descent not only in this country but around the world on 200 years of Greek independence, which they proudly celebrate today. By way of background I say that debates like this one define who we are as a parliament. As the previous member suggested, they are a testament to this country and the great success of migration and multiculturalism in Australia. When we see that we have a number of members in this Chamber of Greek descent, it speaks volumes about the people of this country. We are recognised around the world as having the most successful immigration program ever undertaken. I have always said it occurs with great respect and tolerance. Is it perfect? No, it is not. It is a work in progress and we can continue to make sure that it becomes much better in the years ahead.

As the former Minister for Multiculturalism, appointed in 2017, I take this opportunity to acknowledge some people. The Greek Festival was the first festival I attended as Minister for Multiculturalism. I was very lucky. One Thursday afternoon I sat in this Chamber as the newly and proudly minted Minister for Multiculturalism, and as question time finished Eleni Petinos and Mark Coure came to see if I was going to the Greek Festival dinner, which preceded Greek Independence Day.

I said, "Yes. I am chuffed, pumped and ready to go." They said, "I hope you are not going empty-handed," and I looked at them and they said, "because if you go to the Greek Festival dinner and you do not have a big cheque for Harry Denalis then Harry is going to tear you apart." The fear of God was struck into me as I was heading out to my very first cultural festival, one of 234 that I attended over the proceeding years. I rushed back to find out what the state of play was and in the space of about an hour came up with a cheque for around \$10,000, if I remember, which I took down there. That was nowhere near what the festival had achieved from our Government in the past.

However, there had been a restructuring. We love restructurings, especially when nobody tells you about it and then you go headlong into a festival where you will get pasted for not helping those people. With the restructure, people had to apply and go through more paperwork and processes. We love our red tape in government, but I was unaware of that. Anyway, we went down and had a wonderful night. I acknowledge the president, Harry Denalis. I do not know how long he has been the President of the Greek Orthodox Community and in charge of the festival, but it is a long, long time. I also acknowledge his trusty sidekick, Nia Kataris, who is absolutely marvellous. I told them that I recognised the importance of not only their Greek heritage but also this festival, which lasts over six weeks, and what it brings to Sydney's economy.

The festival is a wonderful event where 30,000 to 35,000 people of Greek descent descend on Tumbalong Park, which is a scene that members need to take on board for themselves. I am proud to say that at the end of my tenure in the lead-up to the 2019 election I made sure that the Greek Festival received \$200,000 a year over the next forward estimates, a total of \$800,000, because of the importance to our cultural identity of bringing people together and doing what the Greeks do so well—celebrating family, friends and community. Congratulations to everybody of Greek descent. Happy 200 years of independence.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (12:52): By leave: I congratulate Eleni Petinos on moving this motion. I know that there was a big struggle between her and all the other Greeks in the Chamber as to who would do it. It is not unlike the Greeks to want to take the credit, but someone has to be the one to move it. We have continuously heard about the Greek spirit. The member for Fairfield—I think his name is Gaetano Zangaris if we want to make him Greek for the day—made a really good point about the particular pride of mothers and fathers. Congratulations. How proud we are to see people who are proud of themselves and their heritage as well as their Australian heritage. Well done to my dear friends Stavros Kamperoliansis, Sophia Cotsis and Eleni Petinos—I think that is the correct way to say it. They inspire other young people, whether they are Greek or other ethnic background, to be better than what some people will tell them to be. That is the Australia that we live in.

We know that the Greeks tell us that they invented everything and there are some things that I would certainly agree with. They did invent democracy, mathematics, physics, philosophy, the Olympics and the lamb barbecue—although I saw a video of some bloke on a lamb barbecue that I was a bit concerned about, where he was just walking around in a singlet. They also invented coffee. A point of argument that I often have with the member for Rockdale is that while they might have invented coffee, the Lebanese people modified it and fixed it a bit so that you can actually drink it.

But the important point is the idea that holds strong. Oxi Day, like any other idea in modern history, is one that speaks to the value of standing up for what one believes in, valuing democracy and having strength in that. A lot of members have spoken about their local electorates. We had quite a big Greek population in Lakemba, particularly in the 1950s. It is slowly but surely decreasing, but the heritage and history are there. In particular, the Greek Orthodox Community of NSW was formed in Lakemba in 1898. Harry and Nia do an outstanding job of bringing people together, running cultural programs and schools to make sure that everybody remembers the history and heritage that their parents bring. How huge the Greek Festival is. It is one of those things that we all love to go to, but it actually speaks to the value of what is really important.

As I have said a number of times, the really important thing when you come to Australia or become an Australian citizen is that you are not told to forget where you come from—your heritage, your roots or your history. You are told to embrace that and bring it into what makes our great Australian story. It is a wonderful thing to see Australians of proud Greek heritage celebrating everything about themselves. A lot is made of the food, but there is much more to culture than that. It is the ideas, the history, the belonging and the sense of making sure that every single person has an opportunity. Conscious of the fact that so many other members want to speak, I will try my Greek once again. A number of Greeks live near me. My olive tree will not grow, but I know my

neighbours have some special secrets. Ζήτω η Αυστραλία and Ζήτω η Ελλάδα—long live Australia and long live Greece! Well done to Eleni and to all our Greek friends, brothers and sisters.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (12:55): By leave: I am not Greek like the member for Fairfield is, but I make a contribution to this wonderful motion brought by the member for Miranda and I do so from the perspective of the Parliamentary Secretary for Veterans. I note that this year marks the eightieth anniversary of the Battle of Crete, in which Anzac and British forces fought alongside the Greeks in one of the turning points of World War II. I note that my grandfather Harry Griffin fought in Greece and received the Hellenic Republic medallion expedition medal 1940-41—a special relationship with that important battle. In 1941 Anzac and British forces joined brave Greek soldiers and civilians in defending the island against the Nazi airborne invasion. The courage and gallantry of both the Anzacs and the Greek soldiers and civilians forged bonds that are still recognised and a deep sense of gratitude that both the Greek country and Australian Greeks feel today.

In its thirty-ninth year, the Greek Festival is one of Sydney's longest-running cultural events. It is a proud and wonderful tradition that remains at the heart of Australia's 400,000-strong Greek community. It is a wonderful foundation and pillar of the multicultural State of New South Wales. I also acknowledge that the Liberal Party in Manly has a Hellenic branch, for a variety of reasons, which absolutely predates me. There are some wonderful members of the Manly Hellenic branch. The Dracakis family—Kerry, Theo, Peter, Helen and Paul Dracakis—are proud members of the Manly Hellenic branch. Helen and Dimitrios Spiropoulos and John Mangos are also members, as are the wonderful Peter and Lyn Polgar—who are of course good friends. I thank the members of the Manly Hellenic branch. In all sincerity, the Hellenic medal hangs proudly in my father's home in recognition of my grandfather's efforts. I commend the wonderful motion of the member for Miranda to the House.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (12:58): By leave: I too take the opportunity to support this motion and to commend the member for Miranda, the member for Rockdale and the member for Canterbury in particular. I know how proud those three members of Parliament are of their Greek heritage and it is wonderful to see that they can unite for such a very important occasion.

The commemoration of the Greek War of Independence is a significant occasion for Greek Australians and Greeks all around the world. It is wonderful to see that communities are coming together, particularly school communities and churches across Australia. I acknowledge St Euphemia College in my electorate of Bankstown. I have a wonderful relationship with that school and the Greek church in Bankstown. They are holding a doxology service this Sunday to commemorate Greek Independence Day, which coincides, as the member for Canterbury said, with the Feast of the Annunciation. In 1821 it was a deliberate decision to ensure that the Greek revolution coincided with the Feast of the Annunciation, to explain that it was an evangelising process of liberating the Greek people and the Hellenic nation.

It is important to state that the Greek people have always valued their orthodoxy and their faith, and it is important for me to acknowledge that I have had a wonderful relationship with the primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia, Archbishop Makarios. I acknowledge his efforts in supporting the community in Australia. I also acknowledge the wonderful priests of St Euphemia Greek Orthodox Church of Bankstown, Father Peter Mavrommatis, who is also the principal of St Euphemia College, and Father Panagiotis. Both of those priests have worked tirelessly in support of our community in Bankstown and I acknowledge their efforts. For example, this Sunday they are organising for a number of children to recite specific poems about Greek Independence Day. They very much value the traditions and history of what is a very significant culture.

There is no doubt that the Greek culture has immense influence, as the member for Lakemba, the member for Rockdale and others have recited. It has influenced so much of society as we know it today and it is important to acknowledge what the Greeks have provided to us as a society. I pay tribute to the consul and to those who have organised the many different events that commemorate the bicentenary. It is clearly an important occasion for not only Australians of Greek heritage but also Australia to recognise and pay tribute to the contribution that Greek Australians have made in enriching our society in Australia and particularly in our State. I thank the member for Miranda, the member for Canterbury and the member for Rockdale for their incredible passion.

I love having many debates with those members of Parliament about the value and traditions of the Greek community. I value the particular strength in the Greek community, which I have seen in the way they have supported many important endeavours. As I said, as the co-chair of the Parliamentary Friends for Religious Freedom I have had a wonderful relationship with the archbishop and the priests in espousing the need to support religious freedom. Archbishop Makarios was one of the first church leaders who supported our forum and he has always provided a contribution in that regard. I take this opportunity to wish all of the Greek Australians in the electorate of Bankstown and throughout New South Wales a happy Greek Independence Day.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (13:03): By leave: I feel privileged to make a brief contribution to mark the 200th anniversary of Greek independence. I thank the Greek goddesses in the Parliament today, the

member for Miranda and the member for Canterbury, and their excellent sidekick the member for Rockdale. We are very lucky to have those great Greek Australians representing their communities so ably in this House, Australia's oldest Parliament. It is absolutely appropriate that we talk about the legacy of the Greek community here; they were the inventors of democracy and, as we have heard, probably of everything. It is a momentous and historic day for the Greek community in Australia and across the world. I congratulate the organisations and the Greek Australians taking part in the many important celebrations of this day.

Greek Independence Day marks the momentous struggle for freedom and independence from the Ottoman Empire and in so many ways has changed the course of human history. For the many Greek migrants who now call Australia home it continues to have renewed significance and has become an important opportunity to celebrate and strengthen the rich traditions of the Greek people in a new world. Greek migrants have helped build the multicultural and diverse communities that I am very proud to represent. The traditions, customs and celebrations of our proud Greek communities are inseparable from the way people think about the parts of Sydney that I represent—suburbs like Marrickville and Dulwich Hill, for example. Those traditions and cultures live in the extraordinary work of local community groups.

I mention some in my electorate, including the ATLAS Community Centre and the Greek Orthodox Parish of Saint Nicholas, which I think of today with its many celebrations and its beautiful, active Greek school that I am always proud to visit and support whenever possible. I acknowledge the Hellenic Art Theatre at Addison Road Community Centre and the many Greek family businesses that attract people from across Sydney and New South Wales. Today in Sydney's inner west we are celebrating with the official renaming of a stretch of Marrickville Road between Livingstone Road and Victoria Road as "Little Greece". All Sydneysiders should come to visit Little Greece—what a wonderful part of Sydney! I pay tribute to the amazing businesses in that precinct, many of which are my favourites.

One of the best and cheapest sandwiches in Sydney is available at Lamia Super Deli. The cheese and spinach triangles at the Hellenic Patisserie are to die for. Athena Cake Shop is a problem for my waistline and has been trading for over 20 years. I acknowledge Faros Seafood, many of the cafes and the Corinthian Greek Restaurant, which has been trading on Marrickville Road for over 50 years. It is a beautiful part of Sydney made all the richer and more vibrant by the contribution of those Greek Australians. Let us celebrate Little Greece today. Members should come to visit in Marrickville. It is just a small recognition of the contribution that Greek Australians have made to our community. I acknowledge that Greek culture and history are very much a live and breathing part of Sydney. I join my colleagues in honouring this important day and the contribution of generations of Greek Australians across Sydney and New South Wales.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (13:06): In reply: What an absolutely phenomenal contribution from every member in this place who spoke to the motion. I cannot tell members how touched I am, and I am sure the community will be touched by the members' contributions. I sincerely thank the members for the electorates of Rockdale, Parramatta, Canterbury, Oatley, Fairfield, Castle Hill, Lakemba, Manly, Bankstown and Summer Hill for their individual and very special contributions. Today is truly a celebration. As many speakers have said, we are currently in the middle of the thirty-ninth annual Greek Festival of Sydney, which is one of the longest-running cultural events in the State. It gives everyone the chance to enjoy the finest of Hellenic music, dance, arts, language and culture, many of which were touched on by the member for Lakemba in a very affectionate manner.

The Greek Orthodox religion remains at the heart of Australia's 400,000-strong Greek community. That is entirely appropriate and fitting given the history that we have discussed today, as the member for Rockdale relayed to the House. The church was the heart of the Greek community in that moment when Bishop Germanos raised the flag in Patras and called for revolution at Agia Lavra monastery. The foundations of the Greek Orthodox religion remain the basis of modern Christian churches wherever they have flourished across the world. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the leadership of his eminence Archbishop Makarios and each of the priests in our local communities, many of whom were acknowledged by those opposite, for their contributions to their local Greek communities.

New South Wales is an incredible, wonderful and multicultural State, and one of the most successful multicultural societies in the world. Earlier today the multiculturalism Minister, Dr Geoff Lee, mentioned that we should be incredibly proud of our heritage. We all are, and we have all touched on the ways that our particular heritage has been celebrated. There is no better demonstration of the pride of the Greek community than the march that coincides with 25 March every year. I remember participating in the march as a little child. I went to St Spyridon College, one of the three Greek Orthodox schools in this State. I remember from a young age congregating at Martin Place in my school uniform—the other option was to wear national dress—and walking proudly down to the Opera House, where tens of thousands of proud Greek-Australians would congregate and celebrate our culture with speeches, dances and music. I would sit on the steps of the Opera House to watch. It is

quite special to sit there now as a member of Parliament, as I am sure it is for the member for Canterbury and the member for Rockdale, and watch children participate.

I acknowledge the role played by the leaders of our three Greek Orthodox colleges: Mrs Katsogiannis from St Spyridon College, Fr Mavrommatis from St Euphemia College and Mrs Lillis from All Saints Greek Orthodox Grammar School. I know that members in this Chamber who represent the other colleges have acknowledged their contributions as well. It is inspiring to know that our culture and heritage will continue through today's young people who continue to celebrate the festivities. But today we are celebrating 200 years of freedom and democracy in this State and everywhere else around the world. I look forward to lighting up the Opera House this evening. I know that it will be embraced wholeheartedly by members opposite. Happy Greek Independence Day. Ζίτο η Ελλάδα.

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

Motion agreed to.

SHOALHAVEN ANGLICAN SCHOOL

Debate resumed from 18 March 2021.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:11): I am very happy to continue my contribution on the member for South Coast and Minister's motion about the Shoalhaven Anglican School site. I spoke a little last week about the member for South Coast's advocacy and work in obtaining this location for Budawang School and making sure that we continue to deliver on our commitments to her community. I also spoke a little about the commitments made within my community, which I will continue today.

I left off speaking about Mosman High School. Some members in this place may know that the last time Mosman High School had a major upgrade was the last time we had a Liberal-Nationals Coalition Government in New South Wales when Virginia Chadwick was a Minister. It is very exciting that we are finally getting the next major upgrade required for our community and students and the future children of my community under this Government. Mosman High School is well known for its outstanding academic record, in particular its highly sought-after creative arts and music program. The constrained site in Mosman, which is its own block in the middle of Mosman Village that has four streets around it, will be transformed to create a modular, multi-use component-based learning precinct to enhance the both creative and academic capacity of our students.

I now move on to the North Sydney Demonstration School in my area where we are progressing a major upgrade. North Sydney Demonstration School, the Dem, as we call it, is a primary school in Waverton that will benefit local families now and into the future. An overhaul of the school's facilities includes replacing the old demountables with 16 new and refurbished classrooms, the addition of a new hall, an upgrade to administration facilities and improved outdoor learning spaces. We are getting the planning and tender process underway so that construction can start this year. This state-of-the-art upgrade will ensure that the school can continue to offer excellent teaching and learning facilities to the many new families moving to North Sydney. I know the member for South Coast would be well aware of the Dem because she grew up in the area and went to North Sydney Girls High School just across the road.

I thank the New South Wales Government for its investment in our public education infrastructure, including in my community. I acknowledge the work of the Mosman High School and the Dem communities. For a long time they have advocated for those upgrades, helping to envision what the school precincts need to provide the best facilities and opportunities for students in the future. The children of many of the parents who have gone through those endeavours are no longer at the schools because of the time it has taken to work through those initiatives. But many of the parents are still part of the school communities and continue to work on those projects because of the commitment and vision they have for the broader community and for the students and children of families still to come. I thank them and the principals of Mosman High School and North Sydney Demonstration School.

I also note that advanced planning is underway at Neutral Bay Public School in preparation for a major upgrade. The school is just across the road from my electorate office, so I get to see the school community frequently. We have made a number of different commitments. One of the biggest commitments we have already followed through on is purchasing a house that sits in the middle of the school's site, between Kindi-land and the rest of the school, to make sure that we have that asset now available to turn into more space for playing or classrooms. We have made that investment and commitment to the community. The next step I would like to see is funding for the entire upgrade of Neutral Bay Public School.

Debate interrupted.

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

Announcements

MEMBER FOR TWEED

MEMBER FOR OXLEY

MEMBER FOR LANE COVE

MEMBER FOR ALBURY

The SPEAKER: I wish the members for the electorates of Tweed, Oxley, Lane Cove and Albury a happy birthday. They will celebrate their birthdays in the next few weeks.

PHOTOGRAPHER IN THE CHAMBER

The SPEAKER: I have approved photographer Phil Hillyard to capture images in the Chamber and throughout this place today as part of a parliamentary project on a day in the life of the people's House. I emphasise that permission will be sought from featured members and staff prior to any publication. It is intended the images will be used on the Parliament's website and intranet, and in educational resources to promote the work of the Parliament. Members are welcome to contact Lisa Thomas of the Department of Parliamentary Services if they have any further questions. I have also approved a pool photographer from *The Sydney Morning Herald* on request. In accordance with common practice we will have only one photographer, with images to be shared as required.

Bills

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

COVID-19 RECOVERY BILL 2021

Assent

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

Question Time

MEMBER FOR UPPER HUNTER

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:18): My question is directed to the Premier. The Premier looked the other way on Daryl Maguire's corruption and hid what she knew for years. She chose to ignore the fact that ICAC was investigating John Sidoti and left him in the Liberal Party for almost as long. Given members of her Government can get away with absolutely anything, is the Premier really surprised that Michael Johnsen did not tell her that he was being investigated by police for rape?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:18): I refute the imputations in the Leader of the Opposition's question and do not accept its premise or the circumstances in which she has asked it. As I stated this morning, I was made aware of that matter she refers to yesterday evening and I am relieved that it is being investigated by the police, which is the appropriate place for investigation.

FLOODS AND HAWKESBURY ELECTORATE

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (14:19): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House regarding the challenges faced by flood-affected communities in the Hawkesbury region and across New South Wales?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:19): I thank the member for Hawkesbury for her question. This week she has been diligently supporting members of her community who have been directly impacted by the floods. I ask her, as I had this morning, to apologise to those volunteers. I was not able to visit this morning due to matters outside of my control. I assure her that her community, as well as all flood-affected communities across New South Wales, will be supported by us during this difficult time. In the morning briefing I received today, I was pleased to learn that but for the Grafton region, the weather experts believe that most river systems are either approaching or have reached their peak. That means it gives communities some assurance of what will occur in the next few days.

But we say now more than ever, in particular to people in the Nepean-Hawkesbury catchment, that whilst rivers may be reaching their peak, the flows and currents are very dangerous. We ask everybody to be extra cautious, not drive through flood waters and certainly not use those waters for recreational purposes and to heed

the warnings that are there. We certainly do not want to see any further loss of life following the tragedy that we all learnt about yesterday. Pleasingly, while there still are 17 evacuation orders in place with about 20,000 people not able to return to their homes, in the past 24 hours between 3,000 and 4,000 people were. Where possible, the SES is alerting communities to have the all-clear and people are returning to their place of residence. Having said that, we know that many people are confronted by catastrophic conditions and their lives will never be the same.

We appreciate the support they will be required to have. I again emphasise on behalf of the Government that the Deputy Premier will lead the clean-up and recovery process. We are deeply grateful to him for that, given the experience he had in the bushfires. I was concerned about messages given by some that the New South Wales Government had not asked for Australian Defence Force [ADF] support or the like. I dispel all of that. Brigadier Garraway joined Minister Elliott and myself this morning to give us an update on the role that the ADF has been playing in the past few days in preparing for the clean-up. They are working closely with Resilience NSW, the RFS, the SES, the police and Fire and Rescue to ensure that we have a coordinated response. Certainly the ADF is intrinsically involved and embedded into our State emergency crisis centre in Homebush. I do not want anyone to have advice to the contrary. Brigadier Garraway kindly gave us an update on what the ADF is doing at this stage.

I am pleased to inform the House that today 13 strike teams from the RFS and Fire and Rescue are heading to Port Macquarie, Kempsey and Taree to assist with recovery and clean-up. We are relieved that all-clears have been given to Kempsey CBD—I know the member for Oxley is relieved about that—to the Taree Estate and surrounding areas, and also North Haven. It is pleasing that in areas where the SES has been able to give the all-clear, our clean-up teams are already supporting the community. That will apply to areas of Hawkesbury and others, which hopefully will have the all-clear in the next few days. As we know, the situation remains volatile and dangerous. Today the SES have advised that the Government's focus will be on getting supplies to communities that have been isolated. Five helicopters were in the air yesterday, undertaking resupply and other essential tasks specifically along the Hawkesbury. I also know that other places around the State are receiving that care. Deliveries included all manner of products, fresh food and vegetables and essential items that communities need.

Yesterday it was pleasing that in the Richmond community, 54 pallets of food were delivered. That demonstrates how many people are isolated and their lack of access to any supplies. I also acknowledge the good work that the Department of Education is doing. Regrettably, there is permanent damage to at least 50 schools. The Government is assessing those affected schools to ensure that they can resume as soon as possible in a safe way. Obviously that information will be provided to parents and school communities. Yesterday the New South Wales Minister and Federal Government added an additional 13 local government areas that will receive disaster relief. That is very important. We need to ensure we get that support to communities as soon as possible. Unfortunately, quite a few of the local government areas that were identified yesterday in that category were very severely bushfire-impacted communities such as Bega valley, Eurobodalla, Glenn Innes, Inverell, Tweed and Wingecarribee areas. [*Extension of time*]

As I have mentioned, those areas which were identified for disaster assistance unfortunately were similar to those which required assistance during the catastrophic bushfires. That demonstrates what people are facing today and in the following days and weeks in terms of their ability to pick up their lives and move forward. The current rainfall has diminished, which is great news. In fact, the two weather fronts that were predicted for the remainder of the week did not pose the danger we thought they would. For at least seven days we are not expecting any rainfall but we are still requesting people to remain vigilant. Complacency is our biggest challenge at the moment. As I said yesterday, we cannot let our guard down just because the sun is shining.

I thank all communities for their patience. I thank those people who have been displaced from their homes. I can only imagine the difficult time they are going through, but their friends and loved ones have ensured their safety at this time. The latest information I have is that whilst the Government has a number of evacuation centres up and running, in the main they are not full. In fact, they are quite empty. That is because people came to register but then moved on to stay with family and friends. That is a good sign. It shows that our citizens are taking care of each other during this difficult time, and I have no doubt that will continue.

I reassure the community that although the heavy rainfall has subsided, conditions remain dangerous in many communities across the State, especially in the Grafton area. I acknowledge the member for Clarence in the Chamber and the challenges his community is facing. Except for the north-western parts of New South Wales and the Grafton community where the water is yet to peak, in the vast majority of other areas most weather experts and the SES are hopeful that rivers have reached their peak. But that does not mean our communities are out of danger, and that is why we ask people to heed the warnings. I ask people to not go anywhere near their property unless they have been given the all-clear and are not currently under an evacuation order. I hope people know that

no matter where they are in this State, the New South Wales Government and all of its agencies are here to support them.

MEMBER FOR UPPER HUNTER

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (14:26): My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. When did the Minister first become aware that the NSW Police Force was investigating the member for Upper Hunter in relation to an alleged sexual assault?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (14:26): The Opposition is predictable, if nothing else. Not long after the member for Blue Mountains decided to politicise a police investigation—

[Opposition members interjected.]

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms Tania Mihailuk: It is called transparency.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: It took you 18 months to find transparency, did it? It took you 18 months to find transparency.

[Opposition members interjected.]

Ms Lynda Voltz: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Ms Lynda Voltz: My point of order is on relevance under Standing Order 129. I want to know when—what time, what date—the Minister knew of the allegations of sexual assault against the member for Upper Hunter.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is in the first minute of his response.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I was responding to interjections.

Ms Lynda Voltz: Well, don't.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I know the rules. Not long after the member for Blue Mountains decided to politicise an ongoing police investigation that she knew was being undertaken, the police commissioner called me to advise me that the investigation that the member for Blue Mountains had referred to was an active investigation.

[Opposition members interjected.]

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is answering the question. Members will remain quiet.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I might have to repeat myself.

Ms Kate Washington: Who else is under investigation?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: Do you really want me to talk about that? That is not in your best interest, trust me.

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

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: Not long after the member for Blue Mountains politicised an ongoing police investigation, the Commissioner of Police called me to say that the matter referred to by the member for Blue Mountains was in fact a live police investigation.

NATURAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (14:28): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how the Government will support flood-affected communities in New South Wales?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:28): I thank the member for Clarence for his question. I acknowledge that right now Grafton is an area that we are concerned about. As we heard from the Premier earlier, there is better news right across the State but of course a danger still exists from swollen, saturated rivers and the water is still moving. Unfortunately we know how dangerous the water can be for communities. The Premier asked me to take over the flood recovery, which I am honoured to do, with a lot of learnings post the bushfires. One of the things that we learnt from the bushfires was clear: We need to respond quickly and decisively in supporting communities and individuals post any event. We all know the period of recovery post the bushfires continues today.

Yes, we got in early and, yes, we had support from agencies across the board, including the Australian Defence Force [ADF], in responding to community needs at the start of the recovery, which involved keeping people safe and getting them into accommodation. Then we went on to the long, large-scale logistical journey of cleaning up, which was a massive and mammoth task on behalf of the people of New South Wales. Approximately 3,700 homes were lost in the fires and another 10,000 buildings were impacted. The communities that felt the brunt of the bushfires and have been on the journey of recovery continue today with emotional and mental scars that even the floodwaters cannot wash away. The charred remains of the landscape are recovering—Mother Nature finds a way—but it is absolutely imperative that we turn up for communities.

Some places in our electorates—like Kempsey, Nambucca Heads and Telegraph Point that I visited with the member for Oxley on Monday—have been impacted by drought, bushfires and of course the COVID pandemic that hit us all. Now those communities are confronted by floods. My greatest concern is the health and mental wellbeing of people in those communities. Our support for them will focus on those things. Of course, the first part of the recovery process is dealing with what has occurred. Off the back of drought and bushfires, some farmers have seen stock perish once again in the floods. The Department of Primary Industries and Local Land Services are providing assistance to landholders and communities experiencing animal welfare issues as a result of the floods. We will continue to work with those landholders. It is distressing. It seems that there is never a break for our great farmers, who produce the food and fibre that we take for granted not only for our own use but also for trade exports.

Yesterday the environment Minister announced the waiving of levies for waste disposal at our local tips, which represents a huge investment by the Government in supporting people to remove flood waste in those communities. Of course, as I said, we have locked up a number of agencies to come together to start the clean-up. We are now officially on the ground, with the support of the ADF and a number of emergency service agencies. But we will not go into areas until emergency services give us the green light. We cannot risk life in the clean-up. That is the same model that we applied post-bushfires. But we will be back out there. I intend to be out in the regions again over the weekend and into next week, making sure that communities that have been impacted by the floods see clearly that we are here to support them.

Parts of the State continue to feel the brunt of the rainfall and the river system. I am mindful and I am comfortable that at this stage the rains will not continue and that means we will have the chance to start the clean-up. My commitment again is to work with all members of the House. I acknowledge a lot of the members, both sides of the House, who have already come to see me in relation to issues on the ground. Again, as we did post-bushfires, we made it a person-centred approach. There is no fixed model that works for everybody. These are people's homes, memories and livelihoods; it is their mental health and wellbeing. That is why it is important that we put people first in the way we do the clean-up and support these individuals. That was the greatest learning post-bushfires. [*Extension of time*]

That was the greatest learning that I picked up on my journey over the past 12 months and why I believe that we supported people as best as we could in the face of one of the largest logistical programs in this State's history. I will carry that through. I look forward to working with members of the community and seeing the clean-up. As part of the cross-government, multiagency strike force that I spoke about earlier, the skip bins and trucks will start to remove debris in the streets with the support of the community and the Australian Defence Force. I look forward to seeing how we can bring people back to a level of normal.

I ask people to get in touch with the Department of Customer Service via its hotline. There is already financial support from the Federal Government. There is support from the New South Wales Government. As the days and weeks progress, there will be more announcements in relation to the level of support that we can offer communities to get back on their feet. We have already heard the stories of the near misses and the close calls. We have heard the stories of businesses that have suffered significantly but also of the generosity post the floods. The other day I spoke about the story of a local businessman who owns the servo in Telegraph Point. He owns a number of other businesses, including in Gloucester, where he has had a bit of bad luck with two or three of his businesses being underwater.

His story was all about community spirit, the community coming together and the generosity of his neighbours, who were concerned about his welfare and getting his business back on its feet. This is the great Australian story—a story of Australian spirit and of mateship. As we approach Anzac Day, it is a reminder of what Australians do to keep our communities safe. I look forward to working with those communities. A lesson that I learned post the bushfires is that government alone cannot fix it; government alone cannot do this. This will take a partnership between charity groups, the community and volunteers. But I tell you what: I am prepared for the challenge ahead. I look forward to being on the road and seeing community members as we work together to again bring our communities back together.

MEMBER FOR UPPER HUNTER

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (14:36): My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Less than 12 months ago, in relation to an investigation into a member in the other place, the Minister said the member should not be allowed to "take an extended paid holiday". He also said no other worker could simply "down tools" and that the member should be made to forfeit his salary while under investigation. Do the same standards apply to the member for Upper Hunter?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (14:36): From what I understand, no charges have been laid in the matter that you are referring to.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: This has nothing to do with the member in the other place.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: If you let me finish—

The SPEAKER: I want to hear from the Minister for more than the first 10 seconds.

Ms Yasmin Catley: He is trying to hide behind something because he is a gutless hypocrite.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: What am I trying to hide behind?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will continue.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Yes, you are. That is exactly what you are.

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

Ms Jodi McKay: You know that you knew what was going on with the member for Upper Hunter.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: Sorry, what was the accusation?

Ms Jodi McKay: I said you know you knew what was going on with the member for Upper Hunter.

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

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: What was your accusation? In relation to this matter, I refer you to my previous answer.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: The Minister has spent the past month throwing rubbish across this Chamber.

Mr Mark Speakman: To the point of order: There is no point of order.

The SPEAKER: The Minister has completed his answer. The member for Swansea and the member for Cronulla will resume their seats.

FLOODS AND ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (14:37): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on how Transport for NSW is assisting communities to recover from the flood tragedy?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (14:38): I thank the member for Riverstone for his question. In terms of the leadership of the Government, both from the Premier's and the Deputy Premier's perspectives, the ability to go out to communities and make sure that they are unified towards their recovery and survival is very important. The member for Riverstone's part of the world is obviously key to that. Part of that is making sure that our SES volunteers and government frontline workers—it would not matter if they work for Transport for NSW, the police or any other agency—are incredibly well supported so that morale remains high. From what we have seen across the State over the past few days, there is no doubt that this is going to be one almighty effort. I dare say that, given the nature of floods compared to fires, the intense property damage that we will see will be very real and very profound for thousands of people in the weeks and months ahead.

One of the assurances we want to give from Transport for NSW is that we will be there to help rebuild community infrastructure. Yesterday it was heartbreaking to see on Facebook a bridge that was being repaired after a fire get washed away by floodwater. We have had fire victims and now we have fire victims who have become fire and flood victims. It is timely that we reflect on the fact that as of this morning 21,000 people are still subject to evacuation orders. This will go on for weeks. People are sitting on the edge of floodwaters looking straight down to where they know their property is—metres underwater and full of mud. We have farmers whose livestock has been washed out to sea and yesterday we saw a tragedy in western Sydney. This will be a difficult and real human experience for thousands of people across the State. One of the key elements is the connection

points that people are dependent upon. Roads across the State have potholes, which, in many instances, many cars will drive into and not be able to get out of.

We need everybody to be safe, so even if people are not in a flood zone, be aware of what the road conditions are like across the city and across the country because it will take an enormous job. Even on Saturday, when Minister Toole and I were involved in a hook-up with Transport for NSW, it was already thinking that far ahead to make sure engineers were available to inspect bridges and roads. We know that in order to get on with the clean-up job those vital links must be well and truly open and serviceable as best they can. Unfortunately, that will require patience, and we need everyone to continue to make sure that they are not complacent in and around floodwaters just because the sun is shining. We must make sure that people are able to be safe. Some major bridges are still well and truly underwater. It does not matter if it is Yarramundi to Old Northern Road or Pitt Town Road, major bridges that are underwater will require bridge inspections.

I recognise the men and women who are doing that work. They have been monitoring floodwaters and know where the bridges are and their condition. The moment we can reopen them safely we will do so. That means getting the sweepers in to make sure that those bridges are clear and safe so that other equipment can come in and start what will no doubt be the biggest clean-up job this State will ever see. I give a shout-out to the Transport Management Centre team, where staff have been deployed to SES emergency operations across the greater Sydney region. Again, 770 additional hours have been rostered between Friday and Tuesday alone for that team. We are observing, with thousands of cameras across the network, the ability to manage and monitor these situations. So I pay tribute to those staff and the staff out in the field—the maintenance crews and rail and bus operators.

There has been major destruction, which continues today, particularly to the public transport network in Sydney. Buses are replacing trains on the T1 Western Line and T5 Cumberland Line between Schofields and Richmond; Busways services in the Hawkesbury are not running; buses are replacing F3 ferries between Rydalmere and Parramatta due to the weir; and on the Central Coast & Newcastle Line buses are replacing trains everywhere, particularly between the Newcastle Interchange and Fassifern due to flooding at Cockle Creek. On the Hunter line, buses are also replacing trains. *[Extension of time]*

I also recognise Sydney Trains and thank staff for what they are doing during these events. Land stability is an enormous challenge, with a lot of landslips and mudslides. It is dangerous work when engineers and staff have to go on site to look at the state of affairs. I thank those teams that are working around the clock. The maritime boating safety officer space has been remarkable. There was an incident where officers helped transport council staff to the Settlement Point Ferry on the Hastings River, which had a ferry cable break. There was a risk of it breaking free entirely and causing enormous trouble for the community, potentially causing a nasty disaster. The key element is that the best way to tackle this is to have our staff working closely with council staff and pulling together with the defence force, which I know will happen in the weeks ahead.

There is no doubt it is going to be all hands on deck. I also encourage the private sector, where they have the capacity, to work alongside Transport for NSW so that decisions can be made and repairs can be done as quickly as possible and service requirements will be in place for the community as part of the recovery effort. There is no doubt that this will be a very tough time, particularly for local government. A lot of council roads have been quite severely damaged. Roadways during fires tend to be able to survive a bit better than they do during floods. There is no doubt that we have a very, very big job ahead, given the extensive nature of the weather events. In advance of that, I recognise and thank the teams who are out on the ground.

BEREJKLIAN GOVERNMENT

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:44): My question is directed to the Premier. A Government MP is under investigation for rape, another faces ICAC next week for corruption and the Premier's former partner is facing criminal charges. Over 10 years the Liberal-Nationals Government has lost 14 MPs to ICAC or police investigations. Meanwhile her Government is pork-barrelling millions of dollars in grants and shredding the evidence.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order—

Ms JODI McKAY: I ask the Premier: Don't the people of New South Wales deserve better?

Mr Mark Speakman: It is not a question. It is a statement.

Mr Ryan Park: Listen, we will bring in pictures next time for this lot. It is a question.

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

Mr Ryan Park: It is a question.

The SPEAKER: Is the member for Keira speaking to the point of order?

Mr Ryan Park: It is a question.

The SPEAKER: I ask the member for Keira to speak to the point of order in the appropriate manner. Does the Leader of the House have anything else he wishes to say?

Mr Mark Speakman: No. A question should be posed, not a statement given.

Ms Jodi McKay: It was a question.

The SPEAKER: I will hear further on the point of order.

Ms Gladys Berejiklian: No. I am happy to answer it.

Mr Ryan Park: Many, many times in this place questions are put with a preface of information to provide context. That is exactly what was done. A question was asked. It is very simple. If Government members do not want to deal with it, that is up to them.

The SPEAKER: Does the Premier wish to speak to the point of order?

Ms Gladys Berejiklian: No. I am happy to answer the question.

The SPEAKER: You are happy to answer it as it was asked?

Ms Gladys Berejiklian: Yes.

The SPEAKER: On that basis I will permit the question.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:46): I acknowledge the question from the Leader of the Opposition and again strenuously refute a number of misstatements and incorrect facts she has posed in that question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The question has been allowed. Opposition members should give the Premier the opportunity to answer it.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: One thing I do know is, notwithstanding challenges that are posed to any government, our Government is focused on supporting our community during the most difficult time in our State's history.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: What matters to our Government is providing support and assistance to tens of thousands of people across this State who are doing it tough. It will always remain our priority—to be here for our citizens, to support our communities and to make sure they are provided with the services and infrastructure they need.

STATE ECONOMY

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (14:47): My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on the effect of sustained sound financial management as the State reopens following the pandemic and recover from floods?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:47): I thank the member for Mulgoa for her question and for the support she continues to provide for her local community. I acknowledge, as have other Government members, the difficult situation that many communities are facing right across New South Wales during these devastating floods. I particularly thank our emergency workers, especially the SES volunteers, who have stepped up to support those families.

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

Mr Anoulack Chanthivong: How much has the State given?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Well, for the information of the member for Macquarie Fields, we continue to increase the budget.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: More than the member for Macquarie Fields provided. We know the current challenge comes after what has been a very difficult 12 to 18 months. The united effort right across the Government has been incredibly important in providing support where it is needed.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: In relation to financial investment during this time, I have spoken to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the Premier and discussions with the Federal Government in relation to category C funding are underway. We will work through that process. In other areas it has been a very positive day. It was great to be out with the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney to announce a substantial package of over \$50 million to support those industries that we see doing it tough over the next 12 months. In December last year around 5,500 people in the live music and entertainment industry were on the JobKeeper program. The \$24 million investment in live music that the Minister announced today was incredibly well received. The Government will continue to hold more events and will work in particular with councils to provide support at this time. We also provided for the Sydney CBD 200,000 accommodation vouchers for people to come to Sydney to enjoy everything that we have on offer here. If we look around the world at the moment—

Ms Lynda Voltz: Why only the Sydney CBD?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Because the Sydney CBD—

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: For example, just last year we had around—

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I will tell you why the Sydney CBD.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Last year we had around 230,000 international tourists on short stays in the Sydney CBD. That is down 99 per cent.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Right across the board there is all this activity driving people back into the CBD. It is great to see many people return to work. We have events on this weekend. To put it in context, in Europe, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, many of these places are in lockdown. In Sydney *Hamilton* is premiering on Saturday; the Golden Slipper is on Saturday, and the Swans—Buddy is back—will play on Saturday night in front of a full house at the SCG. Everything is happening here in Sydney. Following our lifting of the restrictions yesterday, Brad is going out clubbing next week and Rob is leading the choir at church on Sunday. It is going to be action packed. Whatever people are into, they can enjoy it.

Mr Ryan Park: Barra *Stayin' Alive*.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: What is Barra doing?

Mr Ryan Park: *Stayin' Alive*.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: We would not want to see that. Minister Dominello and the Premier launched the Dine and Discover vouchers last week. Victor probably has an updated figure on his app but so far 746,628 people and 8,587 businesses have signed up to the scheme. A lot is happening. Not only have we been able to lift most of the restrictions and achieve the strategy we set out to achieve last year but also our stimulus support of close to \$30 billion, which is targeted and complementary to the Federal Government, will ensure that as many people as possible remain in work during this period of time. I thank both Ministers particularly for the work they have done with industry in putting these packages together. It is not coming from the bureaucracy, it is coming from direct consultation with those at the coalface. It is understanding their needs and concerns and making sure that we are tailoring our packages to where they will have an impact.

This has not just happened. It has come off the back of 10 years of strong fiscal and economic management in this State. It has enabled us to invest where it matters. We have more schools; since 2011 we have delivered the North West Metro, the South West Rail Link, the Inner West Light Rail, the Newcastle Light Rail and the CBD and South East Light Rail; and our road projects have included the M5 West widening and the WestConnex M4 widening. [*Extension of time*]

Look at this activity, look at this record—the M4 tunnels, the M8, NorthConnex, the Pacific Highway upgrade between Newcastle and the Queensland border, the Princes Highway upgrade, 152 new and upgraded schools, the creation of 39,800 additional student places in The Ponds High School, Russell Lea Public School—those opposite do not like the truth; that is why they will lose again—Marie Bashir Public School and Gosford Public School. There are upgraded schools everywhere, including Penrith Public School and Terrigal Public School. Wherever you are in New South Wales there are upgraded schools.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: We have completed 150 major hospital projects—

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: —including Orange Hospital, Liverpool Hospital, Royal North Shore Hospital—

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: —Nepean Hospital, Port Macquarie Hospital, Lismore Base Hospital, Cessnock Hospital, Wollongong Hospital and Dubbo Base Hospital. There has been significant investment in hospitals. And it is not just the infrastructure. Over 9,000 additional full-time nurses have been appointed since 2011 and the medical workforce has increased by over 4,000 full-time equivalent staff. We have more police officers, as the police Minister knows—not including himself. We have committed \$585 million and a further 1,500 police officers. Minister, you gave the badge back, did you not? Everywhere you look there has been positive news. The unemployment rate is down to 5.6 per cent, as we announced recently. In the budget last year it was at 7.5 per cent; that was a projection. The participation rate of 65.6 per cent is above what it was pre-pandemic. Past performance is the best indicator of future performance. The Berejiklian-Barilaro Government will continue to invest record amounts for the people right across the State.

The SPEAKER: The member for Macquarie Fields, the member for Auburn and the member for Bankstown are on three calls to order because they continued to interject straight after they were called to order for the first time, and then continued to interject after being called to order for the second time. They continue to interject and are not behaving appropriately.

FIREARMS REGISTRY

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (14:55): My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. I have received complaints from local farmers, professional shooters, firearms dealers and others about the lengthy delays they are experiencing in the processing of their licence applications, renewals and permits by the New South Wales Firearms Registry—in some cases, well in excess of six to 12 months. What is the Minister doing to address the lengthy and unreasonable delays by the Firearms Registry?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (14:55): I thank the member for Orange for his question. He is a former police officer who knows how important it is that the spirit of John Howard's gun law reforms—

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

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: That the spirit of John Howard's—

Mr David Mehan: Maybe you should go down to the registry and help out.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: Be careful. You should not push me, mate. Trust me, you should not push me. I thank the member for Orange for his question—

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

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: The New South Wales Government and the NSW Police Force take firearm possession and use very seriously. As the member for Orange knows, the role of the Firearms Registry is to assess all applications to ensure that only those individuals considered fit and proper are approved to use and possess firearms. The registry also educates firearm licensees on the great responsibility that comes with holding a firearms licence. That is no mean feat. In February 2021 alone there were 1,268 new firearms licence applications lodged, 2,928 renewal applications and 5,004 permits to acquire.

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

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: The New South Wales police Firearms Registry is the linchpin of safe firearm possession and registration in the State. Applicants undergo a range of criminal and suitability checks and all firearms must be registered. Those processes are subject to strict legislative provisions. A separate permit to acquire is required for each firearm, with a good reason for acquiring the firearm. Each licence application is assessed rigorously on its merits and ability to meet the strict legislative requirements particular to the licence type sought. We are committed to making the registry as efficient as firearms owners and the New South Wales public are entitled to expect. However, system improvements will never be at the expense of public safety. In my

role as Minister for Police and Emergency Services, I am contacted from time to time by members of Parliament in relation to delays.

With just over 4,000 licence applications and 5,000 permits to acquire coming into the registry in February this year alone, the processing times are quite reasonable. In fact, the average processing time for new firearm licences is 88 days. For renewal applications it is 12 days and for permits to acquire it is only four days. While there is always more work to be done at the registry, the reasons for some delays are not always straightforward. Sometimes applicants submit incomplete forms or make mistakes on their forms. Simply checking the wrong box may lead to a higher level of adjudication. There are also many more significant reasons for delays and refusals, including criminal convictions and associations as well as wellbeing concerns for potential licence holders.

Since my time as Minister, the NSW Police Force has worked consistently towards changes to the registry to improve the experience for licence holders. That includes an increase in the number of police officers to the registry workforce to focus on initiating the seizure of firearms and licence suspensions and revocations in appropriate situations. Currently there are 10 civilian Police Assistance Line employees working specifically on Firearms Registry issues. Ten sworn officers will be seconded to assist in addressing the backlog at the Firearms Registry, with recruitment currently underway for them to commence mid-April this year. Other changes include the introduction of an assistant commissioner as the dedicated corporate sponsor and additional point of contact for the community for all customer service matters; new communications processes, including an SMS sent to licence holders whose firearms licences are due to expire within seven days and which, I am advised, will be expanded to other customers over the coming months; and, importantly, revised standard operating procedures and training for risk-based firearms safe storage inspections.

It is important to note that applications which relate to employment will be prioritised over recreational firearms licence holders. Just last month a number of online services became available for Firearms Registry customers via the NSW Police Force Community Portal. I am advised that these online services will result in quicker processing times and less manual processing for firearms clubs and ranges. The changes build on previous online strategies implemented by the registry, and the \$7 million spent over the next four years to upgrade the IT systems of the registry is welcome. The Firearms Registry is currently seeking expressions of interest from suitably qualified persons for appointment to the Firearms Registry Consultative Council for a two-year period. I encourage those who have a vested interest in firearms safety and constructive contributions to the Firearms Registry to apply.

FLOODS AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (15:00): My question is addressed to the Minister for Local Government. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government is assisting local councils affected by floods?

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (15:00): I thank the member for Goulburn for her question and congratulate her on her magnificent work in her electorate. I am aware of what she does for her community. I am here as the Minister for Local Government to talk about the local government family. There are 128 councils in New South Wales and from time to time they come together, usually when there is a disaster. Most of the time they are competing or disagreeing with each other but in a time of disaster they come together. In January 2020 I convened a group called the Local Government Emergency Support Recovery Group. It was not just a group that sat around the table; it was a group of people who, through Local Government NSW, the City of Sydney and the Office of Local Government, came together to partner councils that were not bushfire affected with ones that were. We asked the 18 bushfire-affected councils what they needed. Was it equipment, tree loppers, planners, personnel? We matched those councils with other councils and asked them what they could offer to the local government areas that had been affected by bushfire.

We had 44 councils give 600 offers of assistance. It was extraordinary. I think the 18 councils that were affected made only 44 requests for equipment or other assistance. But they received 600 offers of assistance. On Tuesday I decided to reconvene that group. It will be run from the Office of Local Government. What better time to bring the local government family together? There has been an extraordinary show of support. We will again be talking to councils that have been badly affected by the floods. Thankfully, while mine has been affected by the wet weather, it has not been declared a disaster area. We have been through enough with the bushfires, thank you very much. But councils like Bega have had bushfires and now floods, and so many other councils are like that. What this group will do is bring the local government family together. It is extraordinary to see the family that usually fights, bickers and disagrees at local government conferences come together and say, "We can offer you X, Y and Z. Tell us what you need," and, "We will go to the councils that can offer assistance." This is another example of local government helping each other. It is at the best time it can happen; perhaps the only time they come together. I am so proud of the local government family. I hear a lot of members in this place criticise their councils, and I understand that to a certain extent.

Mr Gareth Ward: Hear, Hear!

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: The member for Kiama interjects—on behalf of Shoalhaven City Council, which I know he supports 100 per cent.

Mr Gareth Ward: Absolutely.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: But in a debate yesterday I heard many members in this place criticise their local councils. My advice—which I always give here—is to please try to work in partnership with your local council. Communities expect us to work together. I am sure many members do so. The member for Keira works with his local council. I know that the member for Wollongong does too. We may disagree; the politics may be different. We should work together with our local councils, show our support for them and tell them we are proud of what they are doing. I am proud of them. In only two days, after we contacted them, six or seven councils have come out to say, "We will offer you whatever we can give you. Whether it is equipment, whether it is clean-up, whether it is excavators—whatever we can do, we will offer it to those poor souls in areas that have been so badly affected by flood." The local government emergency recovery support team has been reconvened. Anyone who is listening out there in local government land can register their interest through the Office of Local Government, where staff will take their particulars. I am sure the Deputy Premier is listening because he is a great supporter of local government.

Mr John Barilaro: Yes, I am, 100 per cent.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: He loves it. We love it. We love them. He is already onto his council, receiving offers of support. The thing with the Deputy Premier—and he just spoke about it—is that he knows exactly what needs to happen after a disaster like the bushfires. He is aware now how local governments work together. He will be aware, as the co-ordinator, of what we can do to help. [*Extension of time*]

As a government, we are here today focused on this disaster and on those local government areas that will take weeks, months or maybe more to recover. That is our focus. That will be the focus of this Government, its Ministers and all of our local members. We are not focusing on anything else. We will not be distracted. We will continue to focus on finding a resolution for those people and helping them. We are about people. We are about solutions. We are about bringing people together—not arguing, listening to ridiculous questions from the other side and politicising issues.

Ms Kate Washington: Singleton council has called its local member and he will not answer the phone.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: Thank you, member for Port Stephens. It is good to see that you are so supportive of the local government emergency recovery group.

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

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: I am so disappointed the member for Port Stephens does not support her local government area.

Ms Jodi McKay: What about the Strathfield Liberal mayor that you have allowed to be there?

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: Strathfield is one of the councils that has already put up its hand. It has already put up its hand. I do not know whether the member for Strathfield gets on with her council, but it has put up its hand to help.

Ms Jodi McKay: You get on with the mayor, don't you? He is a property developer—one of your mates.

The SPEAKER: I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: I think you have a few property developer mates of your own.

Documents

PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO BLUE MOUNTAINS CITY COUNCIL

Reports

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: In accordance with Sessional Order 266, I table the report of the Public Inquiry into Blue Mountains City Council, established under section 438U of the Local Government Act 1993, entitled *Final Report (Asbestos Term of Reference)*, dated 18 March 2021.

UNPROCLAIMED LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 117, I table a list detailing all legislation unproclaimed 90 calendar days after assent as at 25 March 2021.

*Committees***LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE****Government Response: Electric buses in regional and metropolitan public transport networks in NSW**

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government's response to report No. 1/57 of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure, entitled *Electric buses in regional and metropolitan public transport networks in NSW*, received 24 March 2021.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY**Reference**

Ms WENDY LINDSAY: On behalf of the Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety has resolved to conduct an inquiry into support for rural and regional learner drivers, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

COMMITTEE ON THE OMBUDSMAN, THE LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION AND THE CRIME COMMISSION**Reference**

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS: As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission has resolved to conduct a review of the 2019-20 annual and other reports of oversighted agencies, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS**Membership**

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I move:

That Melanie Rhonda Gibbons be appointed to serve on the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics in place of Michael John Johnsen, discharged.

Motion agreed to.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

Gregory Hills Public School

Petition requesting the Government to urgently approve funding and fast-track the construction of the master-planned public school at the nominated school site in Gregory Hills, received from **Mr Peter Sidgreaves**.

*Private Members' Statements***SEXUAL ASSAULT**

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (15:10): I recently spoke to *The Sydney Morning Herald* about my awful experience as a victim of sexual assault in 1993 and over the following three years as the matter went to trial, with the rapist ultimately acquitted. I have raised it now because things should have changed years ago, but not enough has changed in a generation. The article does not name the rapist. Naming him outside this place would leave me open to threats of defamation action, as has been reported in recent weeks. If I could not establish his guilt beyond reasonable doubt at trial 25 years ago, I am unlikely to do so now by way of a defence to defamation. But he does not deserve his privacy. I did not choose to be a victim, but he chose to be an assailant. Very few people, women or men, who are victims of sexual assault report the crime to police. I absolutely understand why. They often fear they will not be believed and just want to move on. I am one of the 10 per cent who did report it, and one of the 10 per cent of the 10 per cent whose sexual assault progressed to a criminal trial.

I make some comments about my dealings with the police so that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the Commissioner of Police can ensure future victims are better supported than I was. I know court processes have been improved for witnesses and the role of rape crisis centre staff in collecting evidence as well as providing counselling has also improved. This was two years before the groundbreaking Wood royal commission and I know the police have changed a lot since then, but I ask the Minister and the commissioner to double-check that my experiences are not repeated. The night I was raped I went out drinking at a "girls drink

free" night with my friends. The rapist, who was known to us, turned up on his own soon before closing. I later went to his home but insisted that I did not want to have sex with him. He ignored me, raped me, and anally raped me. I reported the rape to the Annandale Police Station on 16 July 1993, two days after the sexual assault, and made a formal statement the following day to Constable Eggleston.

To this day I do not think Constable Eggleston believed me, unlike every single family member or friend I told. Sometimes her questioning was uncomfortable. I still remember her asking repeatedly if he hurt me and me repeatedly responding that being raped hurts and being anally raped is particularly painful. Her repeatedly saying, "Yes, but did he hurt you?" to establish whether it was an aggravated offence or not was not at all helpful. I would have preferred to have been punched than raped. If I had been beaten I would not have forgotten to mention it. I gave Constable Eggleston the assailant's first name, but I did not know his surname. I also gave his address and a description of where his unit was at the end of the ground floor corridor. Despite months of phone calls to find out where the investigation was up to she did not question the rapist, who lived only a kilometre from Annandale Police Station. A few months later "girls drink free" nights were banned after the police stated there was an increase in the number of reports of sexual assaults committed by predators finding their victims at such events.

By December 1993 I was despondent and saw the Women's Legal Resource Centre about the lack of investigation. It wrote to Constable Eggleston and she finally undertook to question the rapist, claiming a spelling mistake with his surname. She never said to me that she could not find him prior to the solicitor's letter. He was questioned in the presence of his Queen's Counsel and after a time Constable Eggleston recommended that the incident be filed as "conflicting statements"—conflicting statements of the only two people to directly witness a grotesque, serious crime where only one of them has any incentive to lie. [*Extension of time*]

Prior to making his statement, either his QC or a private investigator questioned a number of my friends, a former boyfriend and other mutual acquaintances about the sort of person I was. The implication was that I was likely to make all this up because I was drunk, I was not a virgin and I consent to sex with everyone at all times, regardless of whether or not I said so. Thankfully, every single one of them told the investigator that they believed me and that if I said I had been sexually assaulted, then that is what happened. Hearing from some of those people, whom I had not told or even spoken to for months, was really confronting and, I believe, designed to intimidate me about what might come out in court. The Director of Public Prosecutions overruled Constable Eggleston on filing it as a conflicting statement and the matter proceeded to a committal hearing at the Newtown Local Court. The alleged rapist provided witnesses to attest to his good character and his QC unsuccessfully sought to have the matter thrown out at the committal hearing.

In 1996 the sexual assault went to trial at the Parramatta District Court. The rapist had a new legal team, again led by a QC. After a full day of evidence, he was acquitted. In addition to the police prosecutor, I had the support of a wonderful court support officer, a number of friends and my then boyfriend, who is now my husband—but never Constable Eggleston. The most dispiriting thing about my entire dealings with her was walking up the stairs at court only to see her sitting with the man who raped me and his QC, laughing about something like they were all mates. It was a massive kick in the guts and something I will never forget. It was incredibly unprofessional and made me want to collapse. I urge the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the commissioner to please make sure this never, ever happens again to any victim of crime. Rapists deserve to be in jail. They do not deserve the friendship and sympathy of the police.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (15:15): Despite the fact that we have obvious political differences, I have always enjoyed the company of the member for Granville. In my mind, her character has just tripled. The courage that she has shown should be an inspiration to all women who have been subject to this sort of behaviour from perpetrators. Unfortunately, in my family there have been incidents similar to those that the member for Granville has just outlined. I assure her that while I am sitting in the chair of this portfolio, the entire energies of the NSW Police Force—and indeed the entire justice system—will always go towards supporting the victim. Of course, a conviction will not follow an allegation every time. But it is vital that we give people like the member for Granville all the support and encouragement we can so that those who are unfortunate enough to follow her in enduring that sort of terrible ordeal know they are not Robinson Crusoe; the community will provide a wraparound service and the justice system will always support them.

The SPEAKER: I clarify that there was a problem with the clock earlier, so it was appropriate for the House to grant an extension.

FLOODS AND PENRITH ELECTORATE

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (15:16): I speak on the impact of the floods that have hit the western Sydney community, particularly Penrith. In

many respects, the Penrith community has dodged a bullet. Across our community, the one-in-50-years flood event has seen an almost unimaginable amount of water flow through the Nepean and down into the Hawkesbury. The communities of my colleague the member for Hawkesbury, Robyn Preston, and the member for Londonderry, Prue Car, have been more substantially impacted by floodwaters. I take this opportunity to say thank you to a number of people. They give just a small snapshot of some of the stories from across my community over the past few days.

First of all, I say a massive thank you to the Penrith SES team and the operations centre at Gipps Street near Claremont Meadows. I was there the other night. Late into the evening they were still taking calls, tasking teams and coordinating volunteers from SES units from all over the State that were operating across western Sydney. They also had their own teams on the ground. To the leadership and volunteers at that local SES, I say thank you from the bottom of my heart on behalf of all members of the Penrith community for their service and dedication. I very much thank the rapid relief teams that have been involved in this response in Penrith, particularly for setting up their sandbag-filling exercises at Jamison Park. It was amazing to see all the people on the ground who helped out.

There are some additional stories. Duffy Fabrications at Emu Plains fabricated a sandbag filler that made that sandbag-filling exercise a little easier on the back. I noticed it had a little social media support from Mark Geyer punching out on his feed. I thank the guys at Duffy Fabrications for that. I thank St Dominic's College students, particularly Jeff Kilbourne, the year 11 pastoral care coordinator, and 12 of his year 11 students who went to the SES to fill sandbags. I am sure other schools were also involved.

I also thank the Ross Hutchison Foundation for putting together food hampers and providing clothing and bedding; Five Star Quality Roofing for donating labouring services for anyone needing help in Penrith; David Moylan of Coffee Club Nepean Village for providing free coffee and toasties to SES volunteers; the team at Emu Hall Bar and Kitchen, which had to shut because of its proximity to the riverbank, for also providing free coffee to SES workers; Jack Little Cafe with Cranebrook Community Pre-School for offering free coffee to support police, Ambulance, RFS and anyone in a uniform over the course of the past few days; the local Lions Club for donating a barbecue to Mama Lana's support service to do their bangers, mash and gravy for extended family members and exhausted volunteers; Luke Hughes of Penrith Quarry Materials for sourcing and providing 700 sandbags—and the sand that went in them—to the SES for free; and Equal Image Salon at Nepean Village for inviting SES volunteers for a free haircut if they have any time to do so—I suspect they got a wash as well as the floodwaters are pretty ugly.

I also thank Greencross Vets, who assisted flood-affected families by offering pet services and emergency boarding; OnePoint Health for helping SES volunteers get over their sore spots, particularly on their feet—they do such a great job; and Debbie O'Connor of The Creative Fringe for delivering 40 of their absolutely stunning handmade blankets. Their Think Outside the Square Blanket Challenge has been able to provide those fantastic blankets to community members in need. I also thank Amit from Park4Pizza for providing food supplies across the Hawkesbury region as well as Penrith; and Vic and Marlene Shipley for being down on Nepean Avenue and helping their neighbours who had to evacuate. Vic, as an electrician, was able to turn off the electricity in that property.

I also thank Chris Bennett, who has been stuck on the *Nepean Belle* for the past few days, moving the paddlewheeler around to make sure that it did not flood. It is such an iconic offering in the community. I thank Chris and Carol for their work to ensure the *Nepean Belle* has been able to get through these floods. If you are an SES volunteer heading down to the Penrith Panthers tonight, we will let you in for free. We want to say a very big thank you and cheer home the Panthers. Our community would love a win tonight as we all need a lift in our spirits to say thank you to those angels that have helped us.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (15:22): As the Minister responsible for many of the people the member for Penrith has just thanked, I also pay tribute to the SES volunteers in the Penrith district. They certainly had a high tempo of operations over the course of the last week and they have not stopped. I am delighted to hear that the people of Penrith, like the people of Baulkham Hills, have spoilt their SES with a few pizzas at the end of the day. I think that should be one of the staple food groups for our emergency services, along with a few drinks afterwards. Unfortunately a number of emergency service volunteers will attend the Penrith Panthers match tonight. I do not think they should—I think they have suffered enough—but I believe that the support offered by that football club is genuine, albeit misguided.

RANDWICK PRECINCT REDEVELOPMENT

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:23): I want to share the voices of hundreds of local health workers and thousands of local residents. The local health workers and residents of the Coogee electorate are

confused and angered by this Government's failure to provide any new parking facilities as part of the Randwick precinct redevelopment. The Coogee electorate is home to three world-class hospitals: the Prince of Wales Hospital, the Sydney Children's Hospital and the Royal Hospital for Women, which is the only female-specific hospital in New South Wales. The redevelopment of this precinct is long overdue and is an absolutely essential piece of infrastructure improvement, as it will be investing in the health and wellbeing of our community for generations to come. The problem is that once again the finer details of a major infrastructure project have been completely missed by this Government.

As part of the \$1.5 billion redevelopment, the precinct will receive a larger adult emergency department with more beds, an intensive care unit with more staff, operating theatres, an emergency psychiatric unit, a medical assessment unit, a virtual care centre and a new helipad. Unfortunately, despite such a large increase in the number of rooms, patients, visitors and staff, this redevelopment comes with exactly zero new car parks. What this will do is fill our local streets of Randwick with the parked cars of nurses, orderlies, doctors, administrators, visitors and patients. Despite being essential to the running of a major hospital, or in this case three major hospitals, none of these people have been factored into this project at all.

Once again, the Government is failing to understand the purpose of a major piece of infrastructure. Once again, the Government is fixated on being able to cut the ribbon on something shiny and new, without having completed the due diligence required for such an investment. In designing this redevelopment, the Government has completely forgotten about the major part—the people. How does the Government expect hospital workers to get to and from their late-night and early-morning shifts without a place to park? How does this Government expect a nurse to be able to drop their kids off at school in the morning and make it to the hospital on time? How does this Government expect an on-call surgeon to make it to the operating room in time to treat their seriously ill patients? But it gets worse.

The Government has forgotten not only the staff but also the patients and their families. Does the Government expect an elderly patient receiving regular treatment to catch the light rail? If so, let's hope they are not in a hurry, considering that the light rail is 20 minutes slower than the soon-to-be-axed buses. Let us hope their appointment is not on a rainy day, because the light rail is a catastrophic failure in the wet. And let us hope that the elderly patient lives adjacent to the light rail, along its path, because the buses that used to stop in the local streets no longer exist. The Government talks about a green transport plan, which sounds great, but it is literally a plan. That is it—a sound bite. If the Government were serious about getting more people onto public transport in the Eastern Suburbs, it would not be cutting 16 bus routes from the area.

It is obvious that the Government has failed to consult with the staff at the hospital, with the Health Services Union, with the Nursing and Midwifery Federation or with local residents. Otherwise, it would have known better. The redevelopment will bring staff to the precinct, which is a fact that should be celebrated. But when staff are made late by their near endless search for a parking space in the local streets, they will not be celebrating. When local residents cannot find a park at the end of their work day, they will not be celebrating. When friends and family miss out on visiting hours because of the excessive walk to and from the hospital, they will not be celebrating. There are some serious solutions to this problem. One that I have been investigating is the use of the 1,000-space car park at the nearby Australian Turf Club. Outside major race meets, it is virtually empty and hundreds of spaces go unused. In an area as densely populated as the Eastern Suburbs, it is essential that our major institutions share assets for the benefit of our wider community. All that is needed is the will of the Government to help make a system like this work. There is still time, but the Government needs to solve this problem for workers, patients and residents before the hospital opens.

PARRAMATTA RIVER

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, and Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (15:27): Earlier this month I joined many volunteers for Clean Up Australia Day at George Kendall Reserve. It was clear that the volunteers had been completing the task of cleaning up our beautiful Parramatta River on more than just Clean Up Australia Day. Kellie Darley—Parramatta Riverkeeper Ambassador, co-founder of ParraParents and Rydalmere mum of two—came across an old overgrown path along the Parramatta River foreshore in May during COVID-19. Whilst exploring the river, she was shocked to see the large amount of rubbish caught between the mangroves and the seawall at George Kendall Reserve. Kellie shared with me how she first thought that there was a fungus growing on the very long trail of debris trapped there, but on closer inspection she realised that it was thousands—if not millions—of pieces of polystyrene. In reporting the rubbish to the City of Parramatta Council, she was advised that the spot is one of the most complained about in terms of rubbish across the Parramatta local government area.

The community and I believe that families across western Sydney deserve a clean, healthy Parramatta River that can be fully enjoyed. Kellie has found that one of the best ways she can help make that happen is to raise awareness of the litter polluting our local waterways and promote the actions we can each take to help, which

include cleaning up the litter around the river. With the easing of COVID restrictions, a number of people from the Parramatta area join Kellie each month to remove rubbish, and on Clean Up Australia Day a total of 150 bags of rubbish were removed. That is 7,500 cubic litres of rubbish, or 60 bathtubs full. When you add in the tyres, suitcases, ride-on toys and other large items they have removed, it is estimated that Kellie and about 50 families are together responsible for cleaning up close to one tonne of rubbish from the Parramatta River between May and November last year along just a 400-metre stretch of foreshore at Ermington.

This year on Clean Up Australia Day I joined Kellie, her family and about 20 other families. Together we removed 34 more bags of rubbish. It is great to see firsthand the valuable work many local residents are doing to help make Parramatta River swimmable again. I thank Kellie and the wonderful group of adults and kids for their hard work and dedication for almost getting the 400-metre stretch of foreshore empty of litter by the end of each clean-up. With the help of the Parramatta River Catchment Group, the volunteers now have access to a litter vacuum that will make removing small rubbish much quicker and easier. I saw it in action and was surprised to see how many pieces of plastic have accumulated.

The regular clean-up events at George Kendall Riverside Park are only possible thanks to the team of people who have leaders volunteering to look after a section of foreshore so everyone stays safe and that their experience is as enjoyable as possible. I especially thank Maryanne Thompson, Paul Patynowski, Anne Sykes, Melanie Pearson, Nic Byran, Bernadette Riad, Chris and Sarah Tornatore, Nadia Young, Jasmine Payget and Nell Graham for their help in running the clean-up events. I say a special thankyou to Kellie Darley for sharing her love of Parramatta River with the community and for inspiring so many people to care about our waterways.

DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (15:30): Honesty, openness and transparency are paramount in any pecuniary interest declaration lodged by all members elected to any State, Federal or local government position. I discuss a number of shortcomings in the present legislation and speak in favour of the Local Government Amendment (Pecuniary Interests Disclosures) Bill 2020, which relates specifically to local government. As soon as mayors and councillors have lodged their pecuniary interest declaration, it is incumbent on the general manager to see that the declaration is printed and appears on the official council website as soon as is practical. This declaration should appear on the council website within days, not months or years. The declaration should be open and accessible to the general public and it should not be placed in a convoluted, hidden or difficult to access location on the council's website. Access should be simple and easy to navigate.

In recent years, some councillors have gone to great lengths to obfuscate their interests in trusts, especially interests relating to property. Approximately four to five years ago, one particular Fairfield City councillor had his properties nicely itemised and listed in his return so the general public could see what properties he had a vested interest in and where they were. Since the Government and Opposition announced they were considering banning developers from running for elected office, the councillor's itemised investments swiftly started to disappear into trusts and information pertaining to their vested interests became obfuscated.

Councillors have firsthand privileged information on the rezoning of land well before it is known to the general public. It has been reported to me that family members and/or associates of a particular councillor have been knocking on the doors of landowners where rezoning would be taking place, attempting to get the owners to sell. This occurred before the general public had been given notice of it. Blind Freddy can see where this information came from. Some councillors are very cunning in the way they operate their trusts. One councillor in particular was believed to have an interest in a major development in a neighbouring council area. This prompted a journalist of a major newspaper to investigate the owners of the syndicate, wherein the councillor's name did not appear as having a vested interest, but the name of a very close relative was listed. It does not take a genius to see what is going on.

Over the years councils have rightly had much of their planning powers revoked by the State Government and I believe it is high time that their rezoning powers are removed as well. When a councillor has major property holdings in a municipality they are elected to represent, empowering those individuals with the capacity to rezone locations of their choosing can lead to a range of unsavoury circumstances, especially when there is no public record of how many properties those individuals own due to the properties being hidden in trusts. It is about time the Government implemented the same rules for councillors that apply to Ministers in State Parliament. Trusts should be open and transparent so that the general public is aware of their property portfolios and can see any conflicts of interest.

When this Parliament knows there is a loophole in our legislation that allows councillors to evade detection for possible corrupt conduct by hiding their business and property interests in trusts, it is incumbent on us to amend that legislation. If we do not then we are complicit in their corrupt conduct and activities. Despite the numerous mayors and councillors out there who dedicate their time and efforts towards helping and serving their

communities, there are always those few who are in it to help themselves with confidential and privileged information gained through their position in council. Time and time again we see stories in the national media about councillors and mayors accused of abusing their positions in council to push through developments that provide no benefit to the community. Given that trusts do not have to be registered, there is no way of knowing if a councillor truly has an interest in a development or not. It is time for the Government to look at that anomaly and force mayors and councillors, through legislation, to open their trusts and present their declarations, trusts and tax returns to the NSW Electoral Commission so that we can stop this abuse of power once and for all.

HEALTH HABITS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (15:35): As a parent with two young boys and a member of this place who is constantly on the move, I know the importance of eating well and the factors that can get in the way of it. While I applaud the work being done by both the State and Federal governments in creating policies and a platform for reform, we must do more as individuals to better our own lives. Growing up in the late seventies and the eighties I was always fascinated by the promotional campaign called "Life. Be in it." Do members remember that? It focused on a character called Norm. He was an overweight man who sat on his recliner every day, drinking beer and eating unhealthily.

Mr David Elliott: Big boned.

Mr MARK COURE: Yes, he was big boned. That is right. The premise of the campaign was to encourage people not to be like Norm but to focus on the importance of eating healthy, being physically fit and being a role model to their children. It inspires individual responsibility and acknowledges that every person and every family can make a difference. A recent report from NSW Health found that over 63 per cent of adults across the State are currently classified as overweight or obese. That is a shocking statistic, but what is most worrying to me as a parent is that children appear to be following the unhealthy eating habits set by their parents. The same report also found that almost a quarter of children in New South Wales are overweight or obese. When those issues become systemic and flow through to future generations, it becomes an epidemic.

We cannot become complacent or push healthy habits to the side. It also comes at a huge cost to the national economy. Tackling obesity accounts for 8.6 per cent of our health expenditure. That is an enormous drain on the budget and means that this funding is not available to provide life-saving and vital medical treatment. What can we as individuals do to limit this and look towards restricting the health and economic effects of a growing obesity rate? Last year I was honoured to host the team from Nutrition Australia in New South Wales Parliament—I know the member for Kogarah has had a bit to do with them as well—for a breakfast that congratulated them on all of their hard work over recent years in campaigning for a healthier Australia. What is most admirable about that organisation is its strong, loyal volunteer base. Together they have helped encourage greater levels of nutritional education and inspired individuals of all backgrounds and circumstances, particularly across multicultural backgrounds, to eat healthy. That is a fantastic initiative. It is an organisation that our Government is always happy to work with.

In 2018 alone the New South Wales Government invested over \$25 billion in tackling the direct and indirect effects of obesity and creating a positive pathway to appropriate reform. Critical to those improvements has been the introduction of the Active Kids rebate, which currently promotes over 9,600 approved providers with \$207 million committed over four years. That allows parents to claim \$100 twice a year on their children's sporting fees and registration. The success speaks for itself, with almost half of all schoolchildren enjoying the benefits of extracurricular exercise. As the member for Oatley I know that this program has been highly regarded throughout my local community, and in fact right across the St George area. I note that the member for Rockdale is in the Chamber as well. It has been imperative in getting children active. What we do as a government and what groups like Nutrition Australia do as advocacy groups is give individuals the tools and support they require while giving them the space to make decisions appropriate to their own circumstances.

Individual responsibility is therefore fundamental in tackling the issue locally. Nutrition ratings are a guide to affirmative action, but the power to champion those recommendations into the home starts with each and every person making a commitment to be better. I urge the public to review the information presented by both the State and Federal governments and groups like Nutrition Australia and to make healthier choices each and every day. We owe it to ourselves to increase the health outlook of the nation. We owe it to our children and their children to make a platform for positive and healthier habits.

ELECTRIC SCOOTERS

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (15:39): Electric scooters are an increasingly familiar sight on streets and footpaths in Sydney and across New South Wales. They are being sold at stores like JB Hi-Fi and even at the local Big W, which sells one for just \$169. The global electric scooter market was worth a whopping \$25 billion

in 2019. Cities across the world are rushing to regulate e-scooters and incorporate them into their transport mix. But what are we doing here? Nothing, because apparently the transport Minister is not in the mood to do anything about them. People are rushing to buy electric scooters for a number of reasons. They are a cheap, quick and effortless ride around our city and suburbs, taking much less effort than cycling, so riders do not even need a shower at the beginning of the work day.

E-scooters are cost effective and good for the environment, with one retailer arguing that the cost of fuelling an electric scooter is a little more than 1 per cent of the cost of fuelling an energy-efficient car. That is creating less emissions. E-scooters are a game changer in solving what is called "the first and last mile problem". Members know that if it is a bit too far to walk to the train station or bus stop, or too far at the other end, people are likely to get in their car. By helping people get to their local public transport stop, e-scooters help reduce congestion on our already choked streets. The cost of congestion in our city is going to hit \$15.9 billion by 2031, so getting people out of their cars is critical to the future of our city. E-scooters are great at reducing pressure on parking as well. In fact, the technology used to power and manage e-scooters is rapidly evolving so that scooter companies can geofence scooters from neighbourhoods where they are not wanted and retrieve discarded or illegally parked scooters. Most importantly, though, they are fun. One resident wrote to me recently and said:

E-scooters are a fun, funky and fresh way of getting around – they can be quite zippy too!

The significant question left to answer is whether they are safe and how to regulate them properly. Of course, the best way to do that is via a trial. Under current rules, e-scooters cannot be registered as a vehicle and can only be ridden on private property. They can be sold under the Federal Motor Vehicle Standards (Road Vehicles) Determination 2017, in which they are classified as "not road vehicles". Because there are no safety standards for e-scooters at the Federal level, it is up to the States to regulate them. The roads Minister in New South Wales would have to offer an exemption to the rule, similar to the exemptions offered for motorised wheelchairs, ride-on lawnmowers, golf carts and electric bikes. Regulation of e-scooters is complex and involves nutting out safety, insurance and licensing issues. To the Government's credit, at one stage it looked like it was on course to solve some of those problems. A trial of electric scooters was due to commence on the northern beaches in January 2019, but just before the election the then roads Minister Melinda Pavey decided it was not a good idea. Under pressure from some within his own Government, new roads Minister Andrew Constance decided to create the Electric Scooter Advisory Working Group.

The working group included hand-picked representatives from emergency services, the State Insurance Regulatory Authority, the NRMA, the Office of Local Government and other key stakeholders—a worthy group. It worked through the issues and late last year released a set of parameters for a trial of electric scooters. It proposed that riders have a driver licence. It also proposed geofencing; a 20-kilometre maximum speed limit, except for when on shared paths; exclusion from footpaths and riding at night; and a trial of only commercially owned scooters, not privately owned scooters. Recently in budget estimates the Minister declared that he is not in the mood for a trial. Again he junked the idea, despite the fact that there was an agreed set of parameters from his hand-picked working group. Frankly, that is a lazy, irresponsible decision. He is putting the lives of countless people who are riding electric scooters at risk by failing to trial and regulate them properly.

I am not the only one who is voicing this view. There is broad support for a trial, including from local councils, business groups and residents. The Productivity Commission's own green paper recommends regulating personal mobility devices, including e-scooters. Even that modern Liberal Dave Sharma says that the Government's resistance to e-scooters is unfathomable. Many States across our country, including Victoria and Queensland, and the Territories have worked out how to regulate e-scooters. With electric scooters becoming more popular every day, a trial to find the safest way to add them to our transport mix is critical. Without becoming too alarmist about it, I ask the Minister whether he is prepared to face the family of someone killed on one of these devices and say that he just was not in the mood to work out how to make them safe. We need a trial to find the safest way to regulate electric scooters before the worst happens. It is time the Minister got on with it.

FLOODS AND HAWKESBURY ELECTORATE

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (15:45): I thank the amazing volunteers across the Hawkesbury electorate for working tirelessly in dangerous conditions to ensure the safety of people and property. The SES volunteers are doing an important job in their responses to urgent situations. The community is grateful to them for putting their own safety on the line. Surf Life Saving NSW, Rural Fire Service and NSW Police Force personnel are rescuing people from dangerous situations and are doing an amazing job in delivering supplies such as food, drinks, baby formula, nappies, medical supplies and other necessities that are in short supply to those who do not have access to them. The Hawkesbury Police Area Command has been outstanding for providing emergency supplies and necessities to our community.

I thank the many community groups that are playing important roles during these devastating times. The Rapid Relief Team, comprising volunteers from the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church, has been filling sandbags, cooking sausages, and offering tea and coffee for those impacted by the flood. I visited the Richmond Club, which has once again opened its doors to anyone evacuating in Hawkesbury. The clubhouse is open for 24 hours a day; it is offering people a safe place to stay. The SES, Anglicare and chaplains from the Vineyard Church are there to offer support and advice. People may shower and get a meal there too. I thank the volunteers and staff, who have been so accommodating. Kennels are available, so people can come with their pets and have them looked after. The depth and extent of the assistance provided by the Richmond Club is wonderful and very reflective of the community spirit prevalent each time the Hawkesbury community faces a disaster or pandemic. I give a big shout-out to Hills Shire Council for making Castle Hill Showground available to Hawkesbury residents, many of whom have taken their animals there for shelter.

There are many other community groups and individuals who are playing an important part in keeping our community safe. They include volunteers from the North Richmond evacuation centre; the Merroo Christian Centre at Kurrajong, which has housed people caught in this flood; the Salvation Army; the Red Cross; and many others. I cannot name them all at this one time. The community and I have the greatest gratitude for the commitment all the volunteers have to our community's safety. Our gratitude equally extends to those not of the Hawkesbury electorate, such as Hills Shire Council, who have come to protect our community, to encourage all who are looking out for the less vulnerable, including the elderly.

The flooding has tragically taken the life of a 25-year-old man, whose car was trapped in floodwaters in Glenorie. I offer my deepest condolences to the man's loved ones. These floods are the latest in a round of disasters to hit the Hawkesbury electorate. I pray for a cessation of the disasters striking our beautiful Hawkesbury one after another. Despite the wrath of Mother Nature and the COVID-19 pandemic, the resilience of our community only strengthens, which is largely a result of the important contributions by our volunteers, who are always there in our toughest hours. I hope everyone in my electorate and across the State stays safe during this period of flooding. I encourage them not to take any unnecessary risks. Now comes the clean-up.

TAXI INDUSTRY

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (15:48): I bring to the attention of the House an ongoing issue affecting many of my constituents: the Government's continued painful failure to provide fair compensation to holders of taxi licences. As all here should be aware, following the Government's refusal to properly regulate the ridesharing industry in New South Wales, taxi licences have plummeted in value. People in my community and across the State who bought taxi licences for as much as \$400,000 have now seen the value of their investments drop to virtually nothing. Thousands of families invested in taxi licences in good faith, accepting that the Government took its own laws seriously and would maintain the market. Last month the average transfer price was just \$61,000, with only two transfers occurring. The reality is that this market, which was once heavily regulated and promoted by the New South Wales Government, has totally collapsed.

A month ago today the Government released the Baker-Finch independent review of the point to point transport industry. Among other things, the review was primarily to consider the case for further assistance in line with the Government's supposed commitment to further compensation. For people in the community who have lost hundreds of thousands of dollars thanks to this Government, this review had been highly anticipated since it was announced in October 2019. I can truly understand why some felt like it was a slap in the face when it turned out that the Government had been sitting on this review since July 2020.

It took Ms Baker-Finch less than six months to complete the review after she was appointed, yet somehow the Government sat on its hands for more than seven months before making it public. For thousands of taxi licence holders, the recommendations of the review are extremely disappointing. While the review acknowledged that licences had dropped in value by \$300,000 from where they were 10 years ago, the review seems to take the approach that investors simply experienced a downside risk and that further compensation is largely inappropriate. This is such a fundamentally unfair approach to take to this issue that I barely even know how to respond.

We all know that prior to the advent of ridesharing apps like Uber the New South Wales Government enjoyed a monopoly power on the provision of point to point transport. This was a protected monopoly backed up by force of the legislation and the conduct of the New South Wales Government over decades. It was not by any means an ordinary investment market with accompanying risks. The New South Wales Government was more than happy to pocket the cash from auctioning off taxi plates, and any decent Government would think that those sales came with a warranty. To say that you can be both the price regulator and the monopoly holder and have no responsibility for the product is an absolute farce. Regardless of what is in the review, the Government needs to accept that it has a genuine responsibility to taxi licence owners, and those members opposite need to make these people whole again.

On 24 February Minister Constance stated that the New South Wales Government is now considering the recommendations in the report. The thousands of families across this State who have invested in taxi licences are once again waiting for some indefinite date on which Minister Constance will even think about taking action. A month has passed since the Minister said he was considering it. Since then, we have had radio silence. In some cases, these people had their life savings wiped out by this Government. Once again they are being told, "Wait and see, and maybe we'll think about giving you some scraps." If those opposite are not going to help these people and are going to keep treating them like they do not matter then I ask them to be honest and tell these people, once and for all, that they are doing them over. The suspense is ruining people's lives, and they deserve much better from their own Government than that.

These people are mostly small investors who diligently saved their money and thought that the safest way to plan their retirements or investments was through a government-backed asset. They do not deserve to wait even longer for a response from this Government. They deserve to be treated with decency and respect, and to be fairly compensated now. For goodness sake, there is currently a \$1 levy per trip for compensation! Let the levy remain as a revenue stream, securitise that levy and have it remain until the 4,500 victims of this Government's atrocious act of commercial violence are adequately compensated. It is simple. Most Government, Labor and Independent members openly agree that compensation is a must. It is time for those opposite to do the right thing and support fair compensation.

DUBBO ELECTORATE ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (15:53): A lot can happen in a couple of years. It is great to stand in this Chamber two years and two days on from the 2019 election and reflect on some of the amazing work that has been done by this Government to help people in regional parts of the State. Heading into that election, the NSW Nationals made a \$500 million commitment to upgrade or replace dilapidated, tired and worn-out timber bridges. It was a really important policy from the only party that truly represents regional communities. In fact, the announcement was described in the *Daily Liberal* as being one that would provide a new lease of life for iconic timber bridges. For some reason, that announcement was met with a bit of cynicism from some, with a few attempts to suggest it was a promise that would never actually be carried out across the Dubbo electorate. So I am pretty happy to be in this place now, remembering those promises and talking about how well they are actually happening and being acted upon right across the electorate—not just in regard to bridges but also roads that are being funded at a level that has never been seen before.

On 8 April last year I was pleased to announce just over \$2.7 million had been allocated to replace the Terrabella Bridge, which crosses the Little River south of Geurie. That funding came from the New South Wales Government's Fixing Country Roads program, and at the time it complemented an investment of \$700,000 from the Federal Government. The replacement of that particular bridge, the Terrabella Bridge, has been talked about by locals for quite some time, and it was identified as a priority by Dubbo Regional Council. I was certainly happy to support the project, as I am well aware of the volume of traffic the bridge supports, which includes family vehicles, trucks and farm equipment.

It is a very important project for the agricultural sector, which will definitely improve freight connectivity, particularly for farmers and stock producers in that particular area. For a long time producers have been calling for a B-double rated bridge in the area, so I am delighted that this will now become a reality. The project will deliver important benefits for all road users, from passengers to producers and from heavy truck drivers to the local school bus. Just a fortnight ago I announced a further \$454,000 in State funding would be allocated to Dubbo Regional Council to go towards completing that project. That part of the funding came as part of the Fixing Country Bridges program, a \$500 million program which I spoke about earlier that formed an integral part of the NSW Nationals election campaign in 2019.

This is delivery of the highest order. That recent announcement included funding for another two major projects in the Dubbo area and \$1.2 million for the final timber bridge in the Mid-Western Regional Council area, the Goodiman Creek Bridge Number 18 on Spring Ridge Road. There is \$1.7 million for the aging Burrendong Number 2 Bridge, sometimes referred to as Fashions Mount Bridge. That bridge provides vital access to Lake Burrendong, which is a vital part of the region's tourism offering. And there is \$1.94 million for the complete replacement of Benolong Bridge. I joined the mayor of Dubbo at the announcement and I know he wholeheartedly supports the work that the Government is doing when it comes to replacing timber bridges. The Benolong and Terrabella bridges are geographically very close. The replacement of both bridges will be significant for the people who live and work in that particular area.

On top of easing the financial burden on councils, this sort of program helps create thousands of jobs in regional communities across the State at a time when we are continually looking to stimulate economies that have been through things like drought, bushfires, COVID-19 and now, sadly, the recent flooding. Given I am talking about bridges today, it would be remiss of me not to refer to another bridge project currently underway in the

Dubbo electorate, and that is the River Street Bridge. Last week in this place we had a petition debate on the topic. I thought it was worthwhile to put on the record once again why this is a good project and a necessary project.

Earlier this week I received notification that, if weather and rainfall forecasts were correct, there was a chance of a moderate flood happening in Dubbo. That could have impacted Bligh Street and in fact put the low-level Emile Serisier Bridge under water. Thankfully that did not happen but I send my condolences to communities across the State that have been subjected to quite dramatic flooding at this time. My part of the world has been lucky in that we have copped a fairly good soaking but none of the flooding at this point. The point about that is that, had the Macquarie River reached that moderate flood level and the Serisier bridge gone under, we would once again have had only one bridge functioning in a massive city like Dubbo.

In this instance, a bypass, which opponents of the River Street Bridge want, would not have done a single thing for the local traffic issues that could have arisen. In fact, it would only have provided an option for vehicles going around Dubbo but absolutely nothing for people wanting to go from one side of the city to the other. That is at the heart of what this project is and always has been: It is a local solution to local traffic problems. The New South Wales Government is committed to spending around \$44 million as part of that overall \$220 million project. That will complement other works being done at intersections to build a better Dubbo. The cynics who question the Government's desire to build bridges that benefit the people we represent have well and truly been proven wrong. The Government will continue delivering for regional areas.

Documents

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Reports

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: By leave: In accordance with Sessional Order 266, I table the report of the Public Service Commission entitled *State of the NSW Public Sector Report 2020*.

Petitions

FRESHWATER MANLY FERRIES

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Before the debate commences, and for the benefit of the public, I take the opportunity to explain the process and rationale behind this unique debate. It is unique because it enables the public to bring their concerns directly to the attention of the House. The intent of the procedure is that the petition debate will start with a speech from a member, which in most cases will be the member who lodged the petition, followed by up to four other members, followed by a Minister in response. To conclude the debate, the first speaker will speak in reply. After all members have spoken, the House will vote on the question that the House now take note of the petition. In most cases, the question will be determined on the voices and be passed. However, if it is challenged by 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 moving to the appropriate side of the House.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (16:00): It is an absolute privilege to speak on a petition to save the iconic Manly ferry from a permanent watery grave. I am honoured to introduce this take-note debate. However, the person who deserves the credit is Candy Bingham, the Deputy Mayor of Northern Beaches Council—who is a dynamo—and the Save the Manly Ferries committee. The campaign to save iconic heritage that has been taken away from the northern beaches by the New South Wales Government is the definition of a community-run, grassroots campaign. There is an old saying: Manly is 10 kilometres from Sydney and 1,000 kilometres from care. It seems the transport Minister has taken that saying to heart because he could not care less about the people of Manly. It is unsurprising. To remove the Manly ferry from Sydney Harbour would be like New York getting rid of its buildings, Athens tearing down the Acropolis or the Liberal Party getting rid of property developers. It just does not seem right.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Ku-ring-gai will remain silent. He will have an opportunity to speak later in the debate.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: We must ask ourselves why a central, iconic and permanent part of Sydney's heritage should be lost. The history of the Manly ferry is engraved in the history of Sydney. It is said that Japanese mini submarines followed a Manly ferry through the anti-sub nets at the mouth of Sydney Harbour on the night of 29 May 1942. Apparently a late-returning passenger thought he saw the sub in the water before dismissing the idea. He was right—lurking in the water was a submarine. Lurking at the bottom of this debate is the issue of privatisation. It might be complicated, but I will explain what has happened. The services were privatised in 2013.

The privatised lease was re-signed in 2019. The contract required Transdev NSW to purchase the new ferries on behalf of the Government, which it chose to build in China.

Andrew Constance has undertaken a fantastic jobs plan for China. We need one here in New South Wales. If members think that is complicated, they would be right. That messed-up ideology means that the people of New South Wales are presented with a false choice: either Chinese-built ferries or no ferries at all. What a load of rubbish! A ferry-building industry exists right here in New South Wales, and Austrade attempts to sell to other countries the ferries that are made here. I ask members to imagine a situation where the New South Wales Government invests in the ferry services that other countries buy from. That could lift capacity, produce jobs and achieve something good but, no, not on Andrew Constance's watch.

What is driving this? The Government and the Minister are not grabbed by the concepts of heritage and tradition. Watching the *Collaroy* turn the corner at Bradleys Head framed by the outline of the Sydney Harbour Bridge would make most people think, "God, I love Sydney!" Unfortunately, it makes the transport Minister think, "Who can I sell this to?" It is a perverted ideology that comes down to a fundamental mistake in economic policy. The Northern Beaches Council has discovered that every year 500 million tourism dollars flow into the northern beaches. Catching the *Freshwater* was the fourth most cited activity behind going to the beach and eating; so, pretty essential. In 2019, 2.8 million people visited Manly. That number is up 16 per cent on 2018 data. In 2020, 52 per cent of all visitors to Manly used the Manly ferry and visitor spending accounted for 12 per cent of all jobs created on the northern beaches. The New South Wales economy relies on tourism and tourism comes from the ferries. The member for Manly, who is meant to represent the people of his electorate, is getting rid of the ferries.

Mr Alister Henskens: There will be more ferries, not less. Can't you count?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I say to the loudmouth member opposite that the Minister for Transport and Roads said the reduction in the number of Freshwater ferries was necessary because they would normally cease operation if swells reached 4.5 metres. He then said that although the new ferries would also cease operating at that point, the old ferries did too. Opposition members checked data from the Manly Hydraulics Laboratory and found that while the swell exceeded 4.5 metres on 15 occasions, the ferry was cancelled only six times. The Government's decision will result in more cancellations and a worse service for the community. I cannot believe the member for Manly would endorse it. It is time to reverse this decision and save the iconic Manly ferry. The Government should not be so reckless.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I remind members that interjections are disorderly at all times. Some members in the Chamber are already on three calls to order. I do not want to throw any members out because this is a very good petition debate.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:05): I thank the member for Kogarah for his wonderful advertisement for Manly. I also thank the constituents of Manly who have supported this petition. I recognise the Deputy Mayor of Northern Beaches Council for her wonderful advocacy for this very important issue. Over the past 24 years I have commuted from Manly by ferry. In fact, this morning I caught the ferry on my way to Parliament and the swell was alright. Make no mistake, the Freshwater ferries are an icon of Sydney Harbour. This morning I saw one going past as I went past the heads. They have played and will continue to play an important role in transporting people around the harbour. The patronage on the Manly to Circular Quay route declined by around 15 per cent between 2017 and 2019, and on most days the ferries run well below capacity.

Ms Trish Doyle: Do you catch the ferry?

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: I just told you, I catch the ferry to work every day. During the average morning peak, on a 1,000-person vessel the number of customers ranges from 30 at 6.00 a.m. to around 280 at 8.00 a.m. However, those figures are no reason to retire all the beautiful old boats. Members will be aware that I have campaigned with members of the Manly community to retain the Freshwaters. While I have not secured the retention of all four of the ferries, two will continue to operate every weekend and on public holidays for many years to come—and so they should. It would be great if the other two ferries, the MV *Freshwater* and the MV *Collaroy*, could stay on the water and continue to operate. The Government is currently seeking interest from organisations to continue operating the ferries for tourism and heritage purposes.

Retaining the ferries would require a partnership between the Government and an interested organisation, and a fantastic collaborative opportunity has arisen with the new Museum of Sydney Harbour. The museum will be the home of Sydney Heritage Fleet, which is internationally recognised as a leading maritime heritage organisation. It will be a place for visitors to enjoy and learn about the cultural importance of heritage vessels. As well as exhibits, the museum will include berths for historic boats and a ferry wharf. It will also run tours on heritage vessels. The Museum of Sydney Harbour presents a purpose-built opportunity for interested organisations to retain the use of the two remaining Freshwater ferries. The Government has been presented with the opportunity

to explore the electrification of ferries, which is an exciting and timely development that I wholeheartedly support. The Northern Beaches Council has also said how easy it would be to retain the Freshwater ferries. I am advised that the decision by Transport for NSW to retain the ferries is final.

I am calling on Transport for NSW to provide as much support as possible to the Northern Beaches Council to undertake a feasibility study or business case to retain and operate two of the remaining Freshwater class ferries. In October the council passed a motion to save all large Manly ferries. The deputy mayor of the council and Chair of the Save the Manly Ferries group has made many good points, including that the Freshwaters have been rigorously maintained up to now, are fit for service, have decades of life left and the cost of maintenance programs for the Freshwaters should be seen as an investment. In line with its campaigning to save all ferries, I have written to the council, encouraging it to undertake a business case or feasibility study. That would be real and meaningful action on its behalf. I also reiterate my call for Transport for NSW to assist the council where possible. The Freshwater class ferries are an icon of Sydney Harbour. The compromise of retaining two of them will not please everybody, but year-round, for years to come, they will remain on Sydney Harbour.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I remind members to be COVID safe by spreading out in the Chamber.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:10): I too thank the Manly community and, as the member for Kogarah has said, the work of the Deputy Mayor of Northern Beaches Council, Candy Bingham, to ensure that these signatures were collated and distributed to the Legislative Assembly. We all know the commitment required because getting a lot of signatures for a petition is not easy. The more than 20,000 signatories to this petition know what we feel and understand in our bones in the Labor Party. We support the Manly ferries. Our harbour ferries must be safe, reliable and iconic. The Manly ferry run is a major tourism drawcard and an essential public service. It is important to remember that it is a public transport service. They are also a definitive aspect of our harbour's culture and history. The double-ended harbour ferries have been a part of Sydney's ferry network since 1879, when the *Wallaby* was first introduced by the North Shore Ferry Company. Over the past 140 years we have had a series of similar vessels, many of which have entered the lexicon to describe and typify Sydney Harbour, including the *South Steyne*, the Lady class ferries and, finally, the lovely Freshwater class.

The State Government refused to consider retaining the *Lady Northcott* and the *Lady Herron*, even though they were loved by tourists and locals alike. Those two grand old dames were towed in the darkness of night to Newcastle Harbour and put up for sale. Once again we see that the Berejiklian Government knows the price of everything and the value of nothing. We must not allow the Government to do the same thing with the lovely Freshwater class. They are the last remaining link with Sydney's rich and storied maritime past, but that does not make them obsolete. Those four ships provide many thousands of miles of reliable, safe and efficient services every week for many thousands of commuters, tourists and local daytrippers alike. We can take no comfort from Andrew Constance's proposal for a staged scrapping of the Freshwater class ferries. The suggestion that one or two boats would be kept for summer holiday trips is fanciful. In practice, the boats will be scrapped by the Liberal Government the moment any costly maintenance or repair work is required, without the economy of scale provided by maintaining a fleet of four.

The Labor Opposition has been campaigning hard on the importance of local jobs. We want to see local manufacturing workers supported to build the world's best trains, trams and ferries for New South Wales public transport passengers. But we also respect the work and expertise of the past. The Freshwater class ferries were built in Newcastle, and their longevity and reliability is a testament to the skill and quality of our local shipbuilders. When the Freshwater class vessels reach their end of life they should be replaced by high-quality, fit-for-purpose vessels built by a local shipyard using the expertise and amazing skills of local workers. We have seen what happens when a replacement fleet is built offshore for the cheapest possible price.

Mr Alister Henskens: Forgacs forever!

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I note the interjection by the member for Ku-ring-gai. Unfortunately, Forgacs is closed because this Government sent every contract overseas and ferries are no longer built in Newcastle. I know the member for Ku-ring-gai when he lived in Newcastle went to the State Dockyard. We have seen what happens when a replacement fleet is built offshore. We get the cheapest possible price and we get a floating bunch of junk. The RiverCat class vessels shipped in from overseas were riddled with asbestos and have hundreds of manufacturing and engineering faults, which seven months later are still not resolved. Nobody benefits from the Berejiklian Government's hatred of our maritime heritage and our manufacturing sector, except offshore shipyards and offshore workers. We will need a steady supply because there is no way we will get 40 to 50 years of reliable service out of the cheap junk that the Minister for Transport and Roads, the Hon. Andrew Constance, has lumbered this State with. However, the real madness of the transport Minister's decision is a practical one. The replacement ferries will seat only a third of the passengers as previously and cannot handle the big swells between Sydney Heads and Freshwater.

Mr Andrew Constance: Are you serious?

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: They would not have handled last weekend's and last week's swells—we know that for sure—but the current Freshwater class did not miss a beat. These icons and traditions must be preserved and built upon. They should not be torn apart in some kind of bureaucratic sport, just to run the cheapest possible service.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:15): No-one can deny the iconic nature of the Freshwater class ferry. Before the member for Kogarah was even born, the great Melbourne band Australian Crawl embodied the romantic quality of the Manly ferry at the beginning of its hit song *Reckless* with these words:

Meet me down by the jetty landing
Where the pontoons bump and spray
The others reading, standing
As the Manly ferry cuts its way to Circular Quay

As a Newcastle boy, in my first days in Sydney I missed the saltwater in my nostrils, so of course I followed the advice of Australian Crawl and went to Circular Quay. I got on the Manly ferry for the first time, and how beautiful it was. No-one with a heart in their chest can deny that the Manly ferry has a special place in our city. I commend the way in which the member for Manly, James Griffin, has courageously fought to retain the Manly ferry by a blended approach of retaining the Freshwater ferry on the weekends and introducing the Emerald class during the week. I think we can all admire an MP who stands up for his community, unlike the member for Kogarah who suffered a massive swing against him in his electorate at the 2019 State election.

The Emerald class ships on Monday through to Friday will provide 328 faster services on the Manly route each week, which is an increase of around 67 per cent. These more frequent services hopefully will encourage more people to use public transport. The ferry service is incredibly important not only to the character of our city but also to our natural environment, which I know the people on the northern beaches feel very strongly about. Every extra person on a ferry represents one fewer person on our roads. On top of that, the Emerald class vessels are more fuel efficient and their engines are more environmentally friendly in comparison with the existing Freshwater class vessels.

There is no better way to get to work than on the ferry. It is much better for our spirits and frame of mind at the beginning and end of the day to avoid traffic jams and glide by the Sydney Opera House, the most beautiful building in the world, perched on a prominent location facing the most beautiful harbour in the world. The new Emerald class ferry will provide commuters with a more frequent and faster service and commuters will be able to use their weekly Opal card cap on fees. Freshwater ferry patronage year on year since 2017 unfortunately has been declining, which demonstrates a serious issue of commuter choice. Patrons have argued loudly for improved commuter services. Between 2017 and 2019 patronage on the Freshwater Manly to Circular Quay route unfortunately has declined by 15 per cent—from 5.2 million in 2017 to 4.5 million in 2018 and even less in 2019.

On average, weekend patronage on the Freshwater Manly to Circular Quay route declined by 12 per cent between 2017 and 2019. Contrary to common misconceptions, the Emeralds can handle conditions around Sydney Heads. These vessels have been purpose built to operate the Manly to Circular Quay route. There are currently six Emeralds in the fleet and they often travel to Manly when a Freshwater is unavailable. There are also some conditions, such as when there is a high frequency of waves near a dock, where the Emeralds can operate when the larger Freshwaters cannot. During the busy summer period, in addition to the Freshwaters on weekends, the new Emerald class vessels will operate every 10 minutes every day and move up to 2,400 customers per direction per hour. Furthermore, on our busiest days in summer, an additional Emerald class vessel will operate and services will be delivered every 8½ minutes, providing seven trips an hour, moving 2,800 customers per hour per direction.

Modern public transport has to be relevant to attract customers. With the Emerald class, passengers can sit outside. The vessels have wi-fi and bike racks, and they are disability and pram friendly. The Freshwater class vessels have 200 external seats for customers. The new Emerald class vessels will have 140 external seats for customers; so with more frequent services, this means more external seats for customers to enjoy on weekends, public holidays and during summer. On weekends the number of outdoor seats will increase from 400 to about 700 on average. I will finish as I started, with the words of Australian Crawl:

Throw down your guns
Don't be so reckless
Throw down your guns
Don't be so reckless
Don't be so ...

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I remind members that there are 20,000 people online watching us right now, in theory.

Mr Gareth Ward: You rounded that up a lot.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I do not want to have to throw the member out.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (16:22): First, "We don't like that kind of behaviour." A ride on the Freshwater ferry from Circular Quay to Manly is a rite of passage. While some may see the ferry as just another mode of transport, just another way to get from point A to point B—and that obviously includes the member for Ku-ring-gai—this is not the case for the several million international tourists who visit this city during normal times. Nor is it the case for the many regional visitors from across the State, and indeed the entire country, who bring their children to what is inarguably this country's finest capital city to experience it and all it has to offer. For those visitors, a ride on the Manly ferry is considered an essential Sydney experience.

A ride on the Freshwater class ferry is not just about the destination it takes you to; it is about how you travel. It is about seeing this city from the deck of the ferry, with the wind in your hair and the saltwater on your skin. Riding on a big ferry is an experience that ranks alongside other must-do activities while visiting Sydney, such as visiting the Opera House and viewing the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and visiting Bondi Beach and Taronga Zoo. It is one of Sydney's quintessential experiences. It is a journey that has been immortalised in songs, books, films and indeed our collective memory since 1850 when the first big ferries took to Sydney Harbour. It is a voyage that contributes to the northern beaches' \$500 million-a-year tourism industry by delivering many of the several million people who visit Manly each year. The removal and reduction of the Freshwater class ferry from Sydney Harbour will surely land a major blow to the businesses and the people of Manly. It is a travesty that this Government is leading that.

The Government wants to replace all but two of the Freshwater class ferries with smaller foreign-made Emerald class ferries. The remaining Freshwater ferries will run on weekends and on public holidays. That is yet another of the Government's short-sighted cost-cutting measures at the expense of the people of Manly and the local businesses. Like the 22,000 people who signed today's petition, I hold serious concerns about the Government's plans for the Manly ferry service. That plan is to replace the Freshwater class diesel-engine ferry with another diesel-fuelled vessel, which has no capacity to be retrofitted with an electric engine, unlike the Freshwater class of ferry. It is beyond short-sighted. It reeks of the kind of planning the Government is renowned for, which is ad hoc, ad lib, absurd, impromptu and myopic planning.

Most shocking of all is that there are real concerns about the Emerald ferry's capacity to handle the large ocean swells that regularly roll through Sydney Harbour's headlands. We know that when the smaller ferries get cut, they get replaced with buses. We know that the large Freshwater class ferries can handle much bigger seas than the smaller ones. When the Emerald class ferries first arrived in Australia, more than 80 defects or safety concerns were identified by inspectors. Those defects included faulty windows, poor plumbing in the engine rooms and, unbelievably, as the member for Swansea raised, concerns that the hulls were too thin to hold a rigid form. They are problems that would not have occurred had the vessels been manufactured in New South Wales—perhaps in Newcastle where they used to be built. Those problems would not have occurred if the Government did not undertake this exercise in lunacy.

The Freshwater ferries, which have been well maintained, potentially have decades of service ahead of them and must be retained. The petitioners are calling for a scheduled maintenance program, which must be put in place for all four ferries, and for a new replacement plan which includes double-ended vessels with a capacity for 1,000 passengers on the Manly route. That plan must be developed. I thank and congratulate the Deputy Mayor of Northern Beaches Council, Councillor Candy Bingham. I recognise the Save the Manly Ferries group and the work it has done in getting more than 22,000 signatures. I recognise the protest that the group held earlier today in Martin Place. I also recognise that the group travelled to Martin Place using the Manly Freshwater class ferry. I call on the Government to listen to the more than 22,000 people who have signed the petition. Those 22,000 people represent only a fraction of those who oppose the plan. The Government must go back to the drawing board and work with all stakeholders to develop a commonsense approach that will see all four Freshwater class ferries retained.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (16:27): I thank the 220-odd people watching this debate online for tuning in. I think they will see the importance of this debate. I thank the member for Manly in particular who saved the Freshwater ferries. The initial decision was to take them all away. One of the reasons for that was because of reliability and the requirements of commuter services. As the community has come forward, we have maintained them, particularly for tourist purposes on weekends and public holidays. The reason for retaining the two ferries is focused on tourism. The Government wants to increase ferry services. That is why we are delivering an increase of 256 services to the commuters of the northern beaches. The ferry service transport data shows that between 2017 and 2019 there has been a big shift away from ferries to the B-Line. There has been a drop in patronage and the Freshwaters are not operating to full capacity, particularly during peak hour. That is because a lot of commuters want a fast service into town and a fast service back home.

Another important point to address relates to the headlands. The advice I have received about the manoeuvrability of the Emerald class is that it is a lot better at handling the swell, particularly in and around Manly wharf. Again, that was one of the factors in our thinking. I have heard discussion around international manufacturing. We all want Australian manufacturing to be successful. In fact, as Minister I was able to directly procure Emerald class ferries from Tasmania in the first instance. In addition, Transdev was engaged by the Government to run the franchise and it procured the ferries through Birdon at Port Macquarie. I reiterate that Birdon does about 70 per cent of the build in terms of the design—

Ms Yasmin Catley: They were brought out here on a cargo ship. You know that.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: No, just please—

Ms Yasmin Catley: I'll bring the photos down and show them to you.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Well, I've actually been to see them.

Ms Yasmin Catley: I have too.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Yasmin, I would like you to go and talk to them.

Ms Yasmin Catley: I have. I have met them here.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I remind the member for Swansea she is on three calls to order.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Well, he is speaking to me across the Chamber.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The Minister will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Anyone can go and run the type of campaign that you guys do. Birdon would have well and truly explained to you the contribution that Australian workers—

Ms Yasmin Catley: And they were not built here.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Sorry, the other day you were on the front page of *The Sydney Morning Herald* saying they were designed overseas. I read that. It was in *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

Ms Yasmin Catley: No, that's not what it said at all. You did not read it right.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Sorry, you have been caught out.

Ms Yasmin Catley: No, that's not what it said.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I direct the member for Swansea to remove herself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A for 15 minutes.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Swansea left the Chamber at 16:30.]

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I note that those opposite believe in net zero admissions. I would be interested to know how they would achieve that. We will see the electrification of ferries in the future, and that will be exciting. But if you were to put a battery on this vessel, it would be so big the boat would sink.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (16:30): In reply: I thank Candy Bingham, Charlotte Rimmer, Paul Garrett from the MUA, the Good for Manly Community Group, Northern Beaches Council, the Manly Community Forum, the Save the Manly Ferry Facebook Group and Action for Public Transport for their enormous, active fight on behalf of the Manly ferry. It was an interesting debate, I think you would agree, Mr Temporary Speaker. We heard the member for Manly heroically order a review into the Manly ferry, so we can all look forward to that. Interestingly, the member for Ku-ring-gai praised him for his courage for ordering a review. Dunkirk and Gallipoli were certainly heroic retreats but, I mean, this is ridiculous. He would stick a medal on Daryl Maguire for services to investigations.

Mr Alister Henskens: Half a per cent, mate. You're good at losing battles. What are you like at winning?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: You know what? Unless you are on script, you are hopeless. You are so overrated. Anyway, I digress. The big problem with this is that Andrew Constance is the transport Minister. He might be a good member for Bega but he is not a very good transport Minister. A few months ago he announced a compromise position, which was trumpeted in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 27 November with the headline "Compromise position". The headline continued, "Minister saves one Manly ferry, offers to sink another". That is fair dinkum. The Minister said he was hopeful tourist operators or heritage organisations would be interested in the retired Freshwaters, while he was open to considering sinking one of them. Sinking one of them! The community in Manly wants these as public transport alternatives and the Minister for Transport and Roads actually said in a

major metropolitan newspaper his compromise position is to sink one, presumably off Sydney Heads, as a dive site. That is not a commitment to public transport. This is, at the end of the day, a disgrace. The member for Manly is in a position to influence his own Government to save public transport for his own community. It is time to save the Manly ferry.

Petition noted.

Private Members' Statements

BANGLADESH INDEPENDENCE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (16:33): On 26 March 2021 Bangladesh and the Australian Bangla community will be celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of Bangladesh's independence. Bangladesh and Australia share a strong relationship. In 1971 Australia was the first developed country to recognise Bangladesh's independence. I wish everyone, not only in Bangladesh but also the wonderful, vibrant Australian Bangladeshi community in my electorate of Canterbury, a happy fiftieth anniversary of Bangladesh's independence. The Australian and Bangladeshi communities share important values of democracy and freedom. As a person of Greek heritage who today commemorates the 200th anniversary of the start of the Greek War of Independence, I understand the strength in those values and the hardship that many nations and their people have gone through to achieve them. That is why I honour the Bangladeshi community. I acknowledge their hard work, their family values and their contribution to making our nation what it is today: a wonderful multicultural community.

Economically, Bangladesh is becoming significant for Australia. In 2018-19 Australia's two-way trade in goods and services with Bangladesh grew to over \$2.5 billion. Key trade items received from Bangladesh include clothing and textiles. COVID-19 has hurt all nations around the world, including Bangladesh and Australia. However, the resilience of our nations continues to shine in times of adversity, with Australia and Bangladesh pursuing new opportunities that will further promote trade and investment to create a shared economic recovery from COVID-19.

The Bangladeshi community in Australia has grown significantly in recent years. The 2016 census recorded 41,233 people from Bangladesh living in Australia, up from 27,808 recorded in the 2011 census. It is one of the fastest-growing communities in Australia and in New South Wales—particularly in my electorate. In 2018 close to 7,000 Bangladeshi students enrolled to study in Australia, which was an increase of 26 per cent since 2015. Members of the Bangladeshi community who have chosen to settle in New South Wales, and particularly in our local areas such as Campsie, Lakemba, Belmore and surrounding suburbs, have contributed so much to the vibrancy of those areas. A number of Bangladeshi community members serve on local councils and many are entrepreneurs. I acknowledge their entrepreneurial drive, philanthropic compassion, cultural vibrancy and engagement with every area of our society.

Many schools in my community, such as Campsie Public School, Harcourt Public School, Belmore South Public School and Belmore North Public School, have a number of second- or third-generation Bangladeshi Australian students. I acknowledge those students and their parents for their hard work and the contribution that they make at a local level. I also acknowledge the organisers and volunteers of the Bangla language schools and the teachers, who spend week in, week out making sure that our students learn the Bangla language. It is very important to continue culture and language. Language is vitally important.

A particular local issue on which the Bangladeshi community has been campaigning with me is the redevelopment of Canterbury Hospital. I thank the Bangladeshi community for its contribution to our local campaign to ensure that we receive a fair share of funding. We will continue the campaign along with our Bangladeshi Australian community. I wish them all the very best. I want them to know that I am very supportive. I am on their side, standing shoulder to shoulder with our Australian Bangladeshi community. I thank them for their contribution. We owe them a great debt for what they do in our community.

MEMBER FOR KIAMA

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (16:38): This Saturday marks a very special day for me, as it will be 10 years since I was first elected to this place and given the greatest honour of my life. Ten years ago the people of my community took a punt on me, a boy from Bomaderry, who had gone to local schools and lived and worked in the community my entire life. All I have ever wanted to do is serve our community. I came here to live my values, deliver on my promises and get things done.

Members often reflect on their inaugural speeches and in preparing these remarks I looked back on mine. In my inaugural speech I said that I would fight to upgrade the Princes Highway. Ten years on and I have secured \$2.5 billion of New South Wales Government money to fix what was once dubbed "the highway to hell". In fact,

so many of those projects were promised that locals literally thought they would never be alive to see them delivered. I promised the Gerringong upgrade, and it has been delivered. I promised the Berry bypass, and it has been delivered. I promised the Albion Park Rail bypass project, which members of the Opposition voted against. It will be open in coming months, one year ahead of schedule. I promised the Berry to Bomaderry upgrade, and it is on time and budget. I promised the upgrade of Jervis Bay Road, and I look forward to seeing work start on that later next year.

Those projects have not only created thousands of jobs but also saved countless lives. When I stood here to deliver my inaugural speech 10 years ago, I never would have thought it possible that we would duplicate the Princes Highway throughout my entire electorate, but with the support of the community, we have done it. I said in my inaugural speech that we would improve local health services. Ten years on and we have seen millions invested into improved services at Shoalhaven and Shellharbour hospitals, with major new commitments secured for both hospitals that are due to commence in this term. In my inaugural speech I said I would fight for people with disabilities. There is not a day goes by that I am not grateful for my community that looked past my disability and chose to support me because of my abilities.

Ten years ago I never would have thought that I would be standing here as the first disability services Minister with a lived experience of disability. Every day I work hard to make the National Disability Insurance Scheme a better and fairer system. In me, people with a disability in New South Wales have an advocate who does not just support; I also understand them because I have walked a similar path. In my inaugural speech I said I would stand up for stronger childcare and protection laws. Ten years on I stand here as the Minister responsible for child protection and every day I champion the rights of children and young people. I will always take the toughest stand against those who seek to deprive our most vulnerable of their rights, liberties and freedoms that every young person in this State deserves.

I am the Minister responsible for families and communities. Today more children are reported at risk of harm than ever before in our State's history. Last year we had the highest number of adoption and guardianship orders in our State's history. Right now we have the lowest number of children in youth detention in our State's history. Our Together Home initiative is the most successful homelessness program in our State's history. Looking back over my 10 years, I am proud to have championed iVote as Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters to make it a permanent feature of our State's electoral system so that people have greater access to our democracy. As Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra I am proud of my bipartisan procurement reforms that mean more locally made steel is used in New South Wales Government-funded infrastructure. As Parliamentary Secretary for Education I worked hard to develop new anti-bullying reforms that provided the resources students, teachers and parents need to respond to both victims and perpetrators of schoolyard bullying.

Above all else, being a local MP is what I live for. My community means the world to me. My electorate's stunning and incredible environmental beauty is matched only by the quality and character of its people. To have the trust and confidence of your community is a very special opportunity, not just to occupy office but to do something with it. I have always done and will continue to do my very best in their service. I am lucky to have two close friends direct my campaigns over recent years, Luke Sikora and Paul Ell. I congratulate Paul on his engagement to Andrew.

I thank all my staff in my electorate office as Parliamentary Secretary and as Minister, but particularly Ben Blackburn, Bryan Fishpool, Melissa Jobson and Paula Turnbull. I also thank my family, particularly my parents, Margaret and Malcolm, for their support and of course my mate and mentor and occasional combatant, Shelley Hancock, without whom I would not be here. I am also the first to admit that my parliamentary career is not without blemish or mistake, but I am strong enough to admit my mistakes, get up and fight on. I do not ask for thanks, I do not ask for forgiveness. I simply ask that I am judged on my record and my results. At the end of the day that is what counts.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (16:43): I commend the member for Kiama for his private member's statement and congratulate him on his outstanding service over the past 10 years. He does a magnificent job in that role of Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services. I say that as a local member and no doubt many members in the House would say the same. He is a Minister who will attend a local area and speak to groups, whether they are large or small, difficult or easy to handle. He will listen and try his hardest to do something about the problems that those people face in the community. For that reason I congratulate him on 10 years service and wish him all the best for the future.

ROAD TOLLS

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (16:44): Metropolitan Sydney has an enviable reputation for being one of the most attractive and livable cities in the world. But under this Liberal Government, livability is being decimated at a rapid rate due to rampant overdevelopment, the cost of living, the destruction of

valuable green open space and new tolls on old roads that used to be free. It might surprise some in the House to learn that Sydney is the most tolled city in the world. That is correct: the most tolled city in the world. It certainly comes as no surprise to me or to my colleague the member for Kogarah. We took to Sydney's roads to highlight the financial impact of this Liberal Government's toll mania. The story was picked up by news media, including the *Daily Mail* in the United Kingdom. So now, among our glorious harbour and beaches, we are also known for having the most expensive toll roads in the world. That is not exactly a selling point for our city. As we in this House know all too well, reputation is everything. Our reputation for being the most tolled city in the world is shameful.

Toll mania is the Liberal Party's number one show in town and it is costing motorists, particularly those in west and south-west Sydney, thousands of dollars every year. A return journey from Ingleburn in my electorate in south-west Sydney to the Sydney CBD costs a total of \$42.11. I ask members to imagine for a minute the tens of thousands of commuters from Sydney's south-west travelling in and out of the city each day and paying more than \$10,000 a year on road tolls. Unfair? You betcha. Highway robbery? Absolutely. The member for Kogarah and I have been inundated by complaints from commuters, who are frustrated and fed up at having to pay hefty tolls to get to work. Many of my constituents are still reeling from the economic impact of the pandemic and, with wages being slashed and slumping to their lowest in decades, people are faced with difficult choices.

What is the Liberals' economic solution? Pay more tolls, including a new toll on the old M5 East. One local commuter I met with made a reluctant decision to take a redundancy from his much-loved job at Virgin Australia at Sydney Airport due to the financial impact of the new M5 East toll. He was driven to make that decision by the Liberal Government's greedy new toll agenda on an old road that had been free for 20 years and that was built and paid for by a Labor government. Another commuter spoke of trying to avoid the tolls by taking local roads, only to find himself on roads that were already gridlocked and choked with trucks. Pay the hefty toll on an old road that was once free or get caught in traffic on suburban streets: That is a common story across my electorate and no doubt many others in south-west Sydney.

Data shows the enormous increase in traffic volumes on local roads since the introduction of the M5 East toll. In a desperate effort to avoid the hefty toll, which is \$7 each way and growing at 4 per cent per year according to the consumer price index, commuters are crowding onto congested local roads. Of course, that defeats the whole purpose of toll roads, which is to reduce traffic on local roads. It is an absolute, complete farce. No matter how the Liberal Government wants to spin this, the M5 East toll is completely unfair. At more than \$3,000 a year and set to increase by at least 4 per cent every year for the next 40 years, you can tell your grandkids to start saving. More than 10,000 people signed a petition calling for the M5 East toll to be scrapped. Many thousands more motorists want the new toll on an old road gone. But no matter how you travel in Sydney—on toll roads or on public transport—you can always expect to pay more under this Liberal Government.

A recent report highlighted that the cost of travelling on Sydney's public transport has surged more than 10 per cent. That comes after the Liberal Government widened the peak-hour window and changed travel concession rules. This tired, 10-year-old Liberal Government is out of touch. With more people returning to work following the easing of COVID restrictions, the Liberal Government should be making it easier and cheaper for people to do so. Instead, workers are bearing the financial pain of the Liberal Government's greedy toll mania. I note that Liberal members in the electorates of Camden, Holsworthy, East Hills and Oatley were silent when their community wanted their voices heard on this unfair toll. I have no doubt that the very same commuters in these electorates will make their voices heard at the next election in 2023.

VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:49): As previously announced, I am drafting legislation to give people suffering from a terminal illness access to voluntary assisted dying. I inform the House that I intend to present legislation in September, following release of a draft bill in July. Similar laws have now passed in Victoria, Western Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand. The Queensland Government has committed to reform with a draft bill due in May. A bill is currently progressing through the South Australian Parliament. The New South Wales bill will be largely based on the Western Australian model, which improved on the Victorian laws, and it will also be informed by the Tasmanian and Queensland processes.

Voluntary assisted dying will be accessible to adults with a terminal illness that will cause death within six months, or 12 months for neurodegenerative conditions, and where the suffering cannot be tolerably relieved. A person must have decision-making capacity and be acting voluntarily and without coercion. The person must undergo two independent eligibility assessments by two separate doctors. There are options to self-administer or for a doctor or nurse to administer the substance. Doctors and nurses must undergo voluntary assisted dying training and will be able to conscientiously object. Each step of the process must be documented in forms sent to a statutory board, which will have oversight, collect data and provide advice to government.

I will add further safeguards to what exists in the Western Australian bill, including to legislate the appointment of the board by the Attorney General and the Health minister; and to give the board final authorisation to prescribe the substance. That is done in Victoria and is included in the Tasmanian and South Australian bills. The bill will strengthen the definition for "decision-making capacity" and require each doctor to request a report from a psychologist, psychiatrist or appropriate medical professional to provide this assessment if there is any question over the person's capacity. Since announcing my intention to introduce legislation, I have been contacted by many people near the end of their life. I will tell the House about Tony—a 55-year-old Blue Mountains resident who was diagnosed with aggressive, advanced prostate cancer with secondary metastases in his bones in 2017.

Back then Tony was given a life expectancy of around five years with treatment. Since then he has undergone intensive therapy, including hormone therapy, which has had disfiguring side effects on his body; chemotherapy, which has permanently damaged his leg muscles and toe nerves; and fatigue from the treatment has forced him to give up work. The cancer has spread; the number of sites and intensity of pain continue to increase. At times the pain has been so unbearable that he has gone to the emergency ward. He also experiences twinges and burning sensations. Tony said it would give him strength and peace of mind. He said it would help him to cope with the pain, discomfort and deteriorating health to know that he has control over his body if the situation gets intolerable. It is this control at the end of life that people seek.

Unfortunately, suicide among people with a terminal illness and poor prognosis is common. Not all people who apply for assistance in jurisdictions that have legislated voluntary assisted dying laws follow it through. There is evidence that some feel the option is enough to help them cope with the suffering. One area that will come up for debate is access for people in rural and regional areas. It is neither fair nor appropriate to legislate a medical service if it is not accessible to people outside of cities. I am committed to legislating for people across the State. Sadly, we cannot rely on Telehealth to ensure people outside of cities can access voluntary assisted dying as there is legal uncertainty around whether the use of audio-visual communication in the process conflicts with Commonwealth laws, which prohibit the use of a carriage service to help someone commit suicide.

It is important to remember that voluntary assisted dying does not compete with palliative care. It is estimated that 10 per cent to 20 per cent of end-of-life symptoms cannot be effectively controlled and people continue to experience prolonged and agonising deaths. The Parliament has always dealt with voluntary assisted dying bills through a conscience vote, which is appropriate. I acknowledge that there will be a range of views based on members' personal experiences, faith backgrounds and the communities they represent. New South Wales is not leading on this reform; therefore, our process provisions and safeguards will benefit from best practices in other States. It is my hope that the bill will be co-sponsored by as many members of both Houses as possible. I am open to the legislation being introduced in either House and scrutinised by an appropriate inquiry process. I commit to a respectful and open process. I will work with members across the political spectrum towards providing hope and relief for those people who face horrific health news.

PEARCE RESERVE CRICKET PAVILIONS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (16:54): I bear great news for the Kings Langley community in the electorate of Seven Hills. Last month I had the great pleasure of being present for the official opening of the new Pearce Reserve Cricket Pavilions. Pearce Reserve is one of the most attractive cricket grounds in western Sydney and it now has the amenities to match in the way of a whole set of new pavilions. The \$1.5 million project involved the construction of pavilions which, together, house change rooms for women and men, store rooms, lavatories, club rooms and a new canteen. However, it should go without saying that, given the vintage of many of the club facilities around our State, the amenities for women within the new pavilions are just as good as the those for men, which is something that the local community can be very proud of.

The project also incorporates upgraded spectator facilities with raised and covered terraces, and tiered seating fronting the cricket oval. The Kings Langley Cricket Club raised an enormous \$75,000 for this project, which was supplemented by a \$100,000 grant from Cricket NSW and the New South Wales Government as part of the NSW ICC T20 World Cup 2020 Cricket Legacy Fund, and funds from Blacktown City Council. The T20 fund was created with the intent of improving local cricket facilities across the State and increasing participation in cricket, with a particular focus on the participation of young women in cricket. The opening of the pavilions is a culmination of more than 15 years of planning and construction, which now sees the overall Pearce Reserve include upgraded tennis courts; basketball courts, half courts and playgrounds; walking tracks; and, of course, the picturesque cricket ground and training facilities. As such, I particularly single out the President of the Pearce Reserve Park Committee, Greg Monaghan, as well as his entire committee, with whom we have worked tirelessly over a number of years to make Pearce Reserve one of the premier community sporting and family recreation areas in Sydney.

Cricket is now played year round at Pearce Reserve, with senior and junior competitions in summer months as well as a limited overs competition in winter. As such, the Kings Langley Cricket Club, as the primary tenant

of Pearce Reserve, has really driven this pavilions project and will rightly enjoy the fruits of its labour. I also draw the attention of this House to the brilliant work of the Kings Langley Cricket Club family, which includes all of its playing members, supporters, club volunteers and, of course, the committee. The club is one of the largest district cricket clubs in the western Sydney area. The pavilions project will play a critical role in attracting and retaining talented players as well as allowing the club to host major matches. The committee is in great hands under the able leadership of club president Paul Giumelli. Under Paul's stewardship, the club's registration has grown, with young women growing faster than any other demographic within the club's diverse membership.

I now turn to the achievements and contributions of one man of this great cricket club in the electorate of Seven Hills. He is, of course, Errol Blench. Errol is a life member of the Kings Langley Cricket Club and has been involved with the club since his sons, David and Michael, first joined the club as playing members over four decades ago. Errol took up coaching and selecting roles at both junior and senior levels. He has continued to contribute to the club and the community through the investment of his own time in the growing of the cricket game and the increase in participation, particularly among young women. Errol was pivotal in advocating for the delivery of the pavilions project as well as ensuring the regular maintenance and upgrades of all amenities that exist across the Pearce Reserve area.

Thanks to all of Errol's hard work, Pearce Reserve is the beating heart of the Kings Langley community and, with the now completed pavilions, it is certainly the local jewel in the crown. On behalf of the whole Kings Langley community, I sincerely thank Errol for his lifetime of achievement in cricket and at the club. Errol's contribution to the Kings Langley community, through his dedicated efforts, make Pearce Reserve exactly what it is today. I thank Errol very much for his contributions.

WYONG ELECTORATE ARTS COMMUNITY

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (16:59): I speak tonight about the burgeoning arts community in Wyong. The Wyong area has a long and proud arts history with the Wyong Musical Theatre Company and the Wyong Drama Group, which have a very proud reputation for presenting high-quality shows that foster the skills of the young and the not-so-young alike to produce wonderful performances. In recent years those performances have been enhanced by the addition of the Art House Wyong, which is a new theatre that opened in May 2016 and consists of a 500-seat theatre, a 130-seat studio, a foyer exhibition space, meeting facilities and a cafe/bar. The Art House has brought a new, professional look to theatre in the Wyong area. It presents a range of professional shows to the community, meaning that high-quality arts and entertainment is easily accessible, which is great for the local area.

The Art House is managed by an independent not-for-profit entity with an independent board of directors. It is bringing some incredible shows to our area. Most recently we saw the opening of the Red Tree Theatre, which was one year late because of COVID. The Red Tree Theatre is unique because it was funded by a community foundation called the Elderslee Foundation and is largely staffed by volunteers. They saw the need for a performance space for local performance groups that could not afford to use the more expensive Art House. These two spaces complement each other. The Red Tree Theatre has a large foyer suitable for exhibitions and a 144-seat performance space. It is certainly a great addition to Wyong arts culture. I most recently attended two performances there, one by Jopuka Productions called *13 the Musical* and one by a company called The Attic Theatrical, which is a further addition to our local arts community.

Jopuka Productions was established in 2016 specifically to provide performing arts training and development to a wide range of emerging artists aged 12 to 26. Jopuka provides a safe and peer-driven space for emerging artists to hone their craft and forge their own pathways in the arts industry. Jopuka presents unique and innovative seasons that are filled to the brim with new works, Australian classics and fringe favourites. It gives young people the opportunity not just to perform but also to direct. I know some young people who are involved with it, in particular the chair and the co-chair, Josh Maxwell and Danielle Brame Whiting, who drive a good, supportive board and have witnessed the development of young people who perform there regularly, such as Elyse and Quinn. This is a great company and performing at the Red Tree Theatre is a great opportunity.

I also acknowledge The Attic Theatrical, which performed its first show in February 2020. The theatre aims to provide a safe and fun environment for the community and performers across the Central Coast and Lake Macquarie regions through new, contemporary and alternative musical theatre, cabaret and vocal performances. I saw its first show, *The Wedding Singer*, which was a high-quality production that was also performed at the Red Tree Theatre. I congratulate Scott and Nicole Osbourne and Amanda and Scott Daniel, who came to me with their dream and followed through on that dream to deliver a high-quality performance group. The Attic Theatrical complements Jopuka as a space for younger people and builds on the long, proud tradition of the Wyong Musical Theatre Company and the Wyong Drama Group.

We are spoilt for choice in Wyong and on the northern Central Coast. We have two fantastic theatres and a number of production companies that are doing fantastic things to keep our community entertained and offer huge opportunities to many young and not-so-young people right across the Central Coast.

SERVICE NSW

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:04): I discuss the many successes of Service NSW over the past seven years. Last year alone seven new centres were opened, almost 120,000 customers were served and the customer satisfaction rate both in store and online was 98 per cent. That is an outstanding achievement and I thank the Minister for Customer Service, Victor Dominello, for his continued commitment and advocacy for Service NSW. It was a tough year for all of the staff at Service NSW in 2020 as they played such a critical role in supporting our community through the bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the bushfires they provided 8,000 homes with clean-up assistance and 22,000 Small Business Support Grants. They received 40,000 calls to their bushfire support hotline.

I cannot thank those selfless individuals enough for their ability to go above and beyond to keep the entire State of New South Wales safe. Moreover, their response throughout the COVID-19 pandemic was impeccable. Ten thousand additional Small Business Support Grants were provided, 23,000 people visited their digital COVID support website and 12 different types of licence and registration fees were waived as a lifeline to individuals, families and businesses. Without that ongoing support our State would not be where it is today. Those men and women who have given so much to our community through these challenging times are the unsung heroes who deserve to be acknowledged here today.

Another program that has been an enormous success for individuals, not just in my community but throughout the State, is the Cost of Living program, which provides individuals with a one-on-one conversation where they can discuss what grants, rebates or savings they may or may not be able to apply for. There are 70 in total. They include toll relief, Active Kids and Creative Kids vouchers as well as the compulsory third party insurance refund scheme. As of June last year, 55,000 appointments have been made and it has saved the people of New South Wales a combined total of just over \$1 billion.

I note that we have a brand-new Service NSW centre in the Roselands shopping centre, which will service the St George region along with the Canterbury-Bankstown community. That centre provides ease of access for residents of suburbs including Beverly Hills, Riverwood, Narwee and Penshurst to Service NSW, where they can utilise all of their wonderful services. It is one of seven centres opened in 2019-20 that are being incorporated into some of the fastest-growing parts of Sydney to ensure that everyone can have access to their many services right across New South Wales.

Yet another success over the past year for Service NSW is its digital driver licence program, which allows everyone with a valid driver licence to have an online version that is available on their smartphone. That is such an impressive innovation and a fantastic leap forward in our Government's endeavour to digitise processes for ease of use. In my area alone there have been almost 8,000 downloads in Hurstville and 3,000 in Riverwood, Penshurst and Peakhurst. That is a fantastic development that puts the most modern technology at our fingertips. I have no doubt that those projects and ideas will continue to evolve our digital space.

That leads me to the success of our QR code, which enables individuals to register when they check in and out of venues. During the height of the pandemic, QR codes were critical in tracking movement and potential COVID-19 cases. They played such an important role in keeping our people safe. Those simple, modern and easy-to-use developments will continue to make our great State the leader in this type of technology. I thank Service NSW for its role in that. I thank every member of the Service NSW team for all of their hard work over the past year, throughout these difficult times. I also make special mention of everyone who has assisted in getting the Service NSW centre opened at Roselands. It is a huge win for the entire St George region and for the south-west of Sydney. I cannot wait to hear all of its wonderful success stories.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:08): I commend the member for Oatley for his private member's statement on Service NSW and echo his comments about the fantastic services and programs provided by that organisation, particularly the Active Kids and Creative Kids programs that he mentioned. I always tell the story of a Lalor Park mum who went to Service NSW at Blacktown, got Active Kids vouchers for her three kids and went back to the Lalor Park Junior Rugby League Club. It was a \$105 registration and she had a \$100 voucher for each child. For \$5 she got a free pair of football boots. It was a fantastic outcome for a family of three young boys who got to play the sport that they loved. I also recognise all the Service NSW workers at Blacktown and Castle Hill who do a fantastic job. I look forward to Service NSW Northmead opening in the future.

GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT BODIES FUNDING

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (17:09): Today I speak about corruption and how we can stop it. Corruption and bad behaviour in the Government is rampant across the Murray electorate and across the nation. Sports rorts, dodgy dams, dodgy Daryl, watergate, bushfire relief rorts, council grant scandals, icare, crooked pipelines, rape cover-ups, secret emails favouring irrigator groups—a new scandal emerges every single day. We live in a State where a teenage boy has been jailed for stealing a packet of hamburger buns but politicians misusing millions of taxpayer dollars face no repercussions. Ministers routinely ignore the law and act like taxpayers' money is their own personal slush fund. Nevertheless, the Government survives and thrives. There are no consequences, no apologies and no resignations.

There is one reason the Government gets away with repeated corruption scandals: a lack of oversight. When politicians do not have anyone looking over them, they get up to no good. When there are no consequences, there is ample crime. Under the Government, our watchdogs have become lapdogs. They are terrified of losing their funding and are thus unable to do their jobs properly. Nobody wants to bite the hand that feeds them. Over the past year I have reported numerous scandals to ICAC and the NSW Ombudsman. I have provided clear evidence of councils misusing ratepayers' money and bureaucrats favouring certain groups and excluding others but I keep getting the same response: "Yes, that sounds bad, but we've decided not to investigate." And how can ICAC investigate when it is hampered by a \$4 million funding shortfall due to government cutbacks?

A Premier should not be allowed to cut funding for a body investigating her Ministers or her boyfriend, hypothetically speaking. Last year the upper House passed a bill to ensure that our oversight bodies are independent and properly funded. The bill would allow ICAC staff to do their jobs without worrying about losing their jobs. ICAC would no longer be reliant on the whims of the Liberal-Nationals Coalition for its funding. It would be the same for the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, the NSW Electoral Commission and the NSW Ombudsman. The bill does that by allowing the annual funding of those bodies to be allocated separately from other agencies and from political interference. That is the key to ending the scourge of corruption gripping our State, our nation and my electorate. We need to empower our oversight bodies to do their jobs, to hold politicians to account and to report them to police where necessary.

The bill was such a no-brainer. Much like my previous bill to force MPs to declare their water interests, the upper House passed the bill in a landslide vote. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, Labor, The Greens, One Nation and Independents supported the bill but, of course, the Liberals and Nationals voted against it. It looks as if the lower House will not even get to vote on it. Why? Because the Liberals and Nationals have delayed, stalled and stonewalled. The bill has been listed for debate every week this year, but somehow we never get to it. The bill is set to lapse and die in May. I urge the Government to reconsider that strategy. We urgently need to restore public faith in the Government and in our politics. We need to strengthen our oversight bodies to reclaim our democracy. The bill would be a perfect start.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (17:13): The loss of any life to suicide is heartbreaking. The loss of a young life is an absolute travesty. Like many communities, mine has been touched by youth suicide. Those losses lead to many questions. For me, it is not a question of what does not work; it is a question of what more needs to be done. Recently I launched a petition calling on the Commonwealth Government to consider funding for a new headspace service in Kiama. Earlier this month I wrote to the Commonwealth health Minister, the Hon. Greg Hunt, in relation to the matter. Given the recent spike in youth suicides in the Kiama electorate and given the location of headspace offices in Wollongong and Nowra, which currently receive funding from the Commonwealth Government, I have requested that the Federal Government consider funding for a new headspace service in Kiama.

The facility could provide vital support services to those who are vulnerable, as well as educate local young people aged 12 to 25 on suicide prevention and the importance of youth mental health. This service could supplement existing educational programs on issues such as relationships, vital counselling for those at risk, drug and alcohol support services, work and study support, and putting young people in touch with local employment opportunities. Currently support services are available. However, my view is that those services could be better coordinated. I have had this conversation with my friend, Gerringong local and a former Minister who assisted a mental health Minister, Cherie Burton. I thank her and so many locals for their efforts in discussing this enormous challenge.

I have seen firsthand the amazing impact that headspace's services have on young people. Headspace—Australia's national youth mental health initiative—was championed by my friend Christopher Pyne in 2006 in response to the recognition that the existing health system needed to be much more accessible and effective for young people with mental and substance-use disorders. If we want young people to access these services, they

need to be able to trust the people who are running these services. This often takes time, effort and coordination. We have a responsibility to do everything we can to provide the necessary access to services and support for vulnerable young people. I am encouraging local residents and representatives from local community organisations to sign my petition, which I will also be tabling in this Parliament.

I commend the work of Illawarra Shoalhaven Suicide Prevention Collaborative, which includes Kiama Municipal Council. It comprises local community members and organisations within Kiama and focuses on coordinating efforts to prevent suicide within our local community. An initial meeting of the working group was held in September 2020. Those present included representatives from Kiama High School, Gezza Cares, Makuta Masks, headspace, Kiama Lions Club, Kiama Rotary Club, Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, Lifeline and Kiama Municipal Council. Each group was able to outline and share activities it is undertaking, or planning to undertake, in order to respond to community issues and concerns.

Kiama High School was able to advise of webinars being offered to parents, in partnership with headspace, as well as increased support for students and staff. Gezza Cares spoke of its work coordinating community responses in Gerringong and in promoting Question, Persuade, and Refer training. Kiama Municipal Council and the local health district are working together to facilitate community skills training, information and support at the Kiama markets, and a community mural led by local artist Sam Hall of Jamberoo. Sam Hall is quickly building up a catalogue of outstanding community work, having completed more than 40 murals at various schools such as Nowra East and Nowra Public schools, and in Albion Park, Jamberoo and the community mural in Gerringong, which I visited with the mayor of Kiama, Mark Honey, to watch it being formed. A number of local people have also partnered with clinical staff from the local health district for Chats for Change sessions at the Joyce Wheatley Community Centre in Kiama. Lifeline South Coast also organised the Out of the Shadows walk for suicide prevention and a virtual garden.

Some tremendous work is being done to facilitate change in our local community. Seeing local young people, seniors, artists, allied health professionals and community groups all working together to start these important conversations and initiatives about youth mental health and initiatives that include everyone in our local community is really fantastic. I believe it is essential, as the local MP, that I do my utmost to support these efforts, which is why I am calling on the Commonwealth Government to allocate funding for headspace in Kiama. People can drop into my electorate office in Kiama to sign my petition and to add their voices to this very important campaign. Each voice must be heard on this issue, which is above politics. Regardless of which party is in Government in Canberra—I commit this to the House—I will always put my community first and the best interests of every young person ahead of anything else. They are the future of our community.

SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (17:18): On Monday I spoke to Terry at North Entrance, whom I had met during the floods in my electorate in February last year. I called him to see how he was bearing up under the flood affecting the electorate this weekend. During our conversation, Terry advised me of a new real estate agent being appointed to manage the property he has been renting for 11 years. He is currently paying \$150 a week. The agent advised him that that was well below the market rate in my electorate now. Terry was looking at an increase in rent from \$150 to \$350 a week, which is a major blow for him. He is a single man receiving a disability pension and has lived in that spot, paying low rent, for a very long time. His experience is not unique. My electorate office has been contacted by many of my constituents in recent weeks who have been evicted to make way for people moving into the area, with similar stories of massive rent increases. These are the human faces of the social problem of housing stress and its more serious counterpart, homelessness.

On 18 February this House noted a petition signed by more than 10,000 residents of this State urging the Government to build 5,000 new social housing dwellings each year for the next 10 years to reduce homelessness and housing stress in this State. The Government would not grant me leave to speak to the petition in debate that night, so I use this private member's statement to welcome the petition and record my support for its call. I congratulate those who have organised it and those who have signed it. They recognise the truth that Australia's housing system is broken. Whether it is those who want to buy a house or those who simply want to find a place to rent, it is clear that the system just is not working for everybody. A chronic shortage of social and affordable housing is causing record levels of homelessness.

In my own region of the Central Coast, housing prices have risen by more than 10 per cent in the last year, even while wages have stagnated. Rental vacancies on the Central Coast are less than 1 per cent. That we should be in these circumstances after one of the biggest housing booms in the history of this State is an absolute disgrace and represents a complete failure of public policy on this issue. The main driver of homelessness in New South Wales is a lack of affordable housing. The major driver of housing stress in New South Wales is a lack of affordable housing. The private sector has failed completely to build sufficient and affordable homes to meet the needs of the citizens of this State. That is why we need to take seriously the petition of 18 February.

We need to build more social housing properties. Sweden did it in the 1960s. It built one million public housing properties from 1965 to 1974. We need to recapture the spirit of the McKell Government, which established the Housing Commission in 1941 with the stated aim that it would provide a "good, cheap house, either for rent or purchase, for people earning around the basic wage". We need to engage our best architects to design public housing. Harry Seidler, one of our greatest architects, could not get a commission to build public housing here. He was commissioned by the Austrian Government to design an 850-unit public housing development in its capital city of Vienna.

We need to halt the privatisation of public housing, which has been the hallmark of this Government. In my electorate there are now 220 fewer social housing properties than there were 10 years ago. Finally, we need a dedicated housing Minister. Currently we have three Ministers with responsibility for housing the citizens of this State. We have got a Minister responsible for the existing—and dwindling—public housing stock; we have got a Minister responsible for the planning rules around building a home, and building affordable and social housing; and we have got a Minister responsible for rationing the public housing that is left in this State to those lucky enough to get to the front of the very long public housing waiting list. We need more State intervention. The citizens of this State deserve the attention of members being directed to this huge social problem.

Community Recognition Statements

REGIONAL YOUTH TASKFORCE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:23): I am pleased to advise the House that local students have been selected to carry the torch for young people on the Central Coast as part of the New South Wales Government's Regional Youth Taskforce. Sixteen-year-old Phoebe Sheridan and 15-year-old Jayden Redfern will join 16 other young people from across regional parts of New South Wales as members of the task force. The Regional Youth Taskforce is a ministerial advocacy group that has a direct line of access to the New South Wales Government and that aims to raise issues faced by friends and classmates. I congratulate both Phoebe and Jayden on being successfully chosen, after undergoing a lengthy application process, to represent their peers and help make decisions that will drive change—and, of course, represent our region. Although they have big shoes to fill, I am confident that both Phoebe and Jayden are well and truly up for the task. Recently I met them and was excited by their massive potential. I wish Phoebe and Jayden the best of luck. I cannot wait to see what the task force achieves this year and I know that they will represent the Central Coast with great ability, fervour, energy and excitement.

OURIMBAH YARNING CIRCLE

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (17:24): Ourimbah campus staff, students and community members gathered to celebrate the official opening of the yarning circle nganggali ngara ngura, a meeting space for Aboriginal communities and locals. "Nganggali ngara ngura" means a "talking and listening place" in Darkinjung language. The yarning circle is a place to talk, share, discuss, educate and have a yarn together. It is a place to build respectful relationships, and it provides a space to enrich students' learning experiences. Aboriginal people have used yarning circles for thousands of years as a conversational process that involves the telling of stories as a way of passing on cultural knowledge. Elder resident and Darkinjung woman Aunty Bronwyn Chambers assisted Ourimbah campus with the design, placement and naming of the yarning circle on Darkinjung Country. Ma & Morley scholar Jack Chambers initiated the event by playing the didgeridoo and The Glen Centre closed the ceremony with a celebratory dance.

TURRAMURRA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (17:25): Turramurra Public School provides its students with a nurturing, caring and fun place to learn. During last year's end-of-year school presentation days, I made a quick stop to the school to surprise its retiring principal, Margaret Foott, with a farewell gift and short speech. For the past 11 years, Margaret has been dedicated to the best interests of Turramurra Public School. She promoted staff professional development, supported learning and wellbeing, and worked closely with the P&C. Margaret said she was blessed to have been part of an incredible community with amazing children. Although Margaret's departure was bittersweet, she certainly deserves her retirement. Margaret is looking forward to spending more time with friends and family and enjoying her love of art. At the start of this year, Mr Anthony Moran was appointed as the new principal, and I wish him well in his new role. I offer my congratulations to all the teachers and staff, the parent community and students of Turramurra Public School on providing a first-class educational environment. I look forward to visiting the school again soon.

BEN AND PAUL LISTER

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (17:26): I acknowledge Ben and Paul Lister, who performed in round one of the 2021 NSW Formula Vee Championship amateur motor car racing competition at Wakefield Park near Goulburn on Saturday 27 February 2021. Paul secured a top 10 finish, finishing seventh in division two. The

next round of the series will be held in April this year, with training and testing sessions being conducted at Luddenham Raceway. I offer my congratulations to Paul and Ben Lister on their current racing achievements. They are great representatives of the Central Coast region, and I wish them both all the very best in their future racing endeavours.

COWRA HOSPITAL AUXILIARY

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:26): I congratulate the fabulous Cowra Hospital Auxiliary, which hosted the first regional conference of the United Hospital Auxiliaries of NSW. I understand State president Linda Swales from Batlow and deputy regional representative Kim Jones from Condobolin were in attendance, along with representatives of several branches from the Central West. I thank Pauline Rowston, Penny Simpson, Sister Mary Trainer and guest speaker Lyn Gray from Fly Oz for their contributions towards this successful event. Since 1988 the Cowra Hospital Auxiliary has fundraised \$439,341 for medical equipment at the Cowra Health Service. During 2018, 2019 and 2020 they raised a combined total of \$75,000, which is an extraordinary effort. Next on the calendar for Cowra Hospital Auxiliary is a lamington drive. That is brilliant news. The lamington drive is back after a hiatus due to COVID-19, and I do not mind sharing this secret: They are some of the best lamingtons I have ever had. I once again offer my congratulations to Cowra Hospital Auxiliary on the work it does.

BEACH COUTURE EXHIBITION

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (17:27): I acknowledge the wonderful work and advocacy of local Coogee woman, artist and environmentalist Marina DeBris, whose exhibition titled *Beach Couture* is currently on display at the Maritime Museum. *Beach Couture* is a collection of wearable artworks made from rubbish collected from beaches and oceans in Sydney and Los Angeles. In a grotesquely amusing fashion, it visualises what is often overlooked but should not be. The exhibition also features the wildly subversive *Inconvenience Store*, showcasing repackaged convenience items found washed up on the beach. The exhibition is a commentary on our society's obsession with senseless consumerism and the impact of fast fashion in particular on our environment. I encourage everyone to see the exhibition. I promise that they will walk away aware of the growing problem of ocean pollution and be inspired to take action.

NATIONAL CARTOON GALLERY

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:28): Australia's first and only dedicated cartoon art gallery is a Coffs Coast icon. The National Cartoon Gallery at City Hill has been transformed from a World War II underground bunker into a modern-day masterpiece. Recently Deputy Premier John Barilaro joined me to officially open the new National Cartoon Gallery, which was upgraded thanks to a \$2.6 million grant from the New South Wales Government. This fantastic facility boasts Australia's largest collection of more than 23,500 historical cartoons, spanning over 120 years of our nation's history. It is home to the largest private collection of contemporary cartoons in the Southern Hemisphere. The New South Wales Government funding ensures that the gallery's reputation for excellence can be showcased worldwide. Its small army of dedicated volunteers is led by the hardworking board comprising chairman, Paul McKeon; vice chairman, Elliot Daniel; secretary, Brian Leiper; treasurer, Rob Anderson; Graham Lockett; Jeynelle Forrest; Tanya Watts; Terry Maguire; and manager, Margaret Cameron.

JACKY FINLAY-JONES

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (17:29): I congratulate incredible local woman Ms Jacky Finlay-Jones on her recent receipt of life membership from Football St George. As the long-serving competition secretary of the organisation, Jacky is in charge of scheduling fixtures, grading players and teams, and resolving issues and disputes between clubs. She completes those tasks with a high degree of empathy and an unshakable commitment to impartiality. Those characteristics have led to her being universally respected by clubs and players. Life membership of Football St George is exceptionally rare. The approval of the board and an annual general meeting of members are required to acknowledge highly distinguished service. Recently Jacky was publicly congratulated by Bayside Council on the motion of Councillor Bill Saravinovski. Jacky is one of those selfless individuals who volunteer huge amounts of their time to help others. Without her, our local football competition would not be the same. It is my privilege to congratulate her in this place.

SES VOLUNTEERS

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:30): I recognise all our SES volunteers across New South Wales for their efforts in supporting and assisting flood-stricken areas recently. In particular, I acknowledge Liverpool SES and Sutherland Shire SES for responding to emergencies across the Holsworthy electorate. Not only has the Liverpool SES team been out in the field assisting people in person but also from its unit it has been monitoring the flood levels of the Georges River and surrounding creeks. The SES team has been doing an

amazing job keeping our local residents informed. It is important that we follow the instructions and advice of the SES during this time. It is vital that residents continue to be aware of the potential hazards and risk of flood in the area. I remind residents to check Live Traffic NSW for road closures, never attempt to cross closed roads or drive, walk or cycle through floodwater. I commend all SES volunteers who have helped during this time. I thank them for continuing to keep the local community safe and protected.

NORTHMEAD CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS HIGH SCHOOL

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:31): Last week I was fortunate to visit Northmead Creative and Performing Arts High School. Northmead is one of only nine New South Wales Government creative and performing arts high schools. It is known widely for its alumni in the creative and performing arts sector. The purpose of my visit was to promote the new education resources that have been developed by the Parliament's Communications, Education and Engagement team. They include resources for year 11 legal studies that are now available on the Parliament's website. I had the pleasure of discussing the content of the new materials and fielding questions from the two year 11 legal studies classes at Northmead. Those students should be commended for their engagement with contemporary legal issues and for their insightful questions about the content we covered. I wish all the students the very best for their upcoming preliminary HSC exams in term three, and I thank the head teacher of Human Society and its Environment, Ms Renuka Senthavadi, and principal Ms Narelle Vazquez for having me at the school.

CENTRAL COAST OLDER WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE ACTION ON HOMELESSNESS

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (17:32): I acknowledge and thank the Central Coast Older Women's Collective Action on Homelessness network for hosting a forum on creating collaborative housing solutions. Older women are the fastest-growing cohort of homeless people. Forum participants discussed understanding the nature of older women's homelessness and explored solutions for the future. I make special mention of Aloma Fennell, President of the National Older Women's Network; Rita Martin, Government and Community Relations Organiser, Professional Services, NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association; Ruth Jordon, Elderslee Foundation board member; and community member Jenni Neary, who facilitated a session. On behalf of the community, I thank those involved for organising that important forum and for raising issues that affect not only the Central Coast but also the whole State.

BOB WALSH

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (17:33): I give a shout-out to one of Narromine's great achievers, Bob Walsh, who recently racked up his fortieth year as Secretary-Manager of the Narromine United Services Memorial Club [USMC]. In the mid-seventies Bob and his wife, Robyn, moved the entire family to Narromine from Woy Woy after visiting on holidays and falling in love with the place. And why would they not? Bob has had a few jobs, including the local milk run. A badly broken ankle ended that and saw him move into his role at USMC in 1981. Bob has been involved in plenty of community events. He has also served as a local councillor. However, his big passion is sport, especially rugby league and particularly Manly. I am delighted that in a few weeks Bob will be in Mudgee when the Sea Eagles host the Titans at Glen Willow. Bob is the current Chair of Group 11 Rugby League, on the board of New South Wales Rugby League and part of the NRL Regional Taskforce that I chair. He is a fantastic supporter of the community and I congratulate him on four decades in his role.

INNER WEST INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (17:34): I congratulate the 150 women from the inner west who were included in the council's 2021 International Women's Day honour roll for their sisterhood and achievements in the community. This year Inner West Council celebrated local First Nations women and girls who represent over 60,000 years of resilience and survival. I acknowledge Auntie Euphemia Bostock, who has spent the past 40 years advocating for and showcasing Indigenous contemporary artists as an Elder and artist at her local gallery and who recently introduced the welcome to country at preschools across the inner west; Auntie Jenny, a role model and educator who is a pillar of the community; Auntie Cheryl Hurley, who has dedicated her life to the Aboriginal community through her work at the diabetes clinic at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital; and Auntie Deborah Lennis, the council's cultural advisor, for her strength, generosity and passion for the community. I congratulate these strong Indigenous women.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL MOLLOY

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (17:35): I remember the beautiful Michael Molloy, who sadly passed away on 21 February 2021. Mr Molloy will be most notably remembered for his contribution to the Miranda RSL Sub-Branch, where he served as president and was a member for nearly 15 years. Due to his kind and generous nature, in 2020 Mr Molloy was named the Senior of the Year for the Miranda electorate for his outstanding service.

to the Miranda RSL Sub-Branch, where he also served on the executive committee between 2011 and 2019. During his time as president between 2016 and 2019, Mr Molloy oversaw the historic Centenary of Anzac commemorations and witnessed an increase in attendance at dawn services. He always volunteered his time selflessly, without requiring any thanks for his efforts. Those who knew him well will always hold him in their hearts, with gratitude for his kind spirit and thoughtful nature. I extend my sincerest condolences to his beautiful wife, Kerry, and the entire Molloy family. Mr Molloy was the heart and soul of the Miranda RSL Sub-Branch and will be dearly missed. Vale, Michael Molloy.

AUSSIE STUDENT INVENTIONS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD COMPETITION

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (17:36): Coogee is home to some wonderful students, and I congratulate Ezgi, Bella, Bridget and Lara from St Clare's College Waverley on their highly commended entry in the Aussie Student Inventions that Changed the World competition. Their Capturefy device is a 3D printed trap made of recycled plastic intended to catch rubbish before it enters stormwater drains. With the guidance of Waverley Council, competition judge Sally Dominguez is helping to make the students' invention a reality. It was fantastic to see their achievement recognised in the *Wentworth Courier*. They will inspire many other young women across the community to become innovators in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. I cannot wait to see their invention in action and the positive impact it will have on the Coogee community.

ROB PIRINA

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (17:37): I commend Rob Pirina of the Glenorie Bakery for his exceptional work during the recent disastrous floods in the electorate of Hawkesbury. Rob enlisted the service of a private helicopter to deliver food supplies to Wilberforce, North Richmond and Kurrajong. Some 180 kilograms of bakery items were flown from Glenorie to the community centre at North Richmond and the Kurrajong nursing home. He also delivered 12 large bags of flour to the Wilberforce Bakery so that tomorrow residents will have fresh bread on that side of the river. Rob is a welcoming man with a very giving spirit. His work is a testament to the connection he has to the community. It is because of the actions of amazing people like Rob that we get through these tough times.

TIME OUT BEST BARS

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (17:38): I congratulate Where's Nick, the Grifter Brewing Co. and the Marrickville Hotel on their inclusion on the 2021 Time Out best bars list. Where's Nick was founded in 2017 by inner west brothers Julian, Nick and Dominic. At number 18 on the list, in 2020 Where's Nick was awarded the Time Out Best Wine Bar award. I also congratulate the Grifter Brewing Co., which is a must-try on the inner west ale trail. Independently owned and run, the Grifter has grown from strength to strength and is now one of the inner west's greatest exports. The Marrickville Hotel is number 51 on the list. Run by the Arcadia team, it is a no-frills place that has all the charm of a local pub but with the cocktails of a swanky small bar. It is a great local drinking hole. I congratulate all the staff of the Marrickville Hotel, Where's Nick and the Grifter Brewing Co. Marrickville has become one of the best places to celebrate and drink in the inner west, which is why the suburb was voted as one of Time Out's top 10 suburbs in the world.

AUSTRALIAN REPTILE PARK

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:39): The Australian Reptile Park has done it again, breaking the record of most raw venom extracted in a single yield from a coastal taipan. The previous record of 3.32 grams by Whiplash was absolutely smashed recently by Cyclone, who delivered a massive 4.45 grams. To paint the picture, that amount of venom is enough to kill 1,000 adults. Instead, that venom will go towards saving lives through the Australian Reptile Park's antivenom program, which provides venom to the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories. Recently I had the pleasure of inviting the Minister for Customer Service, Victor Dominello, to the reptile park, where we had the opportunity to witness a live venom milking. I again thank Tim, Zac, Amanda and the team for hosting Minister Dominello and me, and congratulate them on achieving this new antivenom record. It is an interesting process watching them milk deadly venomous snakes at the Australian Reptile Park, which is one of the most popular places to visit on the Central Coast.

PASSOVER

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (17:40): This Saturday 27 March will mark the beginning of Passover and the first night where the sacred meal of Seder will be observed. During the Seder the story of Jewish freedom from slavery in Egypt is retold and remembered. That theme underpins the entire festival. Passover is also an occasion for all people to reflect on the importance of freedom in their own lives. It is a significant event for the Jewish community and a time for celebration and reflection in the presence of family and friends. The

eastern suburbs are home to one of the largest Jewish communities in Australia. I extend my best wishes to all who are celebrating Passover in the coming weeks.

BALMORAL SWIM FOR CANCER

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:41): I acknowledge the Balmoral Swim for Cancer, which was initiated by the Mosman community in my electorate and which has been raising funds for cancer-related charities since 1990. A number of events are included in the calendar, all organised by the locally based Balmoral Beach Club and a number of founding members since 2005. The Balmoral Team Challenge is one of those events, and was held on Sunday 14 March. I congratulate the overall winners HMAS Penguin team "Lay Flat Larry's", and thank all those in our community who contributed to the fundraising efforts. Unfortunately, due to the inclement weather last weekend, the schools relay challenge was postponed. When it recommences, a number of my local schools will be battling it out in the water and in their fundraising efforts. Good luck to Queenwood, Wenona School, Mosman High School, Sydney Church of England Grammar, Mosman Preparatory School and Redlands. The next event will be on Sunday 28 March for the one-, two- and five-kilometre Around the Bay swims. Good luck to all participating. I thank the Balmoral Beach Club, Balmoral Swim for Cancer and all the volunteers for all that they do.

DULWICH HILL FRUIT MARKET

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (17:41): Every week the owners of Dulwich Hill Fruit Market, Mehmet and Vilma, donate leftover fresh produce to the Medal Mission Team and the Acts of Kindness Community Outreach for their homelessness night. Dulwich Hill Fruit Market has been a fixture in the community for over 20 years. Thanks to its loyal local customers, the owners are able to donate fresh fruit weekly, providing free meals to those sleeping rough. Every night in Australia more than 116,000 people are homeless. Throughout the pandemic we have seen the generosity of the inner west community with community pantries popping up around the neighbourhood and local charities conducting food drives to ensure that no-one has gone without. I thank Mehmet and Vilma for their ongoing support of some of the most vulnerable in our community. In fact, Medal Mission's Paul Shiel commended them for their generosity, stating that it makes such a difference to have them and their kind acts of generosity. I thank all those inner westies who are shopping locally and supporting those charitable endeavours.

ASPECT SOUTH EAST SYDNEY SCHOOL

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:42): I acknowledge the Aspect South East Sydney School in Peakhurst, which received \$11,500 for the installation of an LED sign at the school. That funding was made possible by the New South Wales Government's Community Building Partnership program, which has provided \$300,000 to fund local projects across my community, mostly in the education sector. Recently I had the pleasure of meeting with principal Joanne Tisdell and her team to discuss the importance of the funding for staff and students. I also toured the meeting rooms, which were also upgraded in 2019 thanks to the Community Building Partnership program. The Aspect school in Peakhurst is a fantastic precinct for local students and is a testament to the commitment and dedication of Joanne and her entire team. I will continue to support the Aspect school, along with all the other schools in our area, so that our region can remain the best place to live, work and raise a family.

TOM ROBINSON

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:43): I recognise the hard work and dedication of Tom Robinson, who recently competed at the 2021 NSW Country Championships at Olympic Park. As a member of the Grenfell Amateur Swimming Club, Tom represented Grenfell with distinction over a three-day high performance competition. Tom has distinguished himself by winning the gold medal for the 17 years and over 50 metres freestyle event in 23.59 seconds. At the moment this is the fastest time in New South Wales by an 18-year-old and the third fastest time in Australia. A silver medal for the 17 years and over 50 metres butterfly event and a bronze medal in the 17 years and over 100 metres freestyle event rounded out a very successful competition. Over six races, Tom also posted five personal bests throughout this competition. I congratulate Tom on his achievements. As a former swimmer who has competed at NSW Country Championships I know that Tom is not a breaststroker but we will not hold that against him! We wish him all the best of luck for future competitions.

INNER WEST BAKERIES

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (17:44): We are spoiled for choice in the inner west when it comes to baked goods, with some of the city's greatest bakeries being recognised by the recent Urban List. Creating delicious cakes, fresh bread and pastries by some of the very best chefs in Sydney's culinary world, Stix has opened in the new burgeoning industrial area of South Marrickville. In Dulwich Hill, Alevri.HQ bakery celebrates the fusion of Australian and Greek culture with its signature moussaka pie. Baked by Keiran is a small

hole-in-the-wall bakery in Dulwich Hill, selling out of its signature sourdough by lunchtime most weekends, while Sweet Belem in Petersham serves up mouth-watering Portuguese custard tarts. Established in 1988, Pasticceria Papa in Haberfield introduced Sydneysiders to delicacies of Sicilian pastries. A little piece of New York can be found in the drive-through at Brooklyn Bagel Boys in Marrickville. That is just a stone's throw from the Hellenic bakery, Athena Cakes, the Bourke Street Bakery, The Grumpy Baker, Kim's bakery and Hong Phat Bakery. I congratulate all those who made the Urban List and to all those providing world-class baked goods to inner west residents.

SEVEN HILLS ELECTORATE SES VOLUNTEERS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:46): With great pleasure I recognise the work of the New South Wales State Emergency Service volunteers from the Seven Hills electorate who have worked in the western Sydney communities of the Hawkesbury, Penrith and northern Blacktown areas during the recent weather events. SES volunteers in the Seven Hills electorate are attached to the Blacktown, The Hills and Parramatta units and are recognised for their service and sacrifice in helping the wider community move safely through the challenges they meet through extreme flooding events. The volunteers are to be commended for their efforts in assisting with flood rescues and extracting people from isolated areas. In addition, I recognise the work of the SES in issuing evacuation warnings and further assisting families with evacuation processes. I acknowledge the work of SES volunteers in actively responding to the many on-demand requests, which results in lives being saved. I recognise the work of volunteers from right across the Seven Hills electorate in working out of area for the greater benefit of the western Sydney region.

KAREELA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (17:47): I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Kareela Public School on their appointment. Kareela Public School is a wonderful community. Its members pride themselves on their diverse and nurturing culture. Led by Principal Nicole Arnold, the outstanding staff at Kareela Public School work alongside the parent and student body to uphold their motto "Knowledge, Pride, Success" by developing and supporting each student through their foundational years of learning. The kind-hearted students at Kareela Public School never fail to approach every opportunity with positivity and diligence, helping uphold the wonderful culture that the school community shares. The 2021 leadership team is a group of amazing students who demonstrate the Kareela Public School's values. I congratulate school captains Lana Elkordi and Ashton Astudillo, and vice captains Keira Moukatas, Hendrick Calkhoven, Nicolette Tsang and Aidan Foy on their successful appointment. These students should be incredibly proud of this achievement. I look forward to seeing them lead their peers through this exciting year filled with new opportunities. I extend my best wishes to the new student leaders at Kareela Public School.

JUMBUCK MEATS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:48): I acknowledge three fantastic achievements from my favourite local butchers in my electorate, Jumbuck Meats. As part of the 2020 St George Local Business Awards, Ray and his team won the award for the best poultry, fish and meat provider. But that is not all: They have now gone on to receive an award for best butcher as part of the Australian Small Business Champion Awards. This is a fantastic achievement and it is an absolute honour to know that Oatley is now home to the best butcher in Australia. I would also particularly like to mention the Oatley store manager, Jayden, who won the Outstanding Youth Award through the 2020 St George Local Business Awards. Jayden is a polite, fantastic and capable man, who will most certainly go on to bigger and better things. He has done an outstanding job at Jumbuck. I am so proud to recognise all three of these awards. I wish Jayden and in particular Ray and his team all the very best for the year ahead.

EAST COAST BEVERAGES

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:49): I commend Sam, his family and the team at East Coast Beverages, for their innovative orange peel recycling program. They do an amazing job. Each week East Coast Beverages generates over 50 tonnes of waste from their oranges. This is sent to farmers who are doing it tough in areas across regional New South Wales, who use it as cattle and sheep feed. The peel gets loaded into trucks and the team from East Coast Beverages delivers it directly to the farmers. That means that the oranges start from the ground and end up in the ground—nothing is wasted. That is not the only thing that East Coast Beverages has done to help the Central Coast community. Late last year the company replaced its original labels with a new "drought label", pledging 10c from every bottle sold to rural aid. Community-minded businesses like East Coast Beverages deserve recognition in this place for what they do. It was 1965 when Salvatore Lentini—we drink Lentini water in this place—laid the first seeds of this company, and three generations later this local business is still going strong on the Central Coast.

JUNEE YOUTH COUNCIL

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:50): I am pleased to congratulate the six newly elected members of the Junee Youth Council for 2021: Oliver Phillips, Jasmine Phillips, Mia Phillips, Hunter White, Harry Guymer and Alex Corneliussen. It is amazing that they have put themselves forward to represent other youth citizens in the Junee community. The Junee Youth Council is one of many youth councils in the Cootamundra electorate. It allows all youth citizens to have their voices heard as well to work together to create events and initiatives for other members of their community to be involved in. I thank them all for putting themselves forward to be members of the Junee Youth Council. I cannot wait to see them all again and get involved when I can.

PERRY GILSENAN, OAM

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:50): I congratulate Perry Gilsenan, OAM, of Baulkham Hills in the Seven Hills electorate for his work in the area of Down syndrome. In the 2021 Australia Day honours, Perry was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia by the Governor-General, His Excellency General the Hon. David Hurley, AC, (Rtd). Eighteen years ago, Perry and his wife, Jane, welcomed their firstborn daughter, Grace, who was born with Down syndrome. Perry wanted to assist families who raise children with the condition so 12 years ago he formed Scrapheap Adventure Ride. The organisation holds charity rides and travels to towns right across the length and breadth of New South Wales to raise awareness and fundraise moneys for those with Down syndrome. I congratulate Perry on so far raising an outstanding \$800,000. Well done to Perry and his family for their dedication and efforts to support those living with Down syndrome.

NATIONAL RIDE2SCHOOL DAY

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (17:51): Last Friday was National Ride2School Day when kids and families across New South Wales opted to ditch the car and ride their bikes to school. Encouraging more kids and families to ride is not just about harking back to the good old days; it will also have a real impact on safety, health and the environment for our kids, as well as reducing congestion on our roads. Only 23 per cent of kids meet the national physical activity guidelines and encouraging them to get on their bikes means that they will get healthier and have a whole new generation of experiences that I know some people who are listening believe we should never have lost. There is a real economic benefit also. As Bicycle NSW has said, every kilometre cycled has a \$1.40 benefit to the public health system. The cost of congestion in Sydney is set to skyrocket and if we remove just 5 per cent of all car trips under five kilometres we could increase traffic speeds by up to 50 per cent. That means the school holiday effect on our roads 365 days a year. I congratulate the Bicycle Network and all the students, families and schools that took part in National Ride2School Day.

CANINE COURT COMPANION PROGRAM

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (17:53): I acknowledge the Canine Court Companion Program, which has returned to Sutherland Court House after a long hiatus due to COVID-19. The Canine Court Companion Program was introduced in 2018 in a partnership initiative led by Victims Services and Courts and Tribunals Services to provide additional support by reducing any anxiety associated with the court experience. The dogs play an important role in maintaining a non-threatening environment in courthouses and safe rooms for children, vulnerable witnesses and victims of crime or domestic and family violence. On 22 March 2021, I met volunteer handler Helen and gorgeous therapy dog Loma, along with Registrar Bruiceen and sheriff's officers David, Peter and Scott at Sutherland Court House. I thank Helen, Bruiceen, David, Peter and Scott for their assistance and time and commend them for their important work. I also acknowledge all staff at Sutherland Court House as well as Guide Dogs NSW/ACT for its service in ensuring that this program is successfully facilitated. I am pleased to see this important and valuable program return to our local courthouses and thank all those involved in its delivery.

GEORGE INSTITUTE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:54): Today I discuss an issue that I am extremely passionate about: the sustainability, nutrition and availability of food within New South Wales and throughout Australia and the world. I thank the George Institute and its food policy team for their continued advocacy in this area and for hosting me at their organisation recently. It was a fantastic opportunity to discuss the importance of healthy eating and the role that food packaging plays in influencing food consumption. I am particularly passionate about the Health Star Rating system, which can be found on most food items. As discussed the other day by Dr Alexandra Jones, those labels should be on all processed and manufactured food items for clarity and transparency. The George Institute is leading the charge in holding governments to account and in providing consumers with advice on healthy eating and our long-term plan for food sustainability. I thank the institute's Head of Government Relations, Matthew Cross, for organising this insightful event and for keeping us involved in their ongoing discussions. I thank the George Institute.

*Community Recognition Notices***BULLDOGS SEASON LAUNCH**

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—It was my pleasure to attend this year's Canterbury-Bankstown Football Club Bulldogs Season Launch on 24 February 2021. This event also marked the 100 year milestone since the Canterbury-Bankstown Junior Rugby League formed in 1921. The club was first admitted into the New South Wales Rugby Football league in 1935. For the seventy-six years since, the Bulldogs have been a crucial symbol of local unity. Through both glorious victories and disappointing upsets of the seasons over the years, the Canterbury-Bankstown community has always rallied behind the team as point of local pride. I was delighted to have been present while the team relaunches into a new year and a new season. With Trent Barrett as a new coach, I am excited to see what this year will bring for the team. I would like to extend my thanks to the Club Chairman, John Khoury, and the board of directors: Joseph Thomas, Adrian Turner, Peter Mortimer, Jim Koutsouklakis, Andrew Gifford, and Peter McMahon.

**MUSLIM WOMEN'S WELFARE OF AUSTRALIA – INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
BREAKFAST**

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I am delighted to congratulate the Muslim Women's Welfare of Australia [MWWA] on their successful International Women's Day Breakfast on 13 March 2021 at the Chester Hill Community Centre. The event focused on helping women to connect with their local community and pursue business connections even in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. It provided an opportunity for many women to build their network, and also share valuable lessons on how to lead in a digital world. I would like to congratulate MWWA's President Ms Faten El Dana OAM, as well as the rest of the MWWA Executive on a successful event. I am proud to support the MWWA, and I wish them another prosperous year in 2021. I hope all the women in my electorate of Bankstown had a wonderful International Women's Day!

ASHLEE GREEN

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron)—I congratulate the immense generosity of my community, who raised nearly \$51 000 for the widow and family of Xiaojun Chen, a delivery driver from China who was tragically killed while working for a food delivery service in September last year. Xiaojun Chen was just 43 years old when struck by a bus and killed while working as a food delivery driver in Zetland. Mr Chen had worked in Australia since 2018 in order to send everything he earned back to support his family in rural China. He is survived by his wife, and two young children. Food delivery drivers are considered contractors, not employees, and their families have limited access to compensation in the event of a tragedy like this. Ashlee Green, a Zetland local, started a GoFundMe in October to raise funds to support Mr Chen's family, advertising it in Zetland's local facebook group, and ultimately raising \$50 842. Every cent was donated to his widow, Lihong Wei. I want to pay tribute to the generosity and compassion of Ashlee, and to the many people who gave so freely to support the family of someone that they never knew. May Xiaojun Chen rest in peace.

CHELSEA DE JONG, RANDWICK COUNCIL ART PRIZE

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron)—In honour of International Women's Day, Randwick City Council hosts an annual art exhibition, open to female artists who live, work or study in Randwick City. This year, the Councillors' Prize was awarded to Chelsea de Jong, a year 11 student at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, Kensington. The prize is judged by a panel of three Randwick Councillors who are women, Councillors Luxford, Neilson, and Shurey. Chelsea was awarded the prize for her stunning photo of the Bondi Icebergs lap pools, entitled "Bondi Blues". It really must be seen to be appreciated. This is a point of great pride for Chelsea, her family, and her school community. OLSH College consistently turns remarkable young women who achieve excellent results and make great contributions to our community. I congratulate Chelsea on this wonderful award.

NSW SES AND RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea)—I thank the NSW SES and local Rural Fire Service Brigades for their tireless work and dedication during the recent severe weather and flooding events. From 18 March until the 22 March the NSW SES Lake Macquarie Unit, NSW SES Cooranbong Unit and the NSW SES Swansea-Catherine Hill Bay Unit received 540 requests for assistance. The NSW SES Wyong Unit and NSW SES Gosford Unit received 1000 requests for assistance ranging from flood rescues to leaking roofs, and sandbagging requests. Local Rural Fire Service Brigades across Lake Macquarie and the Central Coast have also assisted the NSW SES crews in responding to requests for assistance. I would like to thank all those volunteers who have given up their own time and even put themselves in danger to assist the community during this disaster.

ANDREW ROMANO

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I recognise Andrew Romano. Andrew is the youngest of five children to Sam and Karen Romano of Orange. News of Andrew's sporting talent on the rugby field spread far and wide, eventually coming to the attention of the Brisbane Boys College in Queensland. Andrew was offered an opportunity to continue his schooling at the Brisbane Boys College, whilst developing his rugby skills and advancing his prospective rugby playing career. In 2018 Andrew moved to Queensland, where he completed his final years of High School at Brisbane Boys College, and attaining his Higher School Certificate in 2020. Andrew's rugby playing career flourished, and his potential was realised when he was selected to join the renowned Queensland Reds academy. Andrew's rugby prowess was evident, and he has been rewarded with the opportunity for the pinnacle of representative selection for his vintage. Andrew was recently selected to join the Junior Wallabies Training Camp One. Andrew has since undertaken the rigors of the camp, competing for selection as prop among 47 of his peers. Andrew will soon learn whether he progresses to the Junior Wallabies Training Camp Two, and selection for the representative squad for 2021. Congratulations and best wishes, Andrew.

EMERGENCY HELP IN FLOOD TIMES

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—Our state has once again been impacted by severe weather resulting in damage and distress. However, in times we may forget horses and livestock whom are faced to brace the drastic effects of flooding. Unfortunately my electorate, sometimes called 'home of the horses' has been issued a high impacted area. Despite the remarkable work of emergency services, some people are still limited in the transportation of these animals to safety. I acknowledge constituents and companies of electorates around the Camden area for offering emergency housing, transport and feed for horses and livestock affected. I mention and thank a few, Arslan's Horse Agistment, Cooina Park, Kaitlyn Miller, Sydney Horse Express and Ultimate Equestrian Supplies. Again, I thank you all for helping us when we need it most.

HANNAH TREVENA

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—I would like to congratulate Hannah Trevena of Elderslie High School for being selected in the New South Wales Combined High School [CHS] Softball Team 2021. The team will play in a tournament with the CIS and CCC on the 8th of March. The CIS enables students and staff from independent schools to participate in a representative sporting pathway to the State and National level. From there a selection will be made for the New South Wales All Schools team who will then participate in the School Sports Australia Tournament, scheduled for September 2021 in Perth WA. Congratulations Hannah and best of luck in the tournament and in your future sporting endeavours.

FIRST CLASS 20 AT MAC

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—The MAC—Lake Macquarie's Museum of Art and Culture—is hosting First Class 20, a showcase for some the region's best young artistic talent. The young artists explored themes as diverse as the COVID-19 pandemic, the Black Lives Matter movement and environmental issues affecting society. Curator Helen Willis said the exhibition shows "students' awareness of the big issues facing us all". St Mary's Catholic College, Gateshead, 2020 HSC student Liam Nash used a collage of hundreds of screenshots, text messages and other digital correspondence, sent to and from his girlfriend during the COVID-19 lockdown, to create incredible portraits of himself and his girlfriend. Warners Bay High students Sophie Davidson, Alivia Dwyer, Alanna King, Jacinta Leck, Cassidy Motum and Holly Quigley showed extraordinary works across a range of styles and mediums. Lorien Saunders of Hunter Sports High produced an outstanding pencil drawing: The Possible Impact of a Stranger's Gesture. Sara Peisley of Kotara High has exhibited a wonderful piece called Endemic. I salute these extraordinary young artists and wish them all the best in future artistic endeavours.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR DOAN NGO

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—I would like to acknowledge Associate Professor Doan Ngo, a resident of the Charlestown electorate and HMRI-affiliated researcher, whose work was recently published in the international journal JACC: CardioOncology. Associate Professor Ngo, the lead author on the paper, has found that heart disease has become a leading cause of long-term preventable death in cancer survivors. Heart disease is on the rise for cancer patients and survivors, but they are less likely to be prescribed medicine which protects their hearts. By examining records of 320 patients admitted to the John Hunter Hospital over a six month period from July 2018, Associate Professor Ngo and her fellow researchers were able to find that, of the sixty-nine cancer patients included, 36% had established cardiovascular disease before their cancer diagnosis, and 64% developed cardiovascular disease after their cancer diagnosis. The work of Associate Professor Ngo and her fellow researchers has highlighted a clear policy and practice gap in the treatment cancer patients. This research is the

first step in developing protocols to lower their risk of developing heart disease, and will no doubt help save many lives. Congratulations to Associate Professor Ngo. This is extraordinary work.

MIKAYLA HUGHES – GRENFELL

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I would like to recognise Mikayla Hughes of the Grenfell Amateur Swimming Club, who recently competed at the 2021 NSW Country Championships at Olympic Park. Representing Grenfell in this prestigious competition for only the second time, Mikayla held her nerve and performed brilliantly. Mikayla posted PB's in the four events that she competed in, including a 3.59 second PB in the girls 13 years 100m breaststroke. Her 50m freestyle was the highlight of her events finishing with a time of 29.83 seconds—the first time she has gone under 30 seconds which is an amazing feat in itself. Mikayla has represented her club with pride and continues to be a mentor for the younger swimmers in the group. My congratulations go to Mikayla on her achievements at a young age and I can only see a bright future ahead for this young lady.

FUNDRAISING EFFORTS IN COWRA – STEPH COOKE MP

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—It is fantastic to recognise the efforts of Cowra resident Linda Braithwaite who was behind the fundraising of over \$5500 for the Leukaemia Foundation as part of the World's Greatest Shave. Linda gave her own hair toward this important cause as part of a World's Greatest Shave event held at Cowra Golf Club, with golfers John Clarke and Braydon Tucker also volunteering to have their heads shaved on the night. While you adjust to your new hairstyles, it is your selfless contribution in the name of those fighting Leukaemia that will long be remembered. As with any successful fundraising effort, there were a number of people involved in making it a success, including Cowra Golf Club's Kristy Bognar and Robert Oliver, bar staff, as well as Dave Thomas and Carole Doyle who commented on the night. Thank you also to Marc Grant and Sam Grant of Brother Fox Barbershop who have once again put themselves forward for a worthy cause – not long ago they were behind a very successful Movember fundraiser in Cowra. Congratulations and thank you all.

MYAH PACEY

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)—It takes a brave, big hearted, selfless person to participate in the World's Greatest Shave, and shave their head. 9 year old Waratah West Public School Student, Myah Pacey, is just that. Brave, big hearted and selfless. This year she is taking part in the 23rd World's Greatest Shave alongside 20,000 others, to raise funds for leukaemia research. Everyday 47 Australians are diagnosed with blood cancer, the funds raised from the World's Greatest Shave go towards providing these Australian's with special care, and financial support. Myah has been asking for a while if she can shave her head to raise much needed funds and awareness for some time, and finally was able to say she had done her part on 12 March 2021. Myah has been taking her collection box to school and accepting loose change donations from her school mates, as well as raising funds on the World's Greatest Shave's online platform. She raised a total of \$2,102.91. Well done, Maya. You should be very proud of the funds you have raised, and the people you have helped.

MARNIE'S BIG CHOP

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)—The decision to chop off your hair is not one that is taken lightly. When Marnie Jeffriess decided to cut off her hair, she made the decision that she would donate it to have it made into wigs for children less fortunate. Marnie is lucky to have long locks, but felt that someone else would appreciate them more than she did. She decided that because she can grow her hair out any time she would chop off 35cm of her hair to be made into a wig for someone who has lost their hair due to a medical condition. Marnie also decided to help raise money for Variety - Hair with Heart along the way. Marnie, who is in Year 8 at Callaghan College Wallsend Campus and is also a member and Patrol Leader of Maryland/Shortland Scout Group, was able to raise \$2298 to assist the charity. On Monday 22 March in front of Joeys, Cubs, Scouts, Venturers, Marnie's family and friends, she took the chop! What an amazing young lady and role model for the youth within our community. Thank you also to Kelly from Opulence Hair and Makeup Wallsend who performed the Chop.

NSW BOWLS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I congratulate Forster duo, Brian Wilson and Marty Gosper who were runner up for champion pairs at the New South Wales Bowls Championships. The pair came up against Australian squad members Corrie Wedlock and Aaron Teys in the semifinal. Despite going into the match as underdogs and facing less than ideal conditions the pair emerged victorious winning the semi 24-14. The Forster duo were then defeated in the final by Engadines, Craig Donaldson and Murray. While the team didn't ultimately emerge victorious, they showed great skill, against very strong competition and should be proud to call themselves the second best champion pairs team in New South Wales.

JAMES BURNS 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—I wish to recognise a local constituent, James Burns, who will be celebrating his 100th Birthday next week on 31st March 2021. I congratulate him on this absolutely outstanding achievement and hope his family spoils him when they celebrate this incredible milestone together. I wish Mr Burns happiness and continued good health into the future.

BERNIE MULLANE COMPLEX

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I'm delighted to announce that the management of the Bernie Mullane Complex, within my electorate of Castle Hill, has been transferred to the local Hills Basketball Association. The complex boasts basketball courts, netball courts and a gym, and I know the 'Hornets' will bring their wealth of experience in upgrading and managing basketball courts and centres to the Complex. The Hornets have assisted in upgrading local basketball facilities before, including upgrading the Dural Recreation Centre in 2018. They invested \$100,000 into the upgrade, which is now the primary training ground of the Blue Hornets, a top wheelchair basketball team in Australia. The Hills Basketball Association has over 7,000 players, with another 200 on the waiting list, and a further 200 kids on the Hornets Academy Skills Program Workshop waitlist, so I know they will put the new game space into good use. I would like to thank all those involved in securing this new venture, especially Steve Burke, Zoe Burke, Russell Graham, Mitzi Crawford, Lyle Vallance, Marinette Impreso, James Murray, Olivia Nicholls and Damien Power.

TRIBUTE TO FLORENCE CARTER

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I am saddened to advise the House of the passing of Florence Carter, a local Country Women's Association member in and around my electorate of Castle Hill for the last 37 years. Florence joined the CWA in 1980, and was President of the Kenthurst Branch until its closure in 2003, before moving to the Galston Branch in 2005, remaining a member until 2017, when she was told to slow down by her doctor. Florence was recognised with the Rotary International's Paul Harris Fellow recognition in 1991 and the Long Service Bar in 2008. My thanks goes out to Florence and all members of the Country Women's Association who continue to advocate for the betterment of country women, particularly in the rural areas of the Hills Shire, and my sympathy goes out to Florence's family in the Southern Highlands.

8RAR LONG HAI DAY COMMEMORATION SERVICE

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer)—Today I would like to acknowledge the 8RAR Long Hai Day Commemoration Service I attended on Sunday 28 February at the Epping Cenotaph in Boronia Park, along with the Hon. Damien Tudehope MLC, Minister for Finance and Small Business in another place. The occasion was marked by wreath laying and the dedication of a remembrance plaque to commemorate those Australian soldiers who died in Vietnam during Operation Hammersley during early 1970. Another remembrance plaque was laid to commemorate the life and service of Sergeant Alan Ahearn who was killed during his tour of duty. Alan was a local Epping boy who attended Epping Boys High School. Operation Hammersley was fought in the dense Long Hai Hills in Vietnam, a stronghold for the Vietcong. Over a dozen Australians were killed in action or died of wounds, most from landmines. Dozens more were wounded. I would like to thank the 8th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment Association (NSW Branch) for organising the special occasion and would like to acknowledge Alan's family and colleagues as well as representatives from the Epping RSL Sub-Branch, The Epping Club, Epping Boys High School and Parramatta City Council. Lest We Forget.

ALLAN MCDONALD

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)—Earlier this month I was very sad to hear about the loss of community advocate and local legend Allan McDonald. Allan has been a member of the Shoalhaven community for thirty years and with his wife Ann, owned and operated a small business in Ulladulla. A passionate member of his community, he dedicated years to Lions Australia, his passing will be felt throughout the entire southern Shoalhaven community. Allan's passion for his community was infectious. There wasn't a local project that Allan wasn't involved in, most recently championing a new Lions' Den at the Dunn and Lewis Centre. He ensured Christmas cheer was always spread throughout the Ulladulla region, joining with a group of volunteers for over a decade to work with local businesses to decorate shop fronts with handmade decorations. I extend my sincerest condolences to Ann and the McDonald family, and on behalf of the entire South Coast community, thank Allan for his tireless work for our region.

CAMBRIDGE GARDENS PUBLIC SCHOOL HOUSE CAPTAINS

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney)—I wish to offer my congratulations to the incoming House Captains of Cambridge Gardens Public School. The House Captains for 2021 includes: Gould House, Mia Docherty and Phillip Boyd-Carroll; Benaud House, Destiny

Turner and Antonio Isha; Newcombe House, Oliva Towns and Dylan Taylor-Rogers; and Cuthbert House, Amilia-Rose Stanford and Jett Carter. I have no doubt these students will make positive and valuable contributions across their school community, particularly for all sporting activities and events.

BATE BAY SURF CLUBS' FLOOD EFFORTS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—I acknowledge and thank volunteers from Bate Bay surf lifesaving clubs for their outstanding efforts during the recent floods. On 22 March Wanda deployed an inflatable rescue boat [IRB] to Blacktown. The Wanda volunteers—Ryan Bevitt, Michael Bonnici, Adam Buckley, Mark Lake, Stephan Trembath and John Wilde—assisted emergency services personnel with rescues and evacuations in hazardous conditions. A number of other club volunteers assisted the effort by packing and transporting equipment, food and supplies. Volunteers from the Cronulla SLSC also contributed to the effort. The past week has been extraordinarily painful for many people throughout our state, and the generosity of volunteers like those from our local surf lifesaving clubs has been a source of inspiration.

CARING HEARTS COMMUNITY QUILTERS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—The Caring Hearts Community Quilters are a generous and inspirational group that dedicates time to making quilts that are then donated to local hospital's Palliative Care wards. This year, the group are celebrating their 21 year anniversary of donating quilts! Unfortunately in 2020, their annual 'Airing of the Quilts' fundraising event was cancelled making it difficult to purchase equipment and resources used to produce the quilts. Thankfully this year, the event will be back up and running this April! In their first year, fourteen quilts were donated to Nepean and Springwood hospital, but this year they have over 350 quilts to donate. Over the years, they have delivered more than 5,000 quilts to Nepean, Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains Palliative Care Patients, Nepean Wellness Centre, Women's Refuges, Children and Neo-Natal wards and many others doing it tough. This incredible achievement has brought a smile to thousands of individuals going through difficult times and I thank the Caring Hearts Community Quilters for dedicating time, effort and resources to this wonderful initiative. Congratulations on 21 years of quilting for the community! I look forward to hearing of your next great achievement.

MARIE HAINING

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I would like to acknowledge Glenmore Park resident, Marie Haining, who has served her local community for 50 years as a Justice of the Peace. Marie is a vibrant and energetic woman who, at the age of 73, has only just stepped down from full-time work to now work four days. In addition to demonstrating the value and contribution that older workers make in our modern workforce she was also faced with the daunting challenge of learning an entire new technological process for her career. Initially Marie felt fearful of this change, believing that she couldn't learn the new database and she almost decided to retire. Yet, her unbeatable spirit pushed her to have a go at this new system. Now she has mastered the database and is thrilled with its ability to help her complete tasks much faster. Marie is now a strong advocate for the benefits of technology in the workplace and is an example that older people can learn technology and be valuable contributors to our workplaces. Congratulations Marie on all your outstanding achievements!

GEORGE LOPES

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—Each year 870 tonnes of copiers and printers are decommissioned. The majority of their plastics sadly end up in landfill. I'm pleased to say that one Lake Macquarie man has made it his business to save as much of this material as possible from landfill. George Lopes of Rathmines originally started PrintStream Newcastle as a copier, printer and office equipment reseller business. Over the past decade it has expanded to become so much more. Working under the motto of 'there must be a better way', PrintStream actively sources ex-lease and end-of-life copiers, printers and scanners and repairs or refurbishes them for re-sale or dismantles and recycles their component parts. Of particular note is the use the company has made of the plastic printer parts which are crushed, sanitised, pelletised and returned to the plastic industry, or converted into 3D filament to be used in 3D printers. In recognition of his outstanding contribution to the Lake Macquarie environment, George was named a finalist for the 2021 Lake Mac Environmental Leader Award. I congratulate George and the team at PrintStream Newcastle on all they do, and continue to do for the environment. Well done.

ALEXANDER DUDLEY

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I recognise New England Individual Landcarer nominee Alexander Dudley for his 30-year contribution to Landcare in the fields of zoology and environmental education. Alex has volunteered on numerous ecological surveys and conservation projects as an environmental educator. In this capacity his work has touched hundreds

of school children, added to the nation's awareness of endangered species, and acted as an educational manager on a conservation property called Five Corners. Alex has written field guides using his own photographic material and popular poetry books, inspiring young people to learn about and connect to nature. I congratulate Alex for a career of such distinction that he was nominated for the prestigious Landcarer Award. I commend Alex for a lifetime dedicated to the conservation of our natural world and the commitment to share his passion with young and old.

SRI OM FOUNDATION TOONGABBIE

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—Earlier this month I was most fortunate to visit the Sri Om Foundation in Toongabbie. The Sri Om Foundation is a charitable organisation that has provided aged care services for people of South Asian backgrounds, in my electorate of Seven Hills as well as across the north and southwest of Sydney, for over fifteen years. I was grateful to join the seniors, in the care of the Sri Om Foundation, for morning tea at the Toongabbie Community Centre. It is here where local seniors can catch up with one another, share knowledge, and seek support should they be in need. I note also that important community initiatives, such as this, are hosted by Sri Om in the suburb Glenwood. Can I sincerely thank President of the Sri Om Foundation, Sriom Gnanasaktiyendra Swamigal, and Vice President Mr Jay Raman, OAM, for their warm and generous hospitality. Can I particularly thank them, both, for the great work that they are doing for our community through the Foundation.

AMANDA TURNBULL

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—The milestones for Amanda Turnbull, a member of the legendary trotting Turnbulls from The Lagoon near Bathurst, just keep on coming. They come at a time when the Bathurst Gold Crown Carnival is in full swing and Amanda continues to train and drive winners at an incredible rate. Earlier this month Amanda notched up her 800th winner as a trainer, but it's her uncanny ability as a driver that continues to create milestone after milestone. At just 24 years of age Amanda became the youngest driver in Australia to amass 1,000 winning drives and more recently drove her 2000th winner. As one of the leading female drivers in Australia, Amanda is testimony that gender is no barrier to becoming a success story in the harness racing industry. There is no doubt her father, Steve, and grandfather, the legendary AD "Tony" Turnbull, are proud of Amanda's success both on and off the track. And at this stage of her career, there are no signs of her slowing down as she continues to break records and in doing so ensure that Bathurst's reputation as a Mecca for the sport continues.

DOUG KINLYSIDE

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Bathurst resident Doug Kinlyside is without doubt a person who loves giving back to the community. He is the current Rotary Club Area Governor Area One (District 9705), an area which stretches from Lake Cargelligo to Oberon and everywhere in between. Doug has been a member of the Rotary club of Bathurst Daybreak since 2006 and has held the positions of president, secretary, treasurer and administration direction. It was great to catch up with Doug recently at the official opening of the upgraded Rotary Lookout at Oberon. His commitment to Rotary remains as strong as ever, but his involvement in the community goes back to the days when he was a member of the Bathurst Apex Club, being awarded the District Apexian of the year in 1990. During Bathurst's Bicentennial year in 2015, Doug was recognised as one of the 200 Living Legends for his service to the community and was nominated as Citizen of the Year in 2017. I commend the selfless work Doug does for others, not only across the Bathurst electorate but also further afield travelling many, many kilometres in his role as Area Governor. Thank you, Doug, for all you do.

GOOD MORNING MACARTHUR

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—It is with great pleasure that I draw attention to the contributions of all those involved with Good Morning Macarthur. Good Morning Macarthur has been a staple of the Campbelltown and wider Macarthur region for a long time. Next month the organisation will celebrate its 100th episode—a huge achievement and an indication of just how popular the regular bulletin on Facebook is. The motto "Good Morning Macarthur – No story is too tiny to tell" really sums up why the community has embraced the team so much. We are a unique community in Campbelltown. We love to help out when and where we can and we like to recognise the achievements of everyone, no matter how big or small they may be. The team at Good Morning Macarthur really do a tremendous job in sharing all those stories among our close-knit community. To reach 100 episodes is certainly no easy feat. Well done to Brian, Frank and the entire team at Good Morning Macarthur for reaching such an incredible milestone. On behalf of the Campbelltown community, thank you and congratulations.

ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE GALA BALL

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—We really are lucky to have such an array of wonderful schools in Campbelltown. The teachers and staff all do a terrific job making the classrooms as engaging and educational as possible. But it's not just inside the classrooms where the teachers, staff and students thrive. Fundraisers and events outside of school also help showcase the school to the wider community. Events like the St Patrick's College for Girls Gala Ball really are testament to that. The school has a wonderful tradition and reputation that stretches far beyond the borders of Campbelltown. The ability to put on such a wonderful event like the gala ball speaks volumes for just how dedicated and passionate the teachers and staff are. It also shows just how much respect and pride the students have for their school. I was lucky enough to attend this year's event and once again, was truly impressed by the spectacle. A huge congratulations must go to principal Sue Lennox and everyone else who was involved with organising the gala ball. It was a great night that was enjoyed by many, many people.

EMILY BROWN

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—There a number of hard working individuals across my electorate who go above and beyond each and every day, whether it is at work or as a volunteer, to better our community. No one displays this better than Emily Brown who is the Director at St Arndu's Pre School, and today I wish to recognise everything that she has done for the organisation. St Arndu's Pre School is a not for profit service in Oatley and they do an outstanding job at supporting children and their families so that their members can grow up to become the best possible individuals they can be. Last year I was able to acknowledge the entire team through the 10th Anniversary of the St George Community Awards and it was great to see them recognised for all of their hard work. These awards honour some of the many individuals and groups that go above and beyond every day to make our community even better. I wish the entire team at St Arndu's Pre School all the best for the year ahead.

JAHVIS LOVEDAY

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—I recognise and congratulate the success of Jahvis Loveday, a young Aboriginal filmmaker from Byron Bay whose short film, "Bama", was the winner of the Flickerfest Academy's Byron All Shorts and Northern Rivers Short Films competition. Bama depicts a moment in the life of a young Aboriginal boy, played by Jahvis's brother, Elijah, after his first day at a private school in the city, and his fear of losing the magic of his family and community after being so far away from them. Jahvis has immersed himself in the creative industries, including graphic design and music composition. In the making of Bama he wrote, directed, produced and handled the cinematography. Also the winner of last year's Byron All Shorts competition with his film "Home", Jahvis is committed to telling the stories of his people. Aged 18, he has a remarkable career ahead of him, both as a filmmaker and a story-teller, taking the experiences of young indigenous people to the world in a powerful and dramatic way.

THE ATLANTIC AND SURFAID CHARITY ART EXHIBITION

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—I recognise the initiative of SurfAid who partnered with The Atlantic to launch a 38-piece charity art exhibition in support of Mother and Child Health programs in remote areas of Indonesia. The Atlantic owner and Creative Director, Kimberly Amos, and local artist Mahala Magins curated the event which featured 38 celebrated artists from across the Northern Rivers and beyond. All the artists generously donated their artwork to help raise funds for this extremely worthwhile cause. Many of the communities that SurfAid support lack access to basic healthcare, clean water and nutrition, resulting in staggering maternal and child mortality rates. In parts of Indonesia 1 in every 20 children die before they turn five, 30 times higher than that of Australia. SurfAid is committed to improving these statistics through education, midwifery training, and providing access to healthcare, clean water, sanitation and improved nutrition. The charity art exhibition, which opened on International Women's Day, raised over \$38,000 and 100% of profits raised will go towards providing access to vital health care. It is uplifting to see individuals and organisations in our community supporting women and children in need in our Asia Pacific neighbourhood.

BAYSIDE MEN'S SHED

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—I acknowledge the continued hard work of Bayside Men's Shed and their commitment to building lifelong friendships and promoting safe work practices. Last year I had the honour of recognising the organisation with a Community Award as part of the 10th Anniversary of the St George Community Awards. These awards acknowledge some of the many hard working individuals and groups who go above and beyond each and every day to help out their community. Fred Poole and the entire team do an outstanding job and they provide a number of services including men's health support, tutoring services and barbecue fundraisers. They have also built a number of excellent products for the local area including street libraries and bench seating for schools and a bee haven for community gardeners. This is a fantastic community

organisation and their support for members and the local community is simply phenomenal. I wish your entire organisation all the best for the year ahead.

MR TED SMITH

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—It is my privilege to recognise Mr Ted Smith, a Darling River water warrior of Pooncarie in the far-west New South Wales. At 14 years, he played his first game of cricket. Forty years later he was still at the crease, bat in hand and, continuing to volunteer his services, was awarded a Life Membership of Pooncarie Cricket Club. He also holds Life Membership of the Tennis Club, where he was President for 11 years, and Pooncarie Gun Club, after playing a role in its formation, he reigned as its first President for 12 years, and continued his involvement for 54 years. Mr Smith also worked with the Pooncarie Race Club, where he held the position of Clerk of Scales for 34 of his 66 years' of service. He led many other local committees such as the Pooncarie Picnic Club, the volunteer fire fighters, and the Pooncarie Bush Nursing Centre, and remains an active member of the Pooncarie and District Development Association (PADDA). Mr Smith has served his community for 76 years and will be 91 in May. A true gentleman with a huge community heart.

MRS ROBYN LIVERMORE

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I recognise Mrs Robyn Livermore, 2020 Hidden Treasures nominee. While living in Parkes and raising her family, Robyn performed crisis work for families in need, as well as helping with many school activities. Robyn's passion has been working with the mentally and physically disabled, and the disadvantaged. In 1981 Robyn and her family moved to Orange, and for the following five years Robyn worked at the Croagh Patrick Orphanage with the Sisters of Mercy in the crisis centre. Robyn also worked at the Anson Street School as a teacher's aide, working with children with special needs, both physical and mental disabilities. Robyn's commitment to working with the disabled led her to learn sign language. Robyn is a talented pianist, and used her musical skills to write the school song, which is still used to this day. Ten years ago Robyn became a volunteer at the Riding for the Disabled in Orange, for the past two years she has been president of the association. These are a few in a very long list of Robyn's voluntary service to community. On behalf of an appreciative community, I thank Robyn for all that she has done, and continues to do.

AWESOME LAKE MAC

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I'd like to congratulate the team of volunteers behind Awesome Lake Mac on their outstanding contribution to their community and for winning the 2021 Lake Macquarie Community Group of the Year Award. I'd particularly like to acknowledge the efforts of the organisation's co-chairpersons Sarah Berry and Emilie Wiggers, as well as its 10 board members Ben Dawson, Jess Rixon, Sheena Harvey, Dayle Fogarty, Marisa Wilson, Sharyn Swan, Steve Graham, Nikki Abercrombie, Liz Robson and Janice McKay who all donate their time and money. Awesome Lake Mac has been operating since 2019 and to date has provided start-up funding to 13 community-led projects and activities which have elevated the creativity, wellbeing and social connection of Lake Macquarie. The organisation follows a similar formula to 'Shark Tank' where people pitch their ideas to Awesome Lake Mac, with successful applicants granted \$1,000 to help turn their ideas from concepts into reality. These grants come with no-strings attached, and allow services, business, groups and individuals to launch their projects or businesses, or grow their projects and ideas. I congratulate Awesome Lake Mac for all they've done and continue to do for the Lake Macquarie community.

CATHERINE HENRY

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—This month I had the honour of announcing Catherine Henry as Newcastle's Local Woman of the Year. Catherine is a tireless advocate for reform in the aged care sector. She has shown an enduring commitment to mentoring and elevating women in the legal profession, and has supported local organisations and charities for decades. Among Catherine's long list of achievements is a tenure as President of the Newcastle Law Society, her appointment as a national spokesperson on aged care for the Australian Lawyers Alliance, and was the winner of their Civil Justice Award last year. Catherine is a powerhouse and a tireless fighter for every cause she sinks her teeth into. There is a reason she is being recognised by her profession on a national level and we are so lucky that she is a Novocastrian. Congratulations Catherine, you do Newcastle proud!

GREEK COMMUNITY OF NEWCASTLE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—On Greek Independence day, today I wish to pay tribute to the Greek Community of Newcastle and their contribution to our city. Today marks 200 years since Greek citizens declared independence from the Ottoman Empire, after 400 years of occupation. During this time Greeks were treated as second-class citizens, but their passion for their culture and beliefs ensured they remained united and strong. Newcastle has a special connection to the Greek Revolution and migration to Australia, with Greece's first

free settler to Australia, Katerina Georgia Plessos, actually a refugee from the Revolutionary War. She spent a number of years living in Newcastle with her family, where her husband served as Chief Magistrate in the mid-19th century. I particularly wish to acknowledge Father Nicholas Zervas, Lulu Tantos, Nick Politis, Danielle Nikolettatos, Leo Nicola, Peter Nicolas, Alexandra Fellas, Eleni Bitsikas, Loukia Nicolas, Dimitra Roach, Alex Macridis and Nick Nicolas for their service to both the Greek and wider Newcastle communities. You are a valuable part of the fabric of Newcastle and the Hunter, and we are much stronger for having you.

SOCIAL JUSTICE GROUP, ST FRANCIS XAVIER ASHBURY

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—The Social Justice Group at St Francis Xavier, Ashbury, are tireless advocates on issues important to many inner west residents: climate change, social housing, homelessness and housing insecurity and the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 on the most vulnerable. The Social Justice Group is one of the many parish groups at St Francis Xavier, Ashbury, and I especially acknowledge the work of Anne Gray, who writes to me regularly to raise important social justice matters. St Francis Xavier was established in 1928 and has proudly continued to grow over the decades into a multicultural and diverse Catholic community. The parish motto is "Serviam," meaning "to serve" and the work of the Social Justice Group is fundamental to that mission. The Social Justice Group works closely with St Vincent de Paul and most recently, have called for the New South Wales Government to invest in a collaborative project proposed by St Vincent de Paul to substantially reduce the inadequate availability of social housing across New South Wales. I thank the members of the Social Justice Group and all the members of the St Francis Xavier parish for their principled and passionate advocacy of these important matters.

MARRICKVILLE SOUTH COLLECTIVE

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Marrickville South Collective is a partnership group comprising many inner west community groups and Inner West Council, aimed at supporting residents of the vibrant, multicultural community in South Marrickville. The Collective was established in 2017 and has been a lifeline for many residents, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic and recession. Among other important initiatives, the group hosts monthly BBQs, allowing local residents to relax, connect and share stories, and programs to support people find work and connect to important services. Many of these events and programs had to be suspended due to COVID-19, however, the group pivoted to provide roaming support for residents, including dropping off food and other essentials, and activities for young families. Today at McNeilly Park, the South Marrickville Collective will be hosting events marking the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (or Harmony Day), with a free community BBQ and food hampers provided by Addi Road Food Pantry. Residents can connect with services and information about after school programs, income support, health referrals and more. I congratulate and thank all the member organisations for their ongoing work and for always celebrating the wonderful South Marrickville community.

CONGRATULATING KYOGLE COUNCIL ON THE MISSING LINK PROJECT, BRIDGES

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I recently joined New South Wales roads Minister Paul Toole, Page MP Kevin Hogan, Ben Franklin, MLC, and Kyogle Mayor Cr Danielle Mulholland to cut the ribbon on the \$7.96 million project to seal 14.8 kilometres of the Clarence Way near Tabulam. Dubbed the Missing Link Project, a safer Clarence Way is welcomed by the beef, timber and blueberry industries, agribusiness, and people offering farm stay accommodation in the Tabulam district and Upper Clarence. Locals like Evelyn Edwards, who campaigned for improvements for 30 years, and the 'Mayor of Malabugilmah' Terry Robinson, both hailed it as life changing for locals who drive it every day. Terry told me that it was like their Pacific Highway upgrade. I thanked Kyogle Council foreman Travis Falls and his team on a job well done. I caught up with Deputy Mayor Cr John Burley, Cr Earle Grundy, Cr Lindsay Passfield, General Manager Graham Kennett and Director Asset and Infrastructure Services Tony Lickiss. Locals who travel the 84 timber bridges welcome Kyogle Council's success in securing \$40.3 million to replace 84 the bridges with concrete ones under the New South Wales Government's Fixing Country Bridges Program, a lobby I strongly supported.

LISMORE RECYCLED FOR SIGHT

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I wish to congratulate Ron Dodson and all members of the Lismore City Lions Club on their continuing program called Lismore Recycled for Sight. The program takes used prescription glasses and gives them to people in need across the world. Locals donate the glasses to a collection box, they are sent to be refurbished at the Brisbane Women's Correctional Facility, and they are then sent to a distribution centre in Brisbane and distributed around the world. Ron tells me that many of our local glasses go to our neighbours in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Recycled for Sight is one of many examples of the Lismore City Lions Club helping those in need in our region. I commend Lismore City Library Head Librarian Lucy Kinsley and the whole team at Lismore Library for hosting a collection box there and helping the Lions Club carry out the program. The glasses that are donated locally have helped improve the lives of many people in

need and in particular have helped children with impaired vision receive an education. I wish the Lismore City Lions Club well in continuing this program and encourage locals to donate their glasses.

TIMMY THE TURTLE

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—On Tuesday 23 March, the Parliamentary Theatre played host to the world Premiere of Timmy the Turtle. Timmy the Turtle, written by a young man on the spectrum, is an animated video designed to become a new school resource. This wonderful film not only shares a powerful message about the lived experience of people on the spectrum, but also provides employment opportunities for young autistic people to pursue their creative talents into employment. Timmy the Turtle is the product of months of work, championed by the founder and director of Autism MATES, Randa Habelrih and her son Richard Habelrih, who is the voice artist behind the brave protagonist, Timmy. Autism MATES, it is an organisation that supports greater inclusion of those living with autism. Their important work focuses on fostering friendship and inclusion in education, in the workforce and in broader society. A great deal of their effort goes toward empowerment, focusing on developing people's strengths, not focussing on deficits. I am personally a supporter of Autism MATES as their vision to create a more inclusive and accepting society for those living on the autism spectrum is something that strongly believe in. Congratulations all.

TAREN POINT PUBLIC SCHOOL CAPTAINS

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Taren Point Public School on their appointment. Taren Point Public School is a small community that offers big opportunities to all students and has plenty of heart. Led by Principal James Nobbs, this unique school is the third school in New South Wales to become a member of the Australian Association of French English Bilingual Schools and has become a hub for French language learning in our community. I commend the school on this fantastic achievement and acknowledge the team of educators who are dedicated to creating an environment that is safe and engaging, allowing students to strive for success. The 2021 leadership team are a group of wonderful students who embody the values of Taren Point Public School. I congratulate School Captains Matthew McGuinness and Georgia Hatton, and Vice Captains Anna McCrone and Lukas Nicolaou on their successful appointment. These students should be incredibly proud of this achievement, and I look forward to seeing them lead their peers through this exciting year filled with new opportunities and learning experiences. I extend my best wishes to these student leaders and look forward to seeing them excel.

EVELYN "BILLIE" TREBLEY 102ND BIRTHDAY

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I wish to congratulate Evelyn Roberta Grace Trebley, known to all as "Billie", on reaching her 102nd Birthday. When asked the secret to her long life, Billie eloquently says it is staying positive, having a healthy diet, and a belief in God. Billie has lived through two global pandemics in her life, having been born in Culcairn on 19 March 1919 at the time of the Spanish Flu. The youngest of five children, Billie spent most of her days growing up in Culcairn, and travelling to Albury High School in the old red rattler trains. She had the art of effective public speaking and was soon in demand to speak at balls and concerts. During one of the balls, at 18 years of age, she met the man of her dreams: Loch. They married at Culcairn and went on to have three children, Glen, Graeme, and Julie. Loch and Billie were married for 72 years, enjoying ballroom dancing. Billie now resides at Mercy Place in Albury and I take this occasion to wish her all the very best for health and happiness.

HOWLONG COUNTRY BAKERY

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—Howlong Country Bakery owners Steve and Catherine Fyffe took over the business and were confronted by the COVID pandemic. Steve worked between 18-20 hours a day, keeping the business going during periods of restriction necessary to contain and control the pandemic. This was to become a defining moment for the business as the New South Wales southern border closures brought police from other areas of the state into Howlong. There the police were looked after thanks to the hospitality they found at the Howlong Bakery. I would like to acknowledge the hard work and perseverance of the Fyffes and their staff who used this time to improve the wholesale output of the business and to update the shop front. In 12 months, business has doubled and the bakery has increased staff with three additional bakers and six extra shopfront people. The product range has also expanded. I wish Steve and Catherine all the very best, and thank them for their dedication and commitment to the visiting police and their community.

NORTH SHORE SCHOOL STUDENTS' HSC EXHIBITIONS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Students from schools in my electorate are strongly represented at the HSC exhibitions for the class of 2020. These exhibitions encompass a diverse range of creative subjects including visual arts, dance, music, drama, technology, textiles and design, and writing. I congratulate the following ARTEXPRESS students: Scott Collins, Ellen Russell, and Sophie Shirriff from Loreto Kirribilli,

Emily Garnock, Chloe Hinchcliff, Francesca Hopkins, and Caley Miles from Wenona, Joanna Lee and Mona Wu from North Sydney Girls' High School, Finn McGrath and Charles Newton-John from St Aloysius' College, Maxwell Partridge from Marist College North Shore, Dylan Shadbolt from North Sydney Boys High School, and Marcus An Tran and Toby Weston from SHORE. Congratulations to Tom Forsyth from St Aloysius' College and Matthew Lau from SHORE for their music works being selected for ENCORE online, and to Grace Gilmour and Isabelle MacFarlane from Wenona, William Scougall from SHORE, and Joseph Wallace from St Aloysius' College for their drama works being showcased online through OnSTAGE. I congratulate Charlotte Bergman from Queenwood for her Design and Technology work being selected for the Shape exhibition. Congratulations to all these students for their outstanding achievements.

NORTH SYDNEY AND MOSMAN SES VOLUNTEERS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—New South Wales has experienced an extreme weather event, a natural disaster of epic proportions. As with the bushfires of last year, where would we be without our volunteers? I recognise the dedication of our SES volunteers cross the state, and thank them for their assistance during this past week for the vital role they play in helping our community in times of need. I want to particularly recognise our local SES North Sydney and Mosman Units. North Sydney SES volunteers were on hand to provide assistance to our local community, and thank you to the North Sydney team members who went out to the particularly hard hit areas in Sydney's North West. Mosman SES volunteers responded to calls for assistance ranging from trees coming down, to pumping of subfloors and water diversion with sandbags, as well as some roof jobs. Thank you to all SES volunteers across the state who have helped our communities during the large volumes of rain and flooding, some of the worst we have seen in 60 years. These volunteers take time away from their families and make themselves available to help their community in severe weather events and emergencies.

ALFORDS POINT PUBLIC SCHOOL CAPTAINS

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate the newly elected leadership team of Alford's Point Public School on their appointment. Alford's Point Public School is a welcoming community who pride themselves on their friendly student body. Upholding their motto "excellence, innovation and success in a caring environment," the team of educators are dedicated to supporting each student as they pursue their passions. Whether through leadership opportunities, academic achievement, sport or creative arts, Alford's Point Public School students always strive for excellence and should be proud of their wonderful school community. The 2021 leadership team are a group of wonderful students who embody the values of Alford's Point Public School. I congratulate School Captains Erika and Charlotte, and Vice Captains Lucas D and Lucas P on their successful appointment. These students should be incredibly proud of this achievement, and I look forward to seeing them lead their peers through this exciting year filled with new opportunities and learning experiences. I extend my best wishes to these student leaders and look forward to seeing them excel.

TRIBUTE TO PAUL (POEL) RAVENEAU

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—The Moree Rugby League and wider community has been left saddened by the loss of a well-known community man Paul Raveneau, who sadly passed away on Friday, 5 March, following a battle with cancer. I recognise the life of Paul or 'Poey', as he was better known. Poey started playing footy at age 5 and achieved so much in his football career, playing over 350 games for the Moree Boars, scoring 176 tries and 1 goal. He also played in the 1999 and 2002 First Grade Grand Final winning teams and captain-coached the Boars to a Grand Final in 2004. Poey held a lot of positions during his time including President, Secretary, Treasurer and Committee Man for junior rugby and held executive positions for senior rugby. In recent years Poey was announced the 27th Life Member of the Club. A proud indigenous man, a loving father and all round top bloke. I pass on my condolences to his wife, Stacey, and his three sons, Bryce, Layne and Peyton, his parents, Paul and Judy, sister Janice and brothers Steve and Luke.

FULL FACE ORTHODONTICS OPENING

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I would like to take this opportunity to offer my congratulations to Doctor Derek Mahony for the Grand Opening of the new Full Face Orthodontics dental practice, Harris Park. Doctor Derek is a Fairfield migrant success story, having migrated as a child with his family from Deli, India. He is a former alumni of Patrician Brother's College, Fairfield. Dr Derek is proud of his heritage and roots and has worked hard to achieve in the field of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopaedics. He is well respected in the dental faculty having trained thousands of dentists. I was delighted to join in with my parliamentary colleague the member for Parramatta Minister Geoff Lee, MP, to officially open the facility. Also present at the opening were members of the Mahoney family, Full Face Orthodontics staff and many dental industry leaders and professionals. The new Harris Park practice is an addition to the Full Face Orthodontics network of, Neutral Bay, Randwick,

Miranda, Hornsby, Gregory Hills and Brunswick West Victoria. I wish Dr Derek Mahoney and his team well for the future.

PAKISTAN RESOLUTION DAY

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—Recently I joined the local Pakistani community as it celebrated "Pakistan Resolution Day". Pakistan Resolution Day or Pakistan Day is a time to reflect and celebrate the adoption of the Pakistan Resolution by the Muslim League establishing an independent federation in Pakistan on 23rd March, 1940. This day was a defining moment in Pakistani history. I was honoured to have joined in with the Pakistan Australia Association to celebrate this historic event. Congratulations to the President of the Association Mr Ejaz Khan, the General Secretary Shakeb Amer and the organising committee for hosting the event. The event was graced by Islamic prayer, poetry and song. It was also an opportunity for the association to acknowledge the 2020 HSC academic achievers. I along with my Parliamentary colleague Dr Hugh McDermott, the High Commissioner and Consul General of Pakistan thoroughly enjoyed the traditional Pakistani hospitality during the evening. Congratulations to the Pakistan Australia Association on a successful event.

BANGLADESH 50 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)—I would like to congratulate the Bangladeshi Community, including the 5,000 living in the electorate of Lakemba, celebrating 50 years of Independence. 2020 has been an extraordinary year with the bushfires, the COVID-19 pandemic and now floods, leaving many in our community facing unprecedented hardship and despair. However, I am heartened by the response from the Bangladeshi community who stepped up helped the most vulnerable in our community. With Bangladesh being the eighth most populous country in the world, it is no wonder that they celebrate their independence with massive parades, fairs, concerts, ceremonies and various other events commemorating the history and traditions of Bangladesh. The Bangladeshi community has shared with Australia its rich culture and history through music, celebrations and we can't forget, food. I would like to further extend my thanks to the Australian-Bangladeshi community, who have contributed towards the greater good of our people. Your deep and rich heritage adds value to the core of this country we call home.

EPETITION HASTINGS SECONDARY COLLEGE UPGRADES

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I recognise an ePetition before the Legislative Assembly signed by a collective of parents and teachers from Hastings Secondary College Port Macquarie Campus which draws attention to concerns surrounding School Infrastructure's planned multimillion dollar school upgrades. The Hastings Secondary College upgrades were first announced in February 2019 with widespread support from teachers, students and parents alike to a master plan that will revolutionise public education and learning outcomes for students in Port Macquarie. Since the announcement, a number of concerns have been raised with me about the planned investment and its ability to cater for the current enrolment of 750 plus students. The ePetition states: "Port Macquarie is a rapidly growing community and development of its public secondary schools has not kept pace with growth. Classrooms at the Port Macquarie campus are dated, in poor repair and are smaller than current regulations recommend. We respectfully petition the Assembly to: 1. Fund full refurbishment of HSC PMC to accommodate the 750 students currently enrolled. 2. Ensure that all teaching spaces in the school are fit for purpose and to modern standards."

TRIBUTE TO WARWICK CARY, ESM

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—It is with great sadness that I acknowledge the passing of Warwick Cary, ESM last year. Mr Cary was well-known and well-respected through the St George community for his work with the Kogarah Unit of the New South Wales State Emergency Service. He was recently appointed a member (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia for his significant service to emergency response organisations and military history and awards. Mr Cary joined the NSW SES in 1982 and was appointed Kogarah Local Controller in 2003, holding the position until 2019. His passion and dedication to volunteering led to a decorated career, including receiving the Centenary Medal in 2001, and the Emergency Services Medal in 2008. He was named Kogarah's Citizen of the Year in 2011 and appointed a life member of the NSW SES in 2019. These acknowledgements are well deserved, and I am grateful – as I'm sure the entire St George community are – for Mr Cary's decades of commitment. I offer my condolences to Mr Cary's family and friends, and to the Kogarah SES Unit.

GEORGES RIVER ASSOCIATION GALA DINNER

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—Congratulations to the Georges River Association who recently held a Lunar New Year Charity Gala dinner at Club Central in Hurstville, which I had the honour of attending. The Gala was organised to raise money for the local Salvation Army Corps and the Association was able to present a very generous donation of \$5000 to Major Sherrie Nicol of the Hurstville Corps. The Georges River Association has

made an incredible contribution to our community over the past years, and have brought a sense of pride to residents through their work. I was pleased to be able to present two community service awards to Mr Zhuang, President of Australia Association of Sun Yat sen University and Dr Wang Xiabo, president of Australia New Zealand Shanxi Association. Thank you and congratulations to Ben Wang, President of Georges River Association for organis in such a fantastic evening.

NOWRUZ NEW YEAR

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—I was delighted Opposition Leader Jodi McKay MP joined me to celebrate Nowruz by visiting local Persian and Afghan stores in Merrylands on 20 March 2021. Ryman supermarket, Asal Sweet patisserie, Green Wheat bakery, Karimian carpets, Walli Asr meat company, Shiraz Ice Cream and Kabul House restaurant all celebrated Nowruz. Thank you to all those local stores for their warm hospitality and for sharing the joy of new year. Nowruz begins at the spring equinox, when the sun crosses the equator and day and night are equal length. It is mainly celebrated in Iran, Afghanistan, the Kurdish regions of Iraq and Turkey as well as by Parsis in India. It is an especially important day for Afghan and Iranian Australians who call my electorate home. Celebrating Nowruz promotes the values of peace and solidarity between generations and within families. It also plays a significant role in strengthening the ties among peoples based on mutual respect and the ideals of peace and good neighbourliness. After what has been a very difficult year for many, I know local families were especially looking forward to finally celebrate Nowruz with their loved ones over food, music and much celebration. Nowruz Mobarak!

RYDALMERE LIONS FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—Congratulations to Rydalmere Lions Football Club on their 2021 Season Launch. The club was first established in 1979, formally known as St Joseph's Zgharta Soccer Club and played out of both Everley Park and Granville Park. In its short history, Rydalmere FC has achieved great success both on and off the field. In 2014 the club won promotion to the NSW State League Division 1 and in 2017 the club's youth and men's National Premier League teams won promotion to NSW NPL1 and NSW NPL2 respectively. They are now based at Rydalmere however they still have a strong following in Granville. Their teams cater for children and adults, both men and women and I know how hard they work at developing and encouraging participation in football within the community. Thank you to Mr Peter Bacha, Club President and other members of the management committee for the invitation to attend. Best of luck to all the players in the 2021 season.

**The House adjourned pursuant to standing and sessional orders at 17:56 until
Tuesday 4 May 2020 at 12:00.**